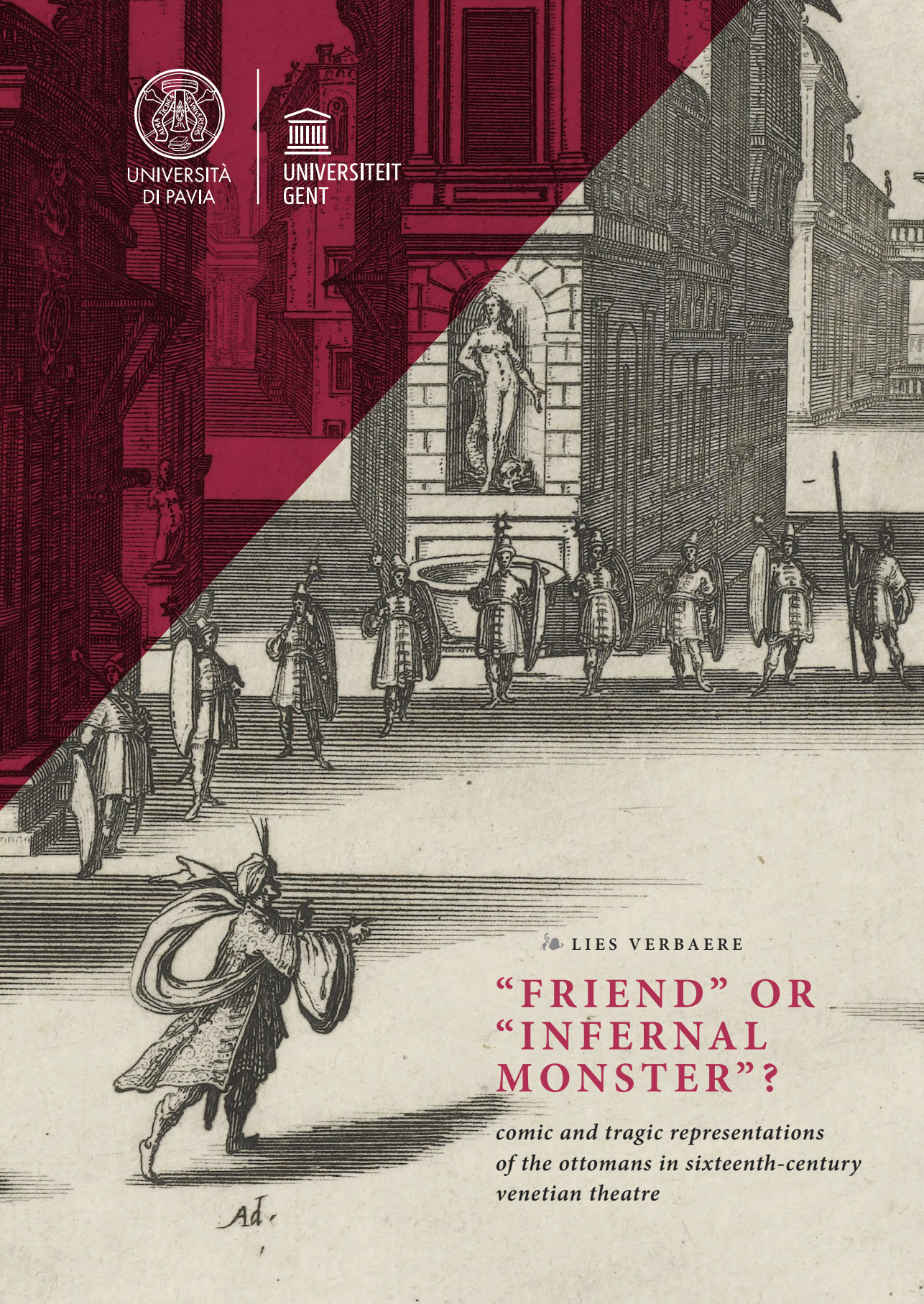


UNIVERSITÀ DI PAVIA

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LIES VERBAERE

"FRIEND" OR "INFERNAL MONSTER"?

comic and tragic representations of the ottomans in sixteenth-century venetian theatre





University of Pavia (Italy)
Department of Humanities
Doctorate in Sciences of the Literary and Musical Text - Curriculum of Modern Philology - XXXVI Cycle
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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor in Literary Studies

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"FRIEND" OR "INFERNAL MONSTER"?

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in sixteenth-century venetian theatre

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PhD thesis by Lies Verbaere

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ITALIAN TITLE — *"Amico" o "infernal mostro"? Rappresentazioni comiche e tragiche della figura degli ottomani nel teatro cinquecentesco veneziano*
DUTCH TITLE — *"Vriend" of "hels monster"? Komische en tragische representaties van de Ottomanen in het zestiende-eeuwse Venetiaanse theater*

COVER IMAGE — Jacques Callot, *Illustration for the third act of the tragedy* Il Solimano *by Prospero Bonarelli* (Florence: Pietro Cecconcelli, 1620) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-5793

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LIES VERBAERE

"FRIEND" OR "INFERNAL MONSTER"?

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Non sa il volgo ignorante o la plebe ignorante e sciocca che per descrivere bene qual si sia persona e per dimostrare varie passioni e costumi in un componimento, bisogna metter mano a l'archivio della filosofia. Perché chi fingerà mai bene un vecchio se col pensiero non si transforma per via della scienza naturale in un vecchio? Chi di vecchio tornerà a farsi giovene se con la lezione delle scienze naturali non prenderà la qualità del giovane? Come potranno esser mai ben trattate le passioni umane, o d'allegrezza o di tristezza, o di timore e di speranza, o di misericordia e di crudeltà, se non da quelli che averanno praticato tra l'academie de' filosofi?[1]

1 Bernardino Pino da Cagli, "Breve considerazione intorno al componimento de la comedia de' nostri tempi," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 2 (Rome: Laterza, 1970), 646.

ABSTRACT

ENGLISH ABSTRACT — *"Friend" or "Infernal Monster"?* charts the characterisation of the Ottomans in sixteenth-century Venetian theatre. This century witnessed conflicts between 'East' and 'West', and Venice as 'Gate to the Orient' had a central role in dealing with the Ottoman Empire. This work dissects eight comedies and four tragedies published between 1542 and 1589, written by Venetian authors and containing Ottoman characters or Italian characters disguising themselves as Ottomans. The first chapter of this dissertation traces Veneto- Ottoman relations. It introduces the Ottoman figures that the Venetians encountered, and the knowledge and stereotypes that circulated about them. Chapter 2 gives an overview of what dramatic treatises tell us about the exotic 'other', and shows how they were portrayed in ancient and early modern spectacles. Chapter 3 discusses the corpus, the contents of the plays, and the biographies of the authors. It also considers the number of editions and the contents of their paratexts. The two final chapters examine the corpus. They analyse the portrayal of the Ottoman, and how this characterisation reflected on the Venetians. Specifically, the fourth chapter discusses the comic roles in which the Ottoman is cast, and the fifth chapter focuses on the roles related to the staging of war. These chapters are subdivided according to the types of Ottomans that appear in Venetian drama. They analyse which stereotypes of the Ottomans emerge, and how the Ottoman characters relate to the typical roles of early modern Italian theatre. They also highlight some performative elements that can be found throughout the plays.

ITALIAN ABSTRACT — *"Amico" o "infernal mostro"?* traccia la caratterizzazione dell'ottomano nel teatro veneziano del Cinquecento. Questo secolo fu testimone di conflitti tra 'Oriente' e 'Occidente', e Venezia, in quanto 'porta d'Oriente', ebbe un ruolo centrale nel trattare con l'Impero ottomano. Questo lavoro analizza 8 commedie e 4 tragedie pubblicate tra il 1542 e il 1589, scritte da autori veneziani e contenenti personaggi ottomani o italiani che si travestono da ottomani. Il primo capitolo di questa tesi ripercorre le relazioni veneto-ottomane. Presenta le figure ottomane che i veneziani incontrarono e le conoscenze e gli stereotipi che circolarono. Il secondo capitolo offre una panoramica di ciò che i trattati

drammatici ci dicono sull'"altro' esotico e mostra come veniva rappresentato nello spettacolo dell'antichità e della prima età moderna. Il terzo capitolo offre una panoramica del corpus, dei contenuti delle opere e delle biografie degli autori. Prende inoltre in considerazione il numero di edizioni e il contenuto dei loro paratesti. I due capitoli finali studiano il corpus in profondità. Analizzano la rappresentazione dell'ottomano e come questa caratterizzazione si rifletta sui veneziani. Il quarto capitolo analizza le parti comiche che furono assegnate all'ottomano, mentre il quinto capitolo approfondisce i ruoli legati alla messa in scena della guerra. Questi capitoli sono suddivisi in base ai tipi di ottomani che compaiono nel dramma veneziano. Analizzano quali stereotipi dei ottomani emergono e come i personaggi ottomani si relazionano con i ruoli tipici del teatro moderno italiano. Vengono inoltre messi in evidenza alcuni elementi performativi che si ritrovano nelle opere teatrali.

DUTCH ABSTRACT — *"Vriend" of "hels monster"?* brengt de karakterisering van de Ottomanen in het zestiende-eeuwse Venetiaanse theater in kaart. In deze eeuw werden de conflicten tussen 'Oost' en 'West' intenser, en speelde Venetië als 'poort naar het Oosten' een centrale rol in de omgang met het Ottomaanse Rijk. Dit werk ontleedt 8 komedies en 4 tragedies die gepubliceerd werden tussen 1542 en 1589, geschreven werden door Venetiaanse auteurs, en Ottomaanse personages of Italiaanse personages die zich vermommen als Ottomanen bevatten. Het eerste hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift schetst de Veneto-Ottomaanse betrekkingen. Het introduceert de Ottomaanse figuren die de Venetianen tegenkwamen en de kennis en stereotypen die circuleerden. Hoofdstuk 2 geeft een overzicht van wat dramatische traktaten ons vertellen over de exotische 'ander', en laat zien hoe hij werd verbeeld in het klassieke en vroegmoderne spektakel. Hoofdstuk 3 bespreekt het corpus, de inhoud van de toneelstukken, en de biografieën van de auteurs. Ook het aantal edities en de inhoud van de parateksten komen aan bod. De twee laatste hoofdstukken onderzoeken het corpus. Ze analyseren de portrettering van de Ottomaan en hoe deze karakterisering licht werpt op de Venetianen. Het vierde hoofdstuk bespreekt de komische rollen waarin de Ottomaan wordt gecast, en het vijfde hoofdstuk gaat in op de rollen die verband houden met de enscenering van de oorlog. Deze hoofdstukken zijn onderverdeeld in types Ottomanen die in Venetiaans drama voorkomen. Ze analyseren welke stereotypen over de Ottomanen naar voren komen en hoe de Ottomaanse personages zich verhouden tot de typische rollen van het Italiaanse vroegmoderne theater. Ze belichten ook enkele performatieve elementen die in de toneelstukken terug te vinden zijn.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like the early modern professional actors from Italy who regularly crossed the Alps, my life during the last twelve years has been spent travelling, for personal reasons, between Gent and Bergamo. These journeys found a third dot on the map in Pavia, where in 2020 I won a PhD scholarship. My trips became so intense that at times I felt like the *comico* Domenico 'Fulvio' Bruni, who in 1623 wrote in his *Fatiche comiche*: "Venga il canchero a questa professione et a chi ne fu lo inventore. Quando mi accomodai con costoro mi credevo di provare una vita felice: ma la ritrovo appunto una vita da zingani, quali non hano mai luogo fermo né stabile." However, Bruni wisely adds: "Ma poiché questo mi deve avvenire io voglio haver questo avertimento di esser sempre nelle compagnie migliori e più honorate, perché oltre lo imparar da quelle, non haverò timore di essere biasimato come molti né per ignorante, né persona infame." Luckily, my travels were more comfortable than Bruni's and, more importantly, I always found the people I love waiting for me in airports at one or the other side of the Alps. In what follows I explicitly thank some of them, and I hope that they know what warmth and gratitude I bear them. I could not be more thankful than for having shared this journey with them, which has without a doubt made me a richer person.

First, what is a young actress without an experienced actor to show her the ropes? I would not be where I am now without my tutors, Fabrizio Fiaschini and Teodoro Katinis. When I started thinking about a PhD, Teodoro, the supervisor of my master's thesis, was with me every step of the way. Together, we stumbled into the world of early modern Venetian drama. But at the time I was working on Tasso's epic poem, and Teodoro was a *professore dei segreti*. We needed a *capocomico*. The appointment of Fabrizio as a tutor in Pavia resolved this issue. I had no knowledge of drama to begin with, but through his encouragement and passionate teaching I learned about theatre and its performative side throughout the centuries. As Fabrizio shared his passion with me, I felt that I had found my place as a scholar of premodern drama. Both Teodoro and Fabrizio have taught me so much along this journey, listened to me, helped in whatever way they could, and did some *supportare* and *sopportare* when faced with my insecurities. *Grazie mille, di tutto*.

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Ac
Ad.

INTRODUCTION

OTTOMANS, THEATRE, AND VENICE

Massive clouds of smoke. Buildings on fire. A man jumping out of a balcony as he tries to escape the flames. Soldiers fighting, scimitars and Turkish bows at hand. Turbaned figures slaughtering innocent men, women, and children. Lifeless bodies scattered across a once majestic city. Flames, blood, death. The image accompanying this introduction, though neither Venetian[1] nor from the sixteenth century, may very well depict how we should imagine the Ottoman on scene in sixteenth-century Venetian theatre. But does it also depict a generic ending of early modern Italian tragedy, or does the Ottoman as a dramatic figure have his own specific looks and behavioural patterns?

> IMAGE 1 – Jacques Callot, *Illustration for the fifth act of the tragedy* Il Solimano *by Prospero Bonarelli* (Florence: Pietro Cecconcelli, 1620) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-5795

This is what this work sets out to discover: how were the Ottomans – or 'the Turks',[2] as early modern Western authors called them – represented in sixteenth-century Venetian drama, and how are literary canonical characters from ancient source material rewritten to shape this 'dramatic Turk'?

In doing so, *"Friend" or "Infernal Monster"?* for the first time investigates a genre which was

1 It has been assumed that a first edition of Bonarelli's Solimano was published in Venice in 1619, yet Maria Alberti has opposed this thesis in her "Le parti 'scannate' per il *Solimano* di Prospero Bonarelli," in *Studi di storia dello spettacolo. Omaggio a Siro Ferrone*, ed. Stefano Mazzoni (Florence: Le lettere, 2011), 184-85. In any case, the first edition with images is certainly the Florentine edition printed by Cecconcelli in 1620.

2 In the Early Modern Period, 'Turk' could stand for subjects of the Ottoman Empire, ethnic Turks, Muslims, or a combination of these possibilities. The term increasingly designated Muslims in general, because the Ottoman Empire became the leading Islamic political entity. It is also worth noting that the Ottoman Empire consisted of various ethnicities, and that the Turkish one was not predominant. In reality, the Ottoman ruling class generally viewed the Turkish populace of their empire with some contempt. Despite the historical reality, Venetian authors usually reverted to the ambiguous term 'Turk'. See Maria Pia Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011), 257-58; E. Natalie Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," in *The Turn of the Soul. Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*, ed. Lieke Stelling, Harald Hendrix, and Todd M. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 115. I will predominantly use the term 'Ottoman' as a neutral term. However, I will not discard the term 'Turk', which I will use at times to refer to early modern usage of the term, to designate stereotyped representations of the Ottoman, or when referring to persons with an ethnic Turkish origin or to the Turkish language. From this perspective, I use terms such as 'the Turkish threat' or 'Turkish theatre'.

immensely popular in the Venetian Republic, and in particular in Venice itself.[3] Sixteenth-century Venice was an extremely cosmopolitan city in whose *calli* Christian Europeans encountered many foreign peoples, such as the Ottomans, and where an enormous amount of information regarding these 'Turks' was being generated, printed, and illustrated on hand presses. Its *palazzi*, squares, and theatres were vibrant scenes of theatrical productions and manifold performances,[4] housing intriguing performances featuring Ottoman figures. It is the cosmopolitan nature of Venice, its centrality in the spreading of printed information throughout the early modern world, and its lively dramatic milieu, which make this subject so interesting for scholarly research.

What is also significant about this subject is the fact that the *Serenissima* held an ambiguous view towards the Ottoman. Out of necessity, the Republic – or the 'Gate to the Orient', as it was known – maintained a good trading relationship with the Ottoman Empire, but in many instances Venice was unable to avoid war. Because of their close ties, the Ottomans and Venetians were both interested in one another. Not only did Mehmed II (1432-1481) have his portrait painted by Gentile Bellini (ca. 1429-1507), and the sultans express an interest in Western philosophy,[5] but the Venetians were also people who knew, read, thought and wrote most about the Ottomans. In addition, the Ottoman was a figure which most helped determine their own Venetian identity.[6]

3 I will use 'Venice' or 'Venetian' as a shorthand for the entire Venetian Republic, often dubbed the *Serenissima* for its reputation as a perpetual guiding light of calm and stability. The Republic consisted of the *dogado* (its core territories, including the city itself, the *dominante*), the *stato da tera* or *domini di terraferma* (mainland territories), and the *stato da mar* or *domini da mar* (maritime territories).

4 In my research I use the term 'performance/performative' mainly in relation to the literary and textual analysis of dramas. In some cases, the term will be extended to some aspects of acting practices (for example, blackface), but always starting from the indications in the texts and paratexts. I do *not* refer to 'performativity' in the sense that every word or action changes ('performs') meanings or social realities (e.g., by saying that a couple is married, they are actually married). For an introduction to these concepts, see Marvin Carlson, *Performance. A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-7; Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*, ed. Ramona Mosse and Minou Arjomand, English Language edition (London: Routledge, 2014), 18-45; and Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 24-37. For performance in sixteenth-century theatre, also see Siro Ferrone, *La Commedia dell'arte. Attrici e attori italiani in Europa (XVI-XVIII secolo)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2014); and Marco De Marinis, *Semiotica del teatro. L'analisi testuale dello spettacolo* (Milan: Bompiani, 1982).

5 On exchanges between European Christendom and the Ottomans, see Anna Contadini and Claire Norton, eds., *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

6 The relationship of the Venetian Republic with the Ottoman Empire has been extensively studied. Some important and recent examples are: Karen-edis Barzman, *The Limits of Identity. Early Modern Venice, Dalmatia, and the Representation of Difference* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople. Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore (Md.): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); James G. Harper, ed., *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750. Visual Imagery Before Orientalism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Marina Formica, *Lo specchio turco. Immagini dell'Altro e riflessi del Sé nella cultura italiana d'età moderna* (Rome: Donzelli editore, 2012); Maria Pia Pedani, "L'Italia, Venezia e la Porta. Diplomazia e letteratura tra umanesimo e rinascimento," in *Italien und das Osmanische Reich*, ed. Franziska Meier (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2010), 57-74; Paolo Pre-

And an outstanding genre for reflecting on one's own identity, because of its own dialogical nature and with the potential to reach a multitude of people from different social classes, was, of course, drama. Theatrical performance could showcase foreign lands and clothing for everyone to see. Its dialogic form opposes characters and opinions with whom or which the audience could identify, and notoriously engendered debate.[7]

Despite Venice's centrality in its contact with the Orient and the importance of drama in its literary production,[8] the Venetian 'Turkish theatre' has hardly been studied today. Nevertheless, it contributed to create an image of the Ottoman in an age in which this Oriental figure was the subject of a very rich literature and imagery. 'Turks' appeared especially in historiographical works, but also in books of physiognomy, travel stories, books of sermons, geographical maps, clothing and costume books, epic poetry, compendia of knowledge, or personal conversion accounts.

The very first individual to turn a recent event involving the Ottomans into drama – the conquest of Buda by the Ottoman Empire in 1541 – was a Venetian: Daniele Barbaro. In his *Tragedia*, written between 1541 and 1548, Barbaro made a protagonist out of the Ottoman instead of having a character mention the 'Turkish threat'.[9] By comparison, the more studied English plays, such as the landmark *Othello*, only put Ottomans on scene from the 1570s onwards.[10]

Marzia Pieri has argued in this connection that the Ottoman presence on the Italian stage grew as military tensions with the Ottoman Empire peaked, and that

to, *Venezia e i turchi* (Rome: Viella, 2013); E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 2012); Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy. A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe. 1453-1638* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001); Lucette Valensi, *Venise et la Sublime Porte. La naissance du despote* (Paris: Hachette, 1987); Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice. Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); or Lies Verbaere, "Turks, Renaissance Image Of," in *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Marco Sgarbi (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019). These works form the basis for my *status quaestionis* and introduction.

7 See for example Jan Bloemendal, Peter Eversmann, and Elsa Strietman, *Drama, Performance, and Debate. Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

8 Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi has asserted that the Venetian audience preferred drama above all genres. Of a total of 713 editions of literary works, she counted 120 editions of dramatic works: 77 comedies, 31 tragedies, and 12 editions of classical drama. See Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere. Lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988), 89.

9 Niccolò Machiavelli famously did so in his *Mandragola* from the 1520s. He has a woman ask his frate Timoteo "Credete voi ch 'l Turco passi questo anno in Italia?", to which the friar answers "Se voi non fate orazione, sì." The woman then complains that she is very frightened of "quello impalare." I quote from Niccolò Machiavelli, *Mandragola. Prefazione di Pietro Gibellini. Note di Tiziana Piras* (Milan: Garzanti, 2000), III.3, 42.

10 Based on Mark Hutchings' repertory in *Turks, Repertories, and the Early Modern English Stage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 203-17.

for Italians it was 'normal' to see a 'Turk' in real life and on stage. Especially in Venice, she writes, the Ottoman became a familiar dramatic character.[11] As we will see, the Venetian Republic was indeed the largest and almost only producer of 'Turkish theatre' in the sixteenth century.

The growing appearance of the Ottomans on Italian and Venetian stages in the Cinquecento is not surprising. First, the sixteenth century is also a dynamic period for Italian drama. The Italians were the first to experiment with neo-Latin and vernacular plays.[12] Whereas scholars like Marvin Herrick have propounded the view that early modern Italian authors imitated ancient models, such as Plautus (ca. 250-184 B.C.) or Aeschylus (ca. 525-455 B.C.),[13] scholars like Richard Andrews and Salvatore Di Maria now emphasise the dynamism of early modern authors with regard to their sources. Italian playwrights rediscovered and updated classical drama, paving the way for authors such as William Shakespeare (1564-1616) or Jean Racine (1639-1699).[14]

In addition, many sixteenth-century Italian intellectuals wrote treatises on how to compose drama. In these treatises as well as in plays and their dedicatory letters, authors debated how drama should be written, and standards were set for elements such as the represented characters, place or time-frame. The cunning slave who acts as a helper to his young master in love, for example, is a dramatic role which was present in classical comedy and became a standard role in early modern comedy too.

11 Marzia Pieri, "La geografia dell'altro fra Cinque e Settecento," in *La maschera e l'altro*, ed. Maria Grazia Profeti (Florence: Alinea editrice, 2005), 302.

12 Jan Bloemendal, "Neo-Latin Drama," in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, ed. Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles E. Fantazzi (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

13 Marvin Theodore Herrick, *Italian Comedy in the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960); and Marvin Theodore Herrick, *Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965). Aulo Greco also seems to point at a certain conservatism in theatre when writing that drama around 1600 seems to feel the need to return to a "punto fermo", which it found in its once-disputed ancient models, while also welcoming elements true to its own modern reality such as the introduction of dialect in speech. See Aulo Greco, "I turchi tra storia e commedia," in *L'istituzione del teatro comico del Rinascimento*, ed. Aulo Greco (Naples: Liguori editore, 1976), 259.

14 Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios. The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Salvatore Di Maria, *The Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance. Cultural Realities and Theatrical Innovations* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2002); Salvatore Di Maria, *The Poetics of Imitation in the Italian Theatre of the Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

Second, the Ottoman Empire had become a major international player.[15] In 1453, the 'Turks' conquered Constantinople,[16] the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. This was a turning point in Western perceptions of the 'East'. The Ottomans were now considered *the* great political and military enemy, especially as they expanded both east- and westward under sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1494-1566). In 1529, they even advanced into the heart of Christian Europe by conquering a large part of Hungary and laying siege to Vienna.

In 1571, the Catholic victory at Lepanto offered a relief from this great threat but it did not end the military conflict. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Ottoman power gradually declined, Christian fear was replaced by an interest in the exotic Eastern world. But before 'exoticism', the Ottoman was by far the most significant 'other' with whom Christian Europeans confronted themselves and whom they wrote about – even more than about the newly discovered native Americans. We must keep in mind that reflections on the 'other' were often produced to reflect on and criticise one's own society (the 'self').[17]

When dealing with similar dynamics between 'West' and 'East', between 'self' and 'other', one inevitably encounters pioneering studies from postcolonial studies such as those by Edward W. Said or Homi K. Bhabha. In his book *Orientalism*, Said portrays the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western coloniser as dominating the colonised 'East'. For him, Orientalism is a Western way of controlling 'the Orient' by institutionally narrating, educating, and governing it.[18] In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha emphasises the ambivalent nature of stereotypes, which are

15 Tobias P. Graf rightly points out that the Ottoman sultans reigned a large part of the European continent during the Early Modern Period; he therefore proposes not to contrast the Ottoman Empire with Europe, and to indicate non-Ottoman European territories by the terms 'Christian Europe' or 'Christendom', though admitting that this is not ideal. One has only to think of the many mixed-religious regions throughout Europe, such as the Balkans. Following his suggestion, I have tried to avoid terms which indicate a dichotomy, such as 'East' or 'West', although for clarity's sake terms such as 'Western' or 'Oriental' are unavoidable. I distinguish, however, between the more general 'Christian' or 'Christendom', and the specific term 'Catholic', which is applicable to Venice and Italy as opposed to the Protestant territories. When explicitly alluding to the problematic use of these terms, or when using these terms in the context of early modern thought, I of course use single quotation marks. Graf raises the issue in *The Sultan's Renegades. Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xx.

16 In honour of Constantine, the Roman emperor, the ancient city of Byzantium was renamed Constantinople in the fourth century A.D. After the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when the city became the capital of the Ottoman Empire in 1457, both the names 'Kostantiniyye' and 'Islambol'/'Istanbul' ('full of Islam') were used interchangeably by the Ottomans, while Christian authors habitually still talked about 'Constantinople'. The name 'Istanbul' was only used exclusively and officially when the modern Republic of Turkey was founded in the 1920s. I use the name 'Constantinople' to refer to pre-Ottoman times, and 'Istanbul' to refer to the city after the Ottoman conquest.

17 See Verbaere, "'Turks.' Early modern opinions were largely divided between the promotion of a crusade, the promotion of pacifism, or the promotion of political analyses of the Ottoman Empire to understand this 'other', positions defended by respectively Martin Luther (1483-1546), Desiderius Erasmus (1466/9-1536) or Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527).

18 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 3.

intended to express the innate characteristics of the 'other', but at the same time need to be repeated in order to demonstrate the truth of this as 'given'.[19]

Scholars have indeed often focused on conflict or dialogue between 'the West' as opposed to 'the East', seeing early modern Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire as rivals locked in a political, religious, and cultural 'clash of civilisations'. Eric Dursteler distinguishes two currents within this dualistic model, which goes back to ancient times: firstly, studies on the political and diplomatic impact of the Ottoman threat and presence in Christianity, and, secondly, research on the image and perception created of the Ottomans. However, many scholars have also argued compellingly that postcolonial theory is not so easily applicable to the early modern world. Rather than being a world consisting of oppositions between 'colonised' and 'coloniser', 'East' and 'West', the Mediterranean was, as we shall see, a site of intensive transcultural exchange. Rather than being a 'coloniser', Christian Europeans felt inferior and afraid of the Ottomans; Western imperialism and superiority were out of the question.[20]

Though the *Serenissima* had accomplished great territorial and maritime expansion in the Quattro- and Cinquecento, monopolising Mediterranean trade, this was not to last. Both intra- and extra-Italian states turned against Venice. The 'Gate to the Orient' saw its possessions in Italy reduced, while the Ottomans threatened its Eastern territories. Sixteenth-century Venice was thus invested in maintaining itself territorially, politically, and economically. It lost power over the Mediterranean due to the Ottoman expansion and was cut off from the trade to the New World. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, with the gradual loss of possessions at the hands of the Ottomans, Venice's importance waned.[21] Though it was a maritime power and a blooming cultural centre which attracted internationally renowned writers, painters, musicians, and intellectuals, Venice was no match for the Ottoman Empire. In the Cinquecento, the balance of power was the reverse of the one in later centuries, as described by Said.

Nonetheless, as Robert Hornback rightly notes, the absence of an 'empire' does not entail that 'proto-racist' tendencies cannot be perceived in the Early

19 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 95.

20 James G. Harper, "Introduction," in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750. Visual Imagery Before Orientalism*, ed. James G. Harper (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 5 and 7; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 6-8. On the application of Said's *Orientalism* to the Early Modern Period, see for example Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Rolf Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento," in *Italien und das Osmanische Reich*, ed. Franziska Meier (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2013), 199-215; or Daniel J. Vitkus, *Turning Turk. English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), especially the introduction.

21 Moreover, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the pope started to meddle with the *Serenissima* and its territories, which further weakened the Republic. In 1797 Venice would lose its independence when Napoleon Bonaparte incorporated the state into the Austrian territories.

Modern Period. It also does not imply that an image of the 'other', or 'stranger' as Hornback calls it,[22] was created in opposition to the 'self'. Recent scholarship in so-called critical race studies has sought to investigate early modern racist behaviour, especially regarding the presence or representation of black Africans in Christian Europe. For example, Thomas F. Earle and Kate J.P. Lowe have shown that 'racist' attitudes can be perceived in the Early Modern Period, which led to sub-Saharan Africans being discriminated against, differentiated, or becoming victims of prejudice.

In the case of Muslims and Jews who lived as minority groups in Christian Europe, religion was often the cause for differentiation.[23] According to Hornback, 'proto-racism' originated especially out of moral or religious beliefs. Comic blackface traditions based on such beliefs, with their silly, lustful, or ignorant characters who are unable to speak clearly, reinforced 'proto-racist' notions.[24] Noémie Ndiaye has also recently studied how performers imitating sub-Saharan Africans attempted to *look* (through black make-up or 'black-up'), *speak* (through 'blackspeak') and *move* like them (through 'black dance'), problematising early modern performance practices and the racialised views of the 'other' they enacted.[25]

In Italy specifically, the word *razza* goes back to 1388.[26] Jaffe-Berg has argued that, in the early modern Italian peninsula and in Venice, *commedia dell'arte* performers enacted the 'other' or even employed Jewish or Ottoman performers to explore issues of migration and inclusion. At the same time, they pointed out in these performances how different these 'others' living in Venice were.[27] Jews and Muslims were frequently asked to perform together with Catholic actors, dancers or musicians. While Venice usually regulated dress through sumptuary laws, these 'others' were often authorised to dress in the same way. Their strangeness was what made them appealing, and they exploited it in order to sell themselves as

22 For Hornback, the 'stranger/self' binary is an early modern form of the later 'other/self' binary, demonstrating how postcolonial understandings are far from anachronistic when applied to the Early Modern Period. He also states that plundering nations already established a need to fashion themselves as imperial powers, and that this was enforced, as Ian Smith has written, in the English case because they were effectively weaker than the Ottomans. The English used imperial rhetoric to compensate their lack of power. See Robert Hornback, *Racism and Early Blackface Comic Traditions. From the Old World to the New* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 14, 17, 19-20.

23 Kate J.P. Lowe, "Introduction. The Black African Presence in Renaissance Europe," in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Thomas F. Earle and Kate J.P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8.

24 Hornback, *Racism and Early Blackface Comic Traditions*, 1-2, 24-25.

25 Noémie Ndiaye, *Scripts of Blackness. Early Modern Performance Culture and the Making of Race*, 1st edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).

26 Hornback, *Racism and Early Blackface Comic Traditions*, 21.

27 Erith Jaffe-Berg, "Migrations and Cultural Navigations on Early Modern Italian Stages," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Theatre and Migration*, ed. Yana Meerzon and Stephen Elliot Wilmer (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 268, 271.

performers.[28] Jews and Muslims participated in Christian rituals, or performed in their own rituals and holidays. Most of all, Jaffe-Berg shows how, through joint performances, different cultures could reflect on their changing socio-political situation and call into question segregating and belittling socio-political norms. Through performance, non-Catholic minorities and Venetians could find a model for how to live together while mutually profiting from each other.[29]

The oppositional model has also been questioned by scholars who stress that 'East' and 'West' are not homogeneous groups, as the first model assumes, but that perceptions of difference and belonging, identity, borders, and cultural interplay were flexible. They stress the existence of a 'global Renaissance', though James Harper notes that the reciprocal artistic influence was minimal, except for the case of the decorative arts. These scholars mitigate the image of the barbarous Ottoman. They underline that different portrayals of the Ottoman existed in the Early Modern Period, when, contrary to the Middle Ages, curiosity and a greater need for knowledge about the Ottoman was met by travellers, diplomats, and increasing book production.[30]

Harper and his contributors propose a useful flexible model in which the *beholder* defines the image of the 'other'. This image depends on three components: time; worldliness and social class, which are linked to geography; and geographic location, with its confessional and political connotations. First, the perception of the Ottoman was not uniform but subject to change over time. Second, one's social class and experiences – a cloistered nun in Flanders is no Venetian merchant captain – determined the portrayals of the Ottoman that a person consumed and how he or she imagined the Ottoman to be. Finally, states who were in the line of battle and most threatened, such as Venice, produced wicked portrayals of the Ottomans. However, Venice's commercial ties with them ensured that these coexisted with positive images. The vicinity also ensured more accurate observations. In this third model, 'the' image of the Ottoman does not exist. It was moulded by multiple voices, each with their own views on the Orientals.[31] This middle-ground perspective proves useful for the present work, in that it considers the voices of various authors originating from the Venetian Republic, each with their own background. As we will see, some of them were in contact with Ottoman subjects, while others possibly fought them or wrote texts on the 'Turk'.

28 Erith Jaffe-Berg, "*Ebrei* and *Turchi* Performing in Early Modern Venice and Mantua," in *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. M.A. Katritzky and Pavel Drábek (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 226.

29 Jaffe-Berg, "*Ebrei* and *Turchi* Performing in Early Modern Venice and Mantua," 240-41.

30 Harper, "Introduction," 5-7; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 8-9. See also Rothman, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul*, especially the introduction for considerations on the need for transregional studies in light of these perspectives.

31 Harper, "Introduction," 7-11.

Before turning to the authors and works which will be investigated in this thesis, let us consider what has already been written about 'Turkish theatre' in sixteenth-century Italy. Scholars have taken the entire Italian peninsula into account and have generally considered 'Turkish plays' from three interconnected viewpoints.[32] First of all, they hint at the problem of *imitatio*, discerning conservative or creative attitudes. Secondly, they detect diverging political aims in Italian 'Turkish plays', ranging from propaganda to self-criticism. Finally, they study the literary representations of the Ottoman and to what extent he is portrayed as familiar to or different from other characters, and how he reflects the reality of Italian contact with the Oriental world.

In doing so, certain aspects have been neglected. Dramatic treatises published at the time which may reflect on the representation of the 'other' are hardly discussed, nor has the way in which the 'other' is presented in early modern spectacle been considered, or the role that the Ottoman assumes among the cast of early modern dramatic characters. Thus, scholarship seems not yet to have thoroughly evaluated the cultural construction of the image of the Ottoman and the ways in which Ottomans and Christian Europeans are portrayed on the Italian stage.

Let us first flesh out what has already been written on Italian 'Turkish theatre'. I will start by considering the hints that scholars have given of the creativity or, conversely, conservativeness with regard to their sources and dramatic theory, which introduce the problem of *imitatio*. *Imitatio* was an enormous issue for medieval and early modern authors, which took into account inspiration from both ancient and vernacular literary models. Unlike today, *imitatio* was the dominant mechanism to create art and literature. However, heated debates took place on how to imitate these models, such as regarding whether to follow one or more models, or whether to adhere to the rules of the classics or to modernise drama.

Scholars of Italian 'Turkish plays' hint at the dynamism or conservatism by which different works regarded their exemplars. Apart from Di Maria, the only author who has analysed a 'Turkish play' – Luigi Groto's *Emilia* – next to its source, scholars rarely refer to the playwrights' use of sources.[33] They generally

32 In what follows, I will very briefly trace the three currents I perceive in scholarship. I will elaborate further on scholarly discussions of my corpus' plays when tackling the plays themselves.

33 Studies of the Italian 'Turkish plays' which mention authors' use of sources beyond Aristotle's *Poetics*, are: Salvatore Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*. Fiction Meets Reality," in *The Poetics of Imitation in the Italian Theatre of the Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 84-104; Tessa C. Gurney, "Echoes of Wartime in Late Sixteenth-Century Italian Comedy," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 24, no. 1 (2018): 155-74; Tessa C. Gurney, "Slavery, Subalternity, Empire. Performing the Multicultural Mediterranean in Italian Comedy" (PhD dissertation, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016); Corinne Lucas, "Jeux de miroirs entre Bude et Venise dans la *Tragedia* de Daniele Barbaro,"

note similarities or differences in connection with Aristotle's *Poetics*, the main theoretical work which early modern authors used to compose drama. For example, Corinne Lucas-Fiorato notes that Giusti cannot, in his *Irene*, make it a truly Aristotelian tragedy since he avoids the essential question of the political guilt of the slaughter which takes place at the end of the play.[34]

As Lucas-Fiorato also shows, the analysis of authors' dynamism has a political side as well. A second group of studies highlights that literature was written, and literary models were rewritten, to fit a certain ideology which was acceptable to church and state. They explore the ways in which tragedy questions the morals of the Ottomans,[35] uses propaganda and participates in political discussions or criticises political actions,[36] or alternatively, as Cosentino adds, propagates the ideals of Catholic martyrdom.[37] Comedy in this light is seen as a belligerent, patriotic and multicultural genre, but also as one that has cathartic and escapist functions. It offers a harmless strategy to put the (sexually deviant) Oriental on stage,[38] a way for the militarily inferior Christian Europeans to safely and symbolically critique the enemy,[39] or to bring about catharsis through laughter so that spectators can rid themselves of the horrors of war and rebuild their lives.[40] The Ottoman becomes a figure which allows every stage action and plot to enter the realms of possibility.

Finally, the secondary literature also investigates how Ottomans and Oriental objects are familiar to and different from Italians on stage. Some scholars have

in *Discours littéraires et pratiques politiques*, ed. Adelin Charles Fiorato (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1987), 61-88; Corinne Lucas-Fiorato, "Tragédie des hommes de paille. Daniele Barbaro, Vincenzo Giusti, Valerio Fuligni," in *Guerre di religione sulle scene del Cinque-Seicento*, ed. Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio (Rome: Torre d'Orfeo, 2006), 79-106; and Daria Perocco, "Turchi in commedia. In Italia fra la fine del Cinquecento e l'inizio del Seicento," in *Sûzişât-i mü' ellefe. Contaminazioni e spigolature turcologiche. Scritti in onore di Giampiero Bellingeri*, ed. Vera Costantini and Matthias Kappler (Crocetta del Montello: Terra Ferma, 2010), 275-84.

34 Lucas-Fiorato, "Tragédie des hommes de paille," 89.

35 Pieri, "La geografia dell'altro fra Cinque e Settecento"; Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento."

36 Valeria Cimmieri, "The Performative Power of Diplomatic Discourse in the Italian Tragedies Inspired by the Wars Against the Turks," in *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power. The Making of Peace*, ed. Nathalie Rivère de Carles (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 93-112; Renzo Cremante, "Appunti sul tema della guerra, ed in particolare della guerra d'Oriente, nella tragedia italiana del Cinquecento," in *Guerre di religione sulle scene del Cinque-Seicento*, ed. Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio (Rome: Torre d'Orfeo, 2006), 121-38; Lucas-Fiorato, "Tragédie des hommes de paille."

37 Paola Cosentino, "Attorno all'assedio di Famagosta. La scrittura tragica e la storia contemporanea," in *Cyprus and the Renaissance. 1450-1650*, ed. Benjamin Arbel, Evelien Chayes, and Harald Hendrix (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 273-96.

38 Stefano Agostino Moretti, "Vestite alla turchesca. Travestimenti, alterità e desiderio nel teatro comico del Seicento," *Studi secenteschi* 52 (2011): 69-85; Pieri, "La geografia dell'altro fra Cinque e Settecento."

39 Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento."

40 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*"; Greco, "I turchi tra storia e commedia"; Gurney, "Slavery, Subalternity, Empire. Performing the Multicultural Mediterranean in Italian Comedy"; Gurney, "Echoes of Wartime in Late Sixteenth-Century Italian Comedy"; Pieri, "La geografia dell'altro fra Cinque e Settecento."

analysed the Turkish language reproduced in Italian comedy. For example, Gallotta underscores the correctness of the Turkish used by Giovanni Battista Della Porta's comedies, asserting that he probably availed himself of an Ottoman or convert to report a nearly perfect dialogue in Turkish.[41] Bülent Ayyildiz writes that the Turkish language was probably known to the Venetians. According to Ayyildiz, Andrea Calmo used Ottoman elements to display reality, create a comic effect, and impress his spectators, hold their attention, and stir their emotions.[42] Perocco asserts that the Turkish spoken in comedy adds to the 'otherness' of the Ottomans, but also testifies to their status of normality. Perocco and Pieri, in fact, both insist on the normality of the Ottomans appearing in Italian comedy, while Moretti adds that comedy freely described the Italians' commercial contact with Islam.

Erith Jaffe-Berg underlines that close contacts between Christian Europe and Eastern territories ensured that Oriental places, objects, languages, and figures became central to *commedia dell'arte*. This dramatic form thus reflected the interests and concerns of the Italian audience that was often exposed to foreigners. She even contends that, because of their significant presence in *commedia dell'arte*, Ottoman Turkish, Armenian, Arab, Romani or Greek characters may be regarded as important secondary character types. Moretti and Perocco further note that tragedy displayed a clash of civilizations and a 'cruel Turk'. Again, 'otherness' allowed authors to explore unacceptable themes. Ottomans on stage excited fascination in the spectator for the exotic and horror of the pirate-slash-barbarian, while at the same time reassuring him that a far-away reality was being portrayed.[43]

Indeed, many scholars of the Early Modern Period concur that the Ottomans were perceived as a threatening and difficult enemy to defeat. Lohse argues that negative depictions of Ottomans in drama originated from the fear of military defeat,[44] while imagological studies, which investigate national stereotypes, show that stereotypes are constructed intertextually rather than founded on solid realities.[45]

41 Aldo Gallotta, "L'elemento turchesco nelle commedie *La sorella* e *La turca*," in *Edizione nazionale delle opere di Giovan Battista della Porta. Teatro. Terzo tomo. Commedie* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche, 2002), 511.

42 Bülent Ayyildiz, "Un veneziano tra le lingue ovvero il turco sulla scena veneziana di Andrea Calmo," *Scaffale Aperto. Rivista di Italianistica* 12 (2021): 110-14.

43 Erith Jaffe-Berg, "After the Laughter Dies Down. Middle Eastern 'Foreigners' in the Commedia Dell'Arte," *Scripta Mediterranea* 29 (2008): 37-50; Erith Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia Dell'Arte and the Mediterranean. Charting Journeys and Mapping 'Others'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2019); Moretti, "Vestite alla turchesca. Travestimenti, alterità e desiderio nel teatro comico del Seicento"; Perocco, "Turchi in commedia. In Italia fra la fine del Cinquecento e l'inizio del Seicento"; Pieri, "La geografia dell'altro fra Cinque e Settecento."

44 Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento."

45 For an introduction to imagology, see Manfred Beller and Joseph Theodoor Leerssen, eds., *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007).

This brings us, of course, to the question of identity, the dynamic between the 'self' and the 'other'. Besides studying the portrayal of the Ottoman in sixteenth-century Venetian drama, *"Friend" or "Infernal Monster"?* also examines whether the plays under investigation consider their own Venetian society or identity when describing the 'other'. It is indeed generally acknowledged that constructing a view of the 'other' entails constructing a view of the 'self', and that the characteristics of the 'self' and the 'other' are mutually exclusive.[46]

Though scholars agree that Venetians had a strong sense of identity, the unity of this identity has been questioned. Early modern identity is today understood as a highly fluid and socially invented construction. Other than factors such as gender, clothing, social status, a shared sense of affiliation or a common past, traditions, profession, or, most importantly, family, two additional markers crucially contributed to a group or individual's identity. The first is their religion and the second is their 'nations', meaning their origination from a shared place or their residence abroad under the protection of a state or city. Dursteler emphasises that identity was not simply made up of these elements but was multi-layered and the result of choices made by an individual. One's origins were potentially more important than one's religious and political affiliations. Contemporaries experienced such fluidity and ambivalence of identities, being acquainted and perhaps even at ease with it.

The Venetians themselves did not care much for religious crusades since they needed the Ottoman: after Lepanto, the senate famously declared "Prima semo veneziani, poi cristiani". But the Republic, which stretched out from Bergamo to Cyprus and Crete, encompassed great geographic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. Its inhabitants did not necessarily identify solely or at all with the political state they pertained to. For example, nobles from Cyprus and Crete openly supported the Ottoman invasion to escape what they viewed as Venetian oppression. The Venetian government was very much aware of such tensions.[47]

At the same time, through the 'Myth of Venice' the Venetians replicated an image of power which reinforced their identity. Venice created an image of itself as an extraordinary city, predestined by God and blessed by Saint Mark to obtain privileges such as wealth, divine favour, and freedom. The Republic was depicted as a politically stable state thanks to its hierarchical structure, in contrast with the chaos of other Italian states, especially Florence.[48] This myth was consciously

46 See for example Barzman, *The Limits of Identity*, 262; Beller and Leerssen, *Imagology*, especially 3-16; or Formica, *Lo specchio turco*, 4-5.

47 For these paragraphs up to this point, see Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 10-19.

48 Edward Muir, "The Myth of Venice," in *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 13-61; Eric R. Dursteler, "Introduction. A Brief Survey of Histories of Venice," in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1-24. A counter-

expressed in public life, through architecture, civic rituals, paintings or music. Venice was one of the great cultural centres of Christian Europe. It boasted the University of Padua, one of the great early modern universities. Moreover, Venice was one of the greatest centres of book production and had a flourishing literary scene. Bronwen Wilson asserts that the rise of print culture was an important contributor to the shaping of Venetian identity. She states that print brought images of Venetians themselves, the world and foreigners to Venetians' everyday life, who increasingly defined themselves through contact with 'others'.[49]

Aside from being a great centre of book production and public spectacle to promote Venetian identity, Venice was also the principal centre of the production of sixteenth-century 'Turkish theatre'. Besides the four 'Turkish tragedies' and the eight 'Turkish comedies' which I have identified for my corpus, all written by Venetians, I was able to trace only one other sixteenth-century tragedy *L'Almerigo* (ca. 1590) by Gabriele Zinani, who was from Reggio Emilia. Another comedy, *La stiava* (1550) by Giovanni Maria Cecchi from Florence, stages no Ottoman characters but only mentions them. The centre of gravity for sixteenth-century 'Turkish theatre' was clearly Venice.

On the contrary, in the Seicento many 'Turkish plays' were produced by non-Venetian authors. We find one tragedy by Prospero Bonarelli, also from Reggio Emilia (Novellara), entitled *Il Solimano* (1620). Nine seventeenth-century comedies have Ottoman and Moorish[50] themes: the Neapolitan Della Porta's *La*

myth about Venice as a dictatorial regime was also created, and both myth and countermyth influenced modern studies on Venice and Venetian politics. See the state of the art in John Martin and Dennis Romano, "Reconsidering Venice," in *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, ed. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore (Md.): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1-35.

49 Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 4-6.

50 The difference between 'Moor' and 'Turk' as used in the Early Modern Period is not always easy to draw. As noted earlier, 'Turk' could signify 'ethnic Turk', 'subject of the Ottoman Empire', 'Muslim', or any combination of these meanings. 'Moor' is also a term with various connotations. It could signify a Muslim of North African origins, and was in this sense very close to the term 'Turk' when denoting a 'Muslim'. But 'Moor' could also indicate persons of sub-Saharan African origins, who were often Muslims. In its most specific meaning, 'Moor' could refer to the inhabitants of the Maghreb or Morocco. As Paul H.D. Kaplan has shown, Venetian art often depicts 'black Turks', thus displaying both Ottomans with strong Semitic traits such as aquiline noses or pronounced African traits such as the stereotyped thick lips or short curly hair. This may have been a practice to clearly mark the Ottoman 'otherness', to showcase the varied ethnicity of the Ottoman Empire's populace, to allude to black slaves in the Ottoman sultan's palace, or, strangely, to allude to African slaves present in Venetian society, thus focusing on the similarities between Ottoman and Venetian society. See Paul H.D. Kaplan, "Black Turks. Venetian Artists and Perceptions of Ottoman Ethnicity," in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750. Visual Imagery Before Orientalism*, ed. James G. Harper (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 55-56. Kate Lowe has researched terminology related to slavery and black Africans in the Venetian archives, and concurs that the term *moro* is ambiguous. It often seems to have stood for 'black African': "Visible Lives. Black Gondoliers and Other Black Africans in Renaissance Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2013): 415-19. Our attention is, however, drawn to the fact that in many Italian areas a *moro* or *moro nero* is not necessarily black. A person denoted in

sorella (1604), *La turca* (1606), and *Il moro* (1607); the Senese Giovanni Battista Petrucci's *Il moro* (1609); the Florentine Giovanni Battista Andreini's *La turca* (1611), *Lo schiavetto* (1612), and *La sultana* (1622); the Ferrarese Pier Maria Cecchini's *Flaminia schiava* (1612); *La fida turca* (1614) by Giovanni Villifranchi from Volterra; and the Roman Giovanni Battista Pianelli's *Li falsi mori* (1638). Moreover, many Seicento *commedia dell'arte* scenarios present Orientalising themes.[51]

Studying Cinquecento Venetian 'Turkish theatre' is, thus, justified not only by the exceptional nature of Christian-Muslim relationships in the sixteenth century, but also by Venice's uniqueness as a cosmopolitan and cultural centre, and by the Republic's distinct monopoly on the production of 'Turkish theatre' at the time. My corpus[52] comprises all twelve 'Turkish plays' written by sixteenth-century Venetian authors I was able to trace: nine comedies (Aretino, *Talanta*, 1542; Dolce, *Fabritia*, 1549; Calmo, *Rodiana*, 1553; Calmo, *Il Travaglia*, 1556; Groto, *Emilia*, 1579; Calderari, *La mora*, 1588; Calderari, *La schiava*, 1589; and Loredano, *La turca*, 1597) and four tragedies (Barbaro, *Tragedia*, ca. 1541-1548; Giusti, *Irene*, 1579; Mondella, *Isifile*, 1582; and Fuligni, *Bragadino*, 1589).

These plays have been singled out because their authors pertain to the Venetian cultural sphere, and because their *dramatis personae* contain Ottomans or Italians disguised as Ottomans. Their publication dates were also fundamental in my selection: I have focused on the sixteenth century, when Venice dominated the production of 'Turkish theatre', when the clash with the Ottomans reached its peak with Lepanto in 1571, and when Venice was notoriously seen as 'the Whore of the Turk' for continuing to trade with this enemy of the Western world.

The chronological range of the corpus, 1541-1597, is explained by the plays: Daniele Barbaro's *Tragedia* (written between 1541 and 1548) puts an Ottoman character on stage for the first time, and the last 'Turkish play' under scrutiny was published in 1597. The twelve plays produced within this time-frame have been studied only partially, but never as a whole. Scholars have preferred the tragedies, and the comedies have remained largely neglected. Only Groto's comedy *Emilia* has been somewhat thoroughly researched, but it has not received as much attention as the tragedies.

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this way may well be a North African with a darker skin. A *nero* is not necessarily always black, but a *negro* is. See Thomas F. Earle and Kate J.P. Lowe, eds., *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xvi.

51 See Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia Dell'Arte and the Mediterranean*; Jaffe-Berg, "After the Laughter Dies Down."

52 For my own corpus, I have excluded *commedia dell'arte* scenarios because it is impossible to establish their provenance and dating. The only scenarios that, to my knowledge, are contextualised in Venice with certainty are the so-called *scenari Correr*, but they probably date from the seventeenth century. See Carmelo Alberti, ed., *Gli scenari Correr. La commedia dell'arte a Venezia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1996).

Apart from Pietro Aretino, who was born in Arezzo but spent half of his life in Venice and had a major influence on Venetian drama, the authors of Venetian 'Turkish theatre' hailed from the Republic's heartland: Vicenza, Verona, Adria, Udine and the *dominante* Venice itself. The authors are all male but come from very different backgrounds, as we will see in Chapter 3: while someone like Aretino comes from humble origins, Calmo is middle class, and Daniele Barbaro was a cleric. These authors lived through events such as the siege of Buda (1541), the battle of Lepanto (1571) and the Council of Trent (1545-1563). They wrote in a complex context, in which Venice showed herself to be ambiguous toward the Ottoman. As such, this work engages with multiple authorial voices from a large area of the Venetian Republic. Their voices will allow us to piece together a Venetian construction of the Ottoman figure and the preoccupations of these Venetian authors themselves.

We can assume that, to these Venetian intellectuals, the Ottoman was probably not a wicked flat character; rather, he contributed to Venice's economical and politico-military significance. Moreover, the contact with the Ottoman through images and books played a role in creating a Venetian identity. Dialogic texts and events like dramatic performances may also have raised issues about the *Serenissima*'s exchange with the Ottomans. They may even have cultivated a partisan veneration of the Venetian state, particularly in the Venetian Republic due to its lack of an aristocrat head of state.[53]

More importantly, being a very popular genre, drama likely contributed to the idea which the Venetian shaped of himself and the Ottoman. Though I agree with Harper's 'multivocal model' which considers each author as the creator of a personal idea of the Ottoman, I also wish to study these dramas as a group of texts which can show us a sense of *venezianità* ('Venetian-ness') in Venetian 'Turkish theatre', since this corpus has never been studied as a collective entity. Karen-edis Barzman defines 'Venetian-ness' as an awareness and image of a collective Venetian identity. This identity was Catholic, patriotic, and mainly imagined, constructed, and performed in contrast with the Islamic East.[54]

We presume that Venetian 'Turkish theatre', like literature in general, created an image of the Ottoman and the 'self'. It is possible to conjecture that the representations of the 'other' and the 'self' in these dramas were consciously shaped. To create characterisations of the 'other' and the 'self', authors expressed their own ideas in their works. This demanded an intervention on the part of the

53 Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios*, 123; Giorgio Padoan, *La commedia rinascimentale veneta (1433-1565)* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1982), 31-32, 209.

54 Barzman, *The Limits of Identity*, 1–2 and 203.

authors concerning their literary models, as well as the standard dramatic roles which dominated early modern theatre.

These interventions can teach us something about authors' attitudes towards the Ottoman, and about the function of entertainment in shaping their own identity and that of the 'other'. I expect that the images created of the 'other' and the 'self' are not black-and-white. By studying the plays, their cultural contexts, and the theoretical treatises written on drama, we will be able to better understand how the Venetians shaped their representations of the Ottoman, and how, in turn, they reflected on their own society.

In other words, I hypothesise, first of all, that the Venetians shaped a certain idea of the Ottoman and their own community through drama, and, second, that to create this idea in drama, authors reshaped their literary models, and the standard character roles present in their works.

I have formulated four research questions to test these hypotheses. First, what ideas on the characters and costumes of the Ottomans existed in Venice, how were they represented in literature and spectacle, and do we find these ideas in sixteenth-century Venetian drama? Second, are the standard comic and tragic roles in early modern drama adapted when the characters 'turn Turk'? Third, do we find hints concerning the performance of the Ottoman in the plays, and does this performance have an influence on the image of the Ottoman? Fourth, do the plays reflect on Venetian society or Venetian identity ('Venetian-ness'), and, if so, how?

To answer these questions, I adopt a source-based approach, closely reading the texts and paratexts, and I take into account the plays' historical and cultural contexts. The historical context naturally involves considering Venice's political and military contacts with the Ottomans. But we also need to be mindful of theoretical considerations – which can be found in treatises and in paratextual material –, conventions of the dramatic genre, performative practices, and the background of and connections between the authors. Besides considering theoretical texts, my approach will focus on authors' innovative or conservative attitude regarding their literary models. When reading the plays in depth, it is important to keep in mind that the Ottoman reflects on the Venetian and to study the 'mirror game' that takes place between the 'other' and the 'self'.

It is beyond the scope of this work to delve into the theatrical practice of the representation of the Ottomans, nor is this an archival piece of research. My approach is a textual-philological and literary-historical one, pursued from the perspective of literary drama studies. Thus, I will study the performance device only in as far as it is present in the texts and paratexts of the plays under study.

First of all, it is difficult to unearth materials from the sixteenth century. Unlike today, no reviews of plays were printed in newspapers to give us concrete information about a performance. A cursory look at the catalogue *Serenissimi teatri* published by the Archivio di Stato di Venezia or the publications on the Teatro Olimpico by Antonio Ranzolin and Stefano Mazzoni reveals no archival material concerning actual performances.[55]

It should also be noted that references to performance are few in the early modern prints under discussion. These sixteenth-century Venetian 'Turkish plays' are not like the seventeenth-century 'Turkish plays' by Andreini, a professional actor from Florence who explained how his plays should be practically staged and which props should be used. The Venetian title pages, paratexts or play texts of the selected corpus hardly offer concrete information. If they do, they usually just mention the date or location of the first performance. Hardly any stage indications can be found in the texts themselves.

However, some conjectures can be made based on the dramatic texts and paratexts, as we shall see in the case of Calderari's *La mora*. I will also offer a broad panorama, based on the secondary literature and some relevant primary sources, of the dramatic practices regarding the 'other' and the Ottoman. Moreover, where relevant, I will guide the reader through the use of visual images that illustrate the presence and representation of the Ottoman in Christian European, Italian and Venetian society and drama. Based on the secondary literature and texts and images from the period available to us, I will try to make some minor suggestions on performance practices where possible. However, the corpus texts, complete with their limitations, remain the core of this study. My focus remains the representation of the 'Turk' in the sixteenth-century Venetian dramatic *text* and *paratext*.

To discover which ideas circulated on the 'Turk' and which performative practices centred around the Ottoman, this work opens with a diptych of two chapters. The first is an overview of the Veneto-Ottoman relations. This overview not only traces the wars between the two partners and the peace treaties that ensued, but also draws a picture of the 'permeable Mediterranean'. In doing so, it identifies the figures that populated and travelled this dynamic geographical area, and it establishes the changing ideas and positive and negative stereotypes that circulated about the Ottoman in books and among the Venetians.

55 Michela Dal Borgo, *Serenissimi teatri. Attività teatrale a Venezia tra legislazione e spettacolo (secoli XVI-XIX). Catalogo mostra documentaria (Venezia, Archivio di Stato, 13-21 febbraio 2012)* (Venice: Archivio di Stato, 2012); Stefano Mazzoni, *L'Olimpico di Vicenza. Un teatro e la sua "perpetua memoria"* (Florence: Le lettere, 1998); Antonio Ranzolin, *L'archivio storico dell'Accademia Olimpica conservato presso la Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana (sec. XVI-XIX)* (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1989).

The second part of the diptych analyses theories and practices of performance regarding the 'other'. The first part of this chapter traces views found in sixteenth-century theoretic treatises on how the Ottoman should be represented in drama, and what effects the exotic 'other' has on the public. The second part then offers an overview of the types of early modern spectacle in which the Ottoman or Moor made an appearance, and the shapes which this figure took. In the final part of this chapter, the dramatic genre is discussed in detail. This subsection first presents the major literary sources for early modern drama. It explores how and in what roles the 'other' is represented in these literary models, and compares these roles to the roles in which the Ottoman appears in sixteenth-century 'Turkish theatre'. The second and final subsection of this chapter gives an overview of how the Ottoman is represented in theatrical performances.

The third, fourth and fifth chapters form a triptych, which zooms in on Venetian 'Turkish theatre'. The third chapter presents the corpus of twelve plays: Aretino's *Talanta* (1542), Barbaro's *Tragedia* (ca. 1541-1548), Dolce's *Fabritia* (1549), Calmo's *Rodiana* (1553) and *Il Travaglia* (1556), Giusti's *Irene* (1579), Groto's *Emilia* (1579), Mondella's *Isifile* (1582), Calderari's *La mora* (1588) and *La schiava* (1589), Fuligni's *Bragadino* (1589), and Loredano's *La turca* (1597). For each play, the biography of its author is discussed, with a focus on his literary and dramatic production and his link with or interest in the Ottoman theme (or lack thereof). The number of editions and dedicatory letters or laudatory poems contained in the front matter of the dramas' editions are also discussed. Each description closes with a short account of the play's contents. A closing paragraph also draws attention to how interconnected the authors were. This section is followed by an introduction to the fourth and fifth chapter, in which the classical roles of early modern comedy and tragedy, such as the *innamorato* or the tyrant, are explained, and their characteristics are explored, so that the way in which the authors of 'Turkish theatre' potentially rewrite these roles can be adequately evaluated. I also put into place the principal questions that will guide my analysis in these final chapters.

The fourth and fifth chapters are structured according to the roles in which the Ottoman is cast. The fourth chapter is subdivided into characters who disguise themselves as Ottomans, and in characters who *are* Ottomans, and according to the comic roles and conditions of the characters: the lover, the convert, the female 'other', and the merchant. The final chapter revolves around Ottoman characters who are connected to war, both in comedy and in tragedy: the sultan, the messenger, the captain, and the soldier. Through a thematic analysis, these chapters seek to establish answers to the four research questions: what ideas on costume and character does 'Turkish theatre' display; does the Ottoman change the role in which he appears; is performance emphasised – and how – in 'Turkish theatre'; and do we find explicit considerations on the authors' own Venetian society?

In the conclusions, the results of the preceding investigation are summarised. Answers to the four main research questions are given, and a consideration of the research hypotheses is summarised. To my knowledge, this is the first time in which 'Turkish plays' are tackled in detail in combination with ideas on drama and the Ottoman from spectacular representations and theoretical texts.

However, 'Turkish theatre' can be viewed from various angles and many possibilities for studying 'Turkish drama' remain open. For example, one can consider the plays from the viewpoint of popularising sixteenth-century literature and images on the Ottomans, conduct archival research to supplement the textual material, study a broader corpus from all over the Italian peninsula rather than my Venetian corpus, or include *commedia dell'arte* and examine how professional actors rendered the Ottoman and the Italian 'self'. My focus, by contrast, is limited to the dramatic texts, their paratexts, and pertinent dramatic treatises, and I have inserted relevant images to help the reader to imagine how performing the 'other' worked and enhance the textual analysis. However, even by operating from the 'inside' of the genre – by focusing on theatre and theoretical treatises – and by offering an accompaniment of illustrations, I believe that this work offers an innovative take on the 'Turk' in early modern drama, a subject which has remained quite understudied in an Italian context.

By considering the case of Venice, I hope to present a coherent history of the creation of the image of an 'other' and the reflection on Venetian society which is surprisingly similar to dynamics which permeate our lives today.



CHAPTER ONE

THE OTTOMAN IN VENICE

1 FAITHFUL 'FRENEMIES'

For all Christian Europeans, the Ottoman or 'Turk' was *the* most important 'other', taking precedence even over the newly discovered American indigenous population. To Catholics and Protestants, the Ottoman symbolised wickedness; to the early modern man he was the Persian who had opposed the Greeks in ancient times, or an admired example of how to organise one's own state; to Rome he was the infidel enemy to be defeated in crusades; and to Venice he was an infidel trade partner which ensured the *Serenissima*'s survival.[1] Especially from the viewpoint of the ruling classes, economic and political considerations generally outweighed religious ones ("Prima semo veneziani, poi cristiani").[2]

At the same time, the perceptions of the Ottoman were extremely multifaceted both in Christian Europe and in the Venetian Republic, and were influenced by both political, social, cultural, and religious factors. Moreover, in Venice specifically, the leading Italian printing centre, the sixteenth century saw an explosion of literature and discussion around the Ottoman population. This chapter sketches the general impressions of the Ottoman in the *Serenissima*.

> IMAGE 2 – People dressed in Oriental style in the background of Vittore Carpaccio's *Miracle of the Relic of the Holy Cross at the Rialto Bridge*, 1494-1496, tempera and oil on canvas, 371 x 392 cm (detail of) – © Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia – G.A.VE – Archivio fotografico – *su concessione del Ministero della Cultura*, cat. 566

In doing so, it is important to bear in mind that the image of the Ottoman is closely connected to external influences such as politics. As Cecilia Gibellini writes regarding Lepanto, changing ideological perceptions also means changing the shape of the 'other' and the 'self'. When Venice first celebrated Lepanto in 1571, it was celebrating the Ottoman defeat, but when in 1573 the Venetians

1 Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy*, 5-10.

2 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 12.

signed a peace treaty with the sultan, the *Serenissima* had to adapt how the Republic positioned herself *vis à vis* the Ottoman.[3]

To become familiar with the background against which Venetian 'Turkish theatre' was written, it is important to delineate, first of all, Ottoman-Venetian political, military and diplomatic relationships. Second, to understand the Ottoman *personaggi* that will be created in Venetian 'Turkish theatre', it is essential to investigate what types of Ottomans the Venetians had dealings with – since these will eventually be turned into dramatic characters –, and the literary culture and stereotypes concerning this 'other'.

Let us begin with the historical background. From the moment when the Ottomans had advanced into Christian Europe after the fall of Constantinople and became a power to be reckoned with, the Republic of Venice decided that they should be 'frenemies'. Their trade relationship had begun long before 1453 and was maintained well into the Seicento. Since the *Serenissima* was especially dependent on Eastern trade to keep its economy going, and since the Ottomans found trade with Venice important even though it was for them a more marginal economic activity, they reciprocally did their best to be on friendly terms.

Though it was in their interests to diplomatically pit Christian European states and the Ottomans against one another, the Venetian leaders sensed the Venetian debilitation in the sixteenth-century Italian political landscape. The Ottomans had become *the* power in the Mediterranean, and the Venetian elite understood the importance of good relations with the Ottoman government to maintain their politico-economic strength.[4]

Venice was often criticised by other Christian European states for this *Realpolitik*. However, Venice was not the only one. Noble dynasties such as the Gonzaga family of Mantua sought friendly connections with the Ottomans. Even the French king Charles VIII took prince Cem, a pretender to the Ottoman throne, to France in 1483, thus collaborating with sultan Bayezid to keep him away from the Ottoman court in exchange for large sums of money. The Ottoman Empire, too, was not Venice's only ally; the Republic regularly formed alliances with the Persian shahs against the Ottomans, among other things. Margaret Meserve has also stressed how Italian humanists lauded certain Islamic empires that they considered possible allies against the Ottomans.[5]

Though Venice tried to avoid a 'total' or 'holy' war, skirmishes with the Ottomans were very frequent, and on several occasions the allies found themselves

3 Cecilia Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto. La celebrazione della vittoria nella letteratura e nell'arte veneziana* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2008), 11.

4 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 4-6.

5 Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2008), 10–12.

at war. The first of these was the failed crusade in 1396, in which Venice participated. Venice again fought the Ottomans from 1415 to 1419, winning the battle at Gallipoli in 1416; and from 1423 to 1430 after Venice occupied Thessaloniki. In 1453, the Venetians helped defend Constantinople against the Ottomans. Seven other occasions are defined as the Ottoman-Venetian wars,[6] lasting from 1463 to 1479; 1499 to 1503; 1537 to 1540; 1570 to 1573 (the 'war of Cyprus'); 1645 to 1669 (the 'war of Candia' (Crete)); from 1684 to 1699 (the 'war of Morea'); and from 1714 to 1718. These last two wars were concluded, respectively, with the treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz.

Dursteler has emphasised how periods of hostility were brief and rare, considering the overall peace between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire from 1500 to 1797.[7] Before the sixteenth century began, however, events other than the Ottoman-Venetian wars took place which helped to define the Venetian idea of the Ottomans.[8]

A year after the confrontation at Istanbul in 1453, an agreement was signed between Venice and the sultan Mehmed II 'the Conqueror' (r.1444-1446 and 1451-1481), but in 1470 the Ottomans took the Venetian island of Negroponte, part of modern-day Greece. Closer to home, in the Friuli region, which belonged to Venice and bordered on the Ottoman territories, the Ottomans made incursions from 1469 to 1478 and in 1499. Fearing further attacks, Venice tried to avoid the conflict and did not contend Mehmed II's Italian territorial aspirations. This in turn led to the conquest of Neapolitan Otranto in 1480, for example. A peace between Venice and the Ottomans was eventually signed in 1502.

However, to the Venetian populace the incursions into Friuli had been traumatising.[9] After the fall of Constantinople, these raids made the Venetian government and its citizens even more anxious about Ottoman expansion; they gradually saw themselves as inferior to the Ottoman military and naval power.[10]

In 1509, when Venice lost the battle of Agnadello (today in Lombardy) against the League of Cambrai, which contested the great expansion of the Venetian territories and wealth, the Venetian senators even considered calling to aid the Ottoman sultan. In 1512, the sultan Bayezid II (r.1481-1512) was forced to

6 Benjamin Arbel nuances the common idea of seven Ottoman-Venetian wars and underlines there were in fact eleven: "Venice's Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period," in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 199.

7 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 6.

8 For these events, I have followed the *cronologia* in Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, 293-300.

9 It was viewed as being committed by the Ottomans, though evidence has shown that many invaders were really Christians who hailed from the Balkans but lived within the Ottoman empire; see Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, 55-60, 257-58.

10 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 17-18.

abdicate in favour of Selim I after an internal war for the throne. Selim I (r.1512-1520) renewed former agreements with Venice in 1513 and 1517.

The new sultan Süleyman I 'the Magnificent' (r.1520-1566), whose reign heralded a great expansion of the Ottoman Empire and an artistic, literary and philosophical boom, confirmed the peace between Venice and the Ottomans again in 1521. But in 1537-1540 a new Ottoman-Venetian war ensued concerning the maritime routes; a Holy League was formed and defeated in 1538 at the Ottoman city of Preveza in modern-day Greece by the Ottoman grand admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa. A new peace was signed in 1540. According to Maria Pia Pedani, the Ottoman maritime hegemony of the Mediterranean began at Preveza and only ended with Lepanto in 1571.[11]

The battle of Lepanto took place on 7 October 1571, after thirty years of harmony between 1540 and 1570, and was part of the so-called war of Cyprus (1570-1573) between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic. The most iconic battle of this period took place a few years after sultan Selim II (r.1566-1574) had confirmed the peace in 1567, at the beginning of his reign.

As for Christian European and Venetian perceptions of the Ottomans, the war of Cyprus played a decisive role. The battle of Lepanto is seen as pivotal, though not all scholars agree on its impact. While Andrei Pippidi notes that, especially after Lepanto, Christian Europeans fostered increasingly ambivalent and nuanced views about the Ottomans,[12] Marina Formica and Pedani assert that, besides relief, Christian European writings still expressed hate and contempt for the Ottomans.[13] While according to Paolo Preto[14] Venice had nurtured an inferiority complex towards the invincible Ottoman Empire, after Lepanto the Ottoman dominion of the Mediterranean diminished and the great Ottoman enemy, who had been so admired for his military prowess and organisation of the state, became an enemy who could be defeated.[15]

The Venetian perceptions of the Ottomans were altered on another level as well in the final third of the Cinquecento. The sultan's absolute power, which the Venetians had previously applauded, was now criticised because its government felt its grasp weakening. The Venetian governing class felt the need to oppose a positive image of its own government to a negative Ottoman example. Therefore,

11 Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, 263.

12 Andrei Pippidi, *Visions of the Ottoman World in Renaissance Europe* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012), 3.

13 Marina Formica, "La Porta e la Tiara. Immagini e dinamiche identitarie nella cultura italiana del XVI secolo," in *Italien und das Osmanische Reich*, ed. Franziska Meier (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2010), 174–176; Pedani, "L'Italia, Venezia e la Porta," 73.

14 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 18.

15 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 36.

the sultan came to be seen as a despotic, decadent ruler, and his subjects as monstrous barbarians.[16] Formica underlines that, even while celebrating the victory at Lepanto, Italian and Christian European writings on the Ottoman continued to display elements of both self-celebration and self-criticism.[17]

Despite the great festivities and victorious feelings after Lepanto, the surge of 'national pride', and the framing of the Ottomans as despotic and monstruous, in 1573 Venice signed another peace treaty with the sultan Selim II. The Ottomans had already started to rebuild their fleet in 1572, and the victory had cost the Venetians more than their greatest defeats.[18] Not only did trade relations have to recover, but the Republic was also conscious of the fact that its days of hegemony in the entire Eastern Mediterranean were over, as was the dream of retrieving its Eastern territories.[19]

The governing class knew that, should it continue the fight against the Ottomans, Venice would suffer great military and economic losses. Therefore, they broke off their adherence to the Holy League of 1571 and turned to the Ottomans again, effectively isolating themselves from the reigning ideological climate in Christian Europe.[20] As Gibellini has extensively analysed, this marked a change in perceptions of Lepanto: the treaty had to be justified, and a new image of Veneto-Ottoman relations had to be constructed.[21]

After Lepanto, the last two sixteenth-century Ottoman sultans, Murad III (r.1574-1595) and Mehmed III (r.1595-1603), confirmed the agreements with Venice in 1575 and 1595, respectively. The 1573 peace would last until the war of Candia broke out in 1645. The war of Cyprus and the battle of Lepanto are thus the last important military events of the sixteenth century, besides marking a major watershed in Venetian perceptions of the Ottomans.

16 Barzman, *The Limits of Identity*; Rothman, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul*; Valensi, *Venise et la Sublime Porte*.

17 Formica, *Lo specchio turco*, 11.

18 Carlo Dionisotti, "Lepanto nella cultura italiana del tempo," *Lettere Italiane* 23, no. 4 (1971): 481.

19 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 36-37.

20 Dionisotti, "Lepanto nella cultura italiana del tempo," 481; as cited in Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 118-19.

21 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*.



2 THE PERMEABLE MEDITERRANEAN

2.1 OF DIPLOMATS AND TRANSLATORS

Against this background, frequent contact took place between Venetians and Ottomans of varied social status. We can presume that these encounters informed the Ottoman characters which are introduced in Venetian drama. On the political level, we find of course the diplomats, who were potentially important figures with regard to 'Turkish tragedy'.

As we shall see, the varied tasks of these political figures, the information they gathered and exchanged, and the extensive network of acquaintances they construed not only found a mirror image in the activities of Ottoman diplomats in Venice,[22] but may also stand as a symbol for the frequent contact between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire. They clearly show how intricately connected 'West' and 'East' were, rather than being two disjointed realities.

This was even more so the case in Venice, whose *stato da mar* (from Dalmatia to the Aegean islands) and *stato da tera*, as Pedani rightly reminds us, were both attached to the Ottoman territories.[23] This made the Venetian Republic, and especially the cosmopolitan city of Venice as a *porta d'Oriente*, receptive to political, cultural, social, and religious encounters both inside and outside of the *Serenissima*. The Ottomans whom one could see in Venice were mainly domestic servants in aristocratic households, who may have been bought or taken captive in combat and may include black Africans,[24] merchants, or diplomatic emissaries.[25]

> IMAGE 3 – A Venetian delegation is received in Damascus – Anonymous (Venetian School), *Réception d'une délégation vénitienne par le gouverneur mamelouk de Damas*, 1500-1540, oil on canvas, 1,58 x 2,01 m (detail of) – © Paris, Musée du Louvre, Collection du roi de France Louis XIV, INV 100/ MR 61 – Image: Thierry Le Mage

The ambassadors of the Republic who resided outside of Venice were called *baili*. As a trading partner and political ally of Byzantium, the Venetians already had an established community in the city since long before the fall of Constantinople.

The *bailo* was their leader, and his embassy or *bailato* was the focal point of the Venetian

22 See Maria Pia Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla guerra di Candia* (Venice: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1994).

23 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, VII-VIII; see also Maria Pia Pedani, *The Ottoman-Venetian Border (15th-18th Centuries)* (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2017).

24 See Earle and Lowe, *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*; Lowe, "Visible Lives". On "black Turks" in Venice, see Kaplan, "Black Turks."

25 Benjamin Ravid, "Venice and Its Minorities," in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 466; Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy*, 11.

nation present in Istanbul. Here there gathered not only chancellors, translators or janissaries (elite Ottoman soldiers) in the *bailo*'s service, but also individuals external to the *bailo*'s household, such as Catholic slaves who supplicated the *bailo*'s intercession, merchants, foreign guests or Ottoman subjects. The *bailo* often acted as a mediator between various groups. First and foremost, however, he was a politician who advanced Venice's interests and passed on information about the Ottomans to Venice. To do this, he promoted Veneto-Ottoman commercial relations, shielded the Republic's trade from potential rivals, and cultivated a dense network of friends, clients or spies. He exchanged letters with Ottoman and Venetian officials, who craved information on Istanbul.

Another important figure in cultural mediation was the dragoman, who was a translator, interpreter, and diplomat. Dragomans arbitrated between merchants and officials, travelled with the *bailo*, and took it upon themselves to resolve local diplomatic problems or miscommunications. The grand dragoman was the representative of Venice in the palaces of the sultan and Ottoman nobles, whose job it was to negotiate matters of state while the *bailo* mostly remained inside the *bailato*.[26]

In Venice, Ottoman diplomats and dragomans were usually settled in the *palazzi* of the Venetian nobles upon their arrival, as the Ottomans were not in the habit of setting up fixed residences abroad for their ambassadors. The highest officials usually arrived at the Lido, where they were met by a splendid procession of Venetian dignitaries. Their triumphant cortege to the *Palazzo Ducale*, at which they would discuss their mission among their Venetian peers in the *sala del Collegio*, at times attracted large numbers of spectators. Pedani mentions the case of Mehmed who arrived by ship in 1640 and was unable to move forward because he was hindered by the crowd.[27]

During these visits, the Venetian officials and populace could observe the Ottomans, who presented foreign objects such as fabrics, horses, carpets or even the occasional impaled head of the sultan's enemies – a practice the Venetians themselves were not unfamiliar with – as diplomatic gifts. They 'dressed to impress' by donning large turbans, tight jackets and kaftans in precious fabrics such as silk or sable. They also mingled with the Venetian officials and populace on other occasions. They gathered information on Venice – as the Venetians did with them –, visited the city – but were hardly allowed to visit the *stato da tera* –, or were

26 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 23-40. On dragomans, see Rothman's recent study, *The Dragoman Renaissance. Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021). Two very general important works on the themes of this subchapter are Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*; and Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*; see also Giuseppina Minchella, *Frontiere aperte. Musulmani, ebrei e cristiani nella Repubblica di Venezia (XVII secolo)* (Rome: Viella, 2015); and Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011) regarding the Ottoman perspective.

27 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 65.

approached by Venetians or Ottoman slaves who wished to obtain favours from them. They attended not only banquets and dances, but also – mostly from high-up terraces or windows – public theatrical plays and popular feasts. Moreover, the envoys frequently visited the Rialto, where the Venetian-based Ottoman merchants often dressed in Oriental clothes.[28]

2.2 OF MERCHANTS AND MINGLING

Merchants, too, can be found in 'Turkish comedy'. Present in Venice at least since 1516, when a source mentions Ottoman merchants lodging in Venice, the Ottomans appear to have travelled more frequently to Venice from 1546 onwards. They strongly grew in number towards 1570, as did the brokers (*sensali*) who tried to accommodate negotiations. However, many Ottomans were abused and arrested in the years of the war of Cyprus, and they had their belongings confiscated. Kafadar mentions how the Ottoman populace was reported to have fled the Rialto after hearing about the victory at Lepanto, out of fear of being stoned.[29] Trading did not stop, however; in March 1573, when the war of Cyprus ended and the peace was proclaimed, Ottoman trading activities started to boom and continued until 1645, when war broke out again. Moreover, only in 1621, with the establishment of the *Fondaco dei turchi*, did Ottoman merchants become gathered as a 'nation'.

Since the Ottoman Empire was very diverse, so were its merchants; Balkan Muslims, Arabs or Turks from different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds resided in a scattered pattern across the city. Either they were organised in 'nations', just as the Venetians and Genovese were separately lodged in Istanbul, or they spread out to populate Venice's inns, whorehouses and private lodgings.

This situation favoured interactions, which were however not always friendly. One of the reasons why the Muslims were a requesting party to see their own headquarters realised[30] was, then, because they felt unsafe in the city. Although Ottomans wreaked havoc as well, as when a "Hungarian Turk" drew a weapon

28 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 46-98 especially. For more specific information on the Rialto, espionage and information gathering, see Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice. Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); or Ioanna Iordanou, "What News on the Rialto? The Trade of Information and Early Modern Venice's Centralized Intelligence Organization," *Intelligence and National Security* 31, no. 3 (2016): 305-26.

29 Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575). Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986): 201.

30 In "Across Religious and Ethnic Boundaries. Ottoman Networks and Spaces in Early Modern Venice," *Mediterranean Studies* 18 (2009): 66-89, Stephen Ortega considers the founding of the *Fondaco* by the leading institutions as both a way of controlling the Muslim merchants and a means of accommodating their presence in the city. See also Stephen Ortega, *Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Ottoman-Venetian Encounters* (London: Routledge, 2016).

against Venetian dignitaries,[31] the Ottomans were more than once insulted, threatened, assaulted, robbed, or even murdered.

Venice could of course not stand for this, since in order to secure its trade with the Orient, the Ottomans had to be protected. However, an anonymous Venetian protested in 1602 that concentrating all Ottomans in a *fondaco* would only cause them to construct mosques and worship their prophet Mohammad, and induce them to take Venice by force under the leadership of the sultan.[32]

The fact that this voice uttered pronouncements of fear is perhaps not entirely incomprehensible. The presence of the Ottomans across the city, which encouraged their mingling with Venetians, was eyed with suspicion by religious and political authorities. They fraternised with merchants, Jews, women, Venetian officials, dragomans, slaves and so forth. Some had relationships with Catholic women, possibly prostitutes, induced Catholics to convert to Islam, partied together and shared meals together, which included the risk of Catholics consuming meat during Lent.[33]

2.3 OF CONVERTS AND TRAVELLERS

To the Catholic authorities, the identities and loyalties of such individuals were vexingly difficult to grasp. Contact between Ottoman and Venetian merchants were viewed with distrust, and the matter became even worse when people lived as Jews or Muslims in one town and as Catholics in another, or when Catholic merchants disguised themselves as Ottomans to safely travel to the Orient.

Whereas on the one hand, the Inquisition based itself on the past occurrence of religious rites, such as circumcision or baptism, to determine whether someone was or was not a Catholic, on the other hand, these authorities inquired into the life and habits of suspicious individuals. How did they live and behave in both non-religious and religious contexts? What did they eat, what did they say, and how did they dress? If someone dressed and behaved like a Catholic, but did not go to mass, was he a Catholic?[34]

Bronwen Wilson cites the example of three Spanish men who reached Venice dressed as Catholics, but who put on turbans and dressed as Muslims to prepare for their journey to Istanbul. Two of them were condemned to serve on the galleys,

31 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 170.

32 Ravid, "Venice and Its Minorities," 468.

33 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 169-71; Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575)"; Ortega, "Across Religious and Ethnic Boundaries"; Ortega, *Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean*; Ugo Tucci, "Tra Venezia e mondo turco. I mercanti," in *Venezia e i turchi. Scontri e confronti di due civiltà* (Milan: Electa, 1985), 38-55.

34 Randolph C. Head, "Religious Boundaries and the Inquisition in Venice. Trials of Jews and Judaizers, 1548-1580," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 20, no. 2 (1990): 175-204.

since the inquisitors judged that their Ottoman appearance signified that they had become Muslims (*fatto turco*). The third one was released, with the stipulation that he should no longer deal with infidels, after having declared untrue the charges of having dressed as a Muslim (*da turco*) or having converted (*farsi turco*); he had only eaten meat on two Fridays and shaved off his hair, but he had never planned to 'turn Turk'.[35] A concern which became central in these cross-examinations was the question of sincerity.[36] Dress, outward appearance and behaviour became essential markers of religious identity, which legitimized questioning the interior beliefs of an individual.

Conversions could be forced, as in the case of the *devşirme* system in which children from the Balkans were levied in order that they would become Ottoman officials and elite soldiers. But they could also be sincere: Dursteler and Rothman stress that, in the Mediterranean, individuals smoothly changed religion whenever it was convenient.[37] For example, some converted for practical motives while travelling, or because they were captured, ransomed, enslaved, or had immigrated. Conversion was often induced for reasons of social or economic advancement rather than because of personal religious beliefs.[38] In Catholic lands, neophytes were received into institutes of conversion, where they were educated

35 Bronwen Wilson, "Reflecting on the Turk in Late Sixteenth-Century Venetian Portrait Books," *Word & Image. A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 19, no. 1-2 (2003): 49.

36 See for example Eric R. Dursteler, "Fearing the 'Turk' and Feeling the Spirit. Emotion and Conversion in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Journal of Religious History. Special Issue. Emotions and Conversion* 39, no. 4 (2015): 503-4; Irene Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero. Forestieri e Inquisizione a Roma in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2011), 67-70; Peter A. Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism in Early Modern Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Ravid, "Venice and Its Minorities"; Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," 117-19; Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative. Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

37 Dursteler, "Fearing the 'Turk' and Feeling the Spirit," 503-4; Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," 117-19.

38 Conversion to Islam was more frequent since neophytes in Ottoman society could access privileged positions more easily than neophytes in Christian Europe. On social advancement, see for example Eric R. Dursteler, "Fatima Hatun Née Beatrice Michiel. Renegade Women in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *The Medieval History Journal* 12, no. 2 (2009): 355-82; or Maria Pia Pedani-Fabris, "Veneziani a Costantinopoli alla fine del XVI secolo," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi. Veneziani in Levante, musulmani a Venezia* 15 (supplemento) (1997): 67-84. On conversion narratives to Islam, see the works of Krstić, such as *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); or "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate. Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 35-63. For a study of the lives of slaves in the Ottoman Empire and the consequences of such situations at home, see Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters. White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Lucette Valensi, *Ces étrangers familiers. Musulmans en Europe (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Éditions Rivages et Payot, 2012) discusses the presence of Muslims of various social and geographical groups in Europe.

by the church on their new faith and integrated into society.[39] Many converts or renegades[40] (Catholic converts to Islam) were slaves or servants.

A figure connected to them was the corsair-pirate, another presence in 'Turkish drama'. Corsairs could be either Catholics or Ottomans. The Ottoman corsairs instilled fear in the Italian peninsula. Predominantly in the south of Italy, pirates regularly executed swift raids, kidnapping and enslavement of peoples. Abduction was a central element in the construction of the dramatic plot: lost family members and children could be found again and recognised in the final scene of comedies when all the havoc that was created previously was brought back to normal. Since the Italian peninsula was perched between the professional slave-taking Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, and was politically splintered and militarily undefended, it should not surprise us that this subject matter was a vivid one in the Italian and Venetian imagination.[41]

After the Council of Trent, which promoted a revival of religious missions, the Ottoman lands also became attractive to missionaries. In the late sixteenth century, these missionaries were mostly Venetians. They aimed at reinforcing the Catholic faith among that part of the population of the Ottoman Empire which was still Catholic, and at extending the church's influence through conversion. Istanbul became the focal point from where to start their missions.

Pilgrims also found their way to the Ottoman Empire, especially since Jerusalem had been conquered by the Ottomans in 1517, but also because Istanbul sported some landmarks of religious cult and fascination.[42] Non-religious travellers,

39 Emanuele Colombo, "'Infidels' at Home. Jesuits and Muslim Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Naples and Spain," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014): 192-211; Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero*, 67-70; Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism in Early Modern Italy*; E. Natalie Rothman, "Becoming Venetian. Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21, no. 1 (2006): 39-75; Justine A. Walden, "Muslim Slaves in Early Modern Rome. The Development and Visibility of a Labouring Class," in *A Companion to Religious Minorities in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Matthew Coneys Wainwright and Emily Michelson (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 299-300.

40 On renegades, see for example: Eric R. Dursteler, "Jews, Renegades, and Early Modern Identity," in *Venetians in Constantinople. Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore (Md.): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 103-29; Eric R. Dursteler, *Renegade Women. Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore (Md.): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Giovanna Fiume, *Schiavitù mediterranee. Corsari, rinnegati e santi di età moderna* (Milan: Mondadori, 2009); Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*; or Lucetta Scaraffia, *Rinnegati. Per una storia dell'identità occidentale* (Rome: Laterza, 1993).

41 Robert C. Davis, "Slave Redemption in Venice, 1585-1797," in *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, ed. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore (Md.): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 455 and 477-78.

42 Lucia Rostagno, "Pellegrini italiani a Gerusalemme in età ottomana. Percorsi, esperienze, momenti d'incontro," *Oriente Moderno. Nuova Serie* 17 (78), no. 1 (1998): 63-157; Elmira Vassileva, "Ottoman Istanbul from the Perspective of the Catholic Missionaries in the Post-Tridentine Period (End of 16th-17th Centuries)," in *Osmanlı İstanbulu IV. Uluslararası Osmanlı İstanbulu Sempozyumu Bildirileri, 20-22 Mayıs, İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi*, ed. Feridun Mustafa Emecen and Emrah Safa Gürkan (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2016), 289-311.

too, were allured by the city's exotic fascination. Dursteler writes that 20% of the 449 travel accounts written between 1573 and 1645 were composed at the hands of Venetians.[43] In them we find exclamations such as "Ancora non mi posso acquietare né l'animo né la vista, havendo fisso ancora la graziosità di Costantinopoli, né vedo l'ora di aver occasione per ritornar a goderla, parendomi esser sepolto".[44]

Istanbul was also a travel destination for merchants and non-inhabitants visiting their native friends or Christian European friends and family who were integrated in the city. The exchange of gifts, art, objects, maps and so on has been emphasised by scholars who defend the idea of a 'global Renaissance'.[45] Though the scientific literature used to assume that Ottoman merchants were discouraged to trade with the Catholics, ample evidence suggests that there were longstanding and close mercantile connections between the Venetians and Ottomans.

In support of this, Dursteler cites the friendship between Çelebi Mehmed Reis and Lorenzo Girardi. The former was a merchant from Ankara who maintained a large trade network with contacts in Venice, Istanbul, and Candia. Girardi was one of Venice's main tradesmen and his key contact on site. Mehmed saw Girardi as a trustworthy, fine man, and addressed him as "amico carissimo". He even gave him permission to do business or appear in court in his name.[46]

Moreover, young patricians went to Istanbul to complete their training as state officials, or grown envoys to settle as diplomats in service of the Republic. They also brought with them a ship's crew who mingled with the city's inhabitants, and many a young sailor was seduced to convert and turn his back on his family.[47]

2.4 OF BORDER RESIDENTS AND WOMEN

Crossing religious boundaries did not necessarily mean that converts left behind their dear ones, though they might clash with them because of their new convictions. Some continued to practice their former faith covertly, while some Catholic mothers educated their children in the tradition of their original faith without their Muslim husbands knowing.[48]

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43 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 98. For a study and repertory of travel accounts, see Stefanos Yerasimos, *Les Voyageurs Dans l'Empire Ottoman, XIVe-XVIe Siècles. Bibliographie, Itinéraires et Inventaire Des Lieux Habités* (Ankara: Imprimérie de la Société turque d'histoire, 1991).

44 Tucci, "Tra Venezia e mondo turco," 45.

45 See for example the volume edited by Anna Contadini and Claire Norton, *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*; or by Franziska Meier, *Italien und das Osmanische Reich* (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2010).

46 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 161-62; for the quotation, see 161.

47 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 98-101, 158-73.

48 See for example Dursteler, "Fatima Hatun Née Beatrice Michiel"; Eric R. Dursteler, "Fleeing 'The Vomit of Infidelity'. Borders, Conversion and Muslim Women's Agency in the Early Modern Mediterranean," in

Such cases are almost tangible among inhabitants of borderlands such as the Balkan area or Dalmatia, where multiple states and religions encountered each other. People could then easily switch religion without caring for frontiers, of whose existence and exact location they were often ignorant. They migrated, traded, intermarried, formed friendships, worked for one another, fought for one other's regime or shared popular customs and attitudes. However, they were also subject to local tensions, which could lead to theft or murder, and which did not care for top-down orders.[49]

Contrary to what one would expect and to what some scholars have supposed, even the political Veneto-Ottoman border was fluid. For example, Dursteler claims that, rather than fighting each other over diplomatic issues, Ottomans and Venetians often collaborated to maintain the status quo in the border regions and preserve the peace between their countries. This was the case, for example, when a mishmash of Venetian, Ottoman and Habsburg conspirators of both Christian and Muslim orientations revolted in 1596 and took the fortress of Clissa on the triple Venetian, Ottoman and Habsburg frontier in Dalmatia. Similarly, the flight of the Christian Maria Gozzadini and her three Muslim daughters from the Ottoman island of Milos, where her deceased husband had been the chief commander, to Venetian shores might have potentially disturbed Veneto-Ottoman relations.[50]

The case of Maria Gozzadini is an example of the stories of women converts. Both in literature and in history, Muslim women in Italy and Venice were frequently servants, slaves and converts. In Cinquecento Venice, slavery was not uncommon, and most slaves were women who were placed in patrician households or with nuns.[51] However, most of the Muslim women who reached Venice seem to have been converts.[52]

Traditionally, historical and sociological studies have considered women to be less predisposed to convert religion than men. They were seen as more devout and attached to their families and homes. However, in more recent times it has been demonstrated that they were equally or even more willing to convert compared to men. Besides converting out of opportunism or zeal, they seem to have changed religion mostly to escape unhappy marriages or profit socially and economically,

Living in the Ottoman Realm. Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries, ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 182-92; or Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

49 Eric R. Dursteler, "Habsburgs, Ottomans, and Venetians on the Frontiers of Dalmatia. The Capture of Clissa in 1596," in *The Habsburg Mediterranean 1500–1800*, ed. Stefan Hanß and Dorothea McEwan (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2021), 65-67.

50 Dursteler, "Fleeing 'The Vomit of Infidelity'"; Dursteler, "Habsburgs, Ottomans, and Venetians on the Frontiers of Dalmatia."

51 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 118.

52 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 167.

if possible together with their children.[53] In fleeing unbearable situations, female converts at times even ended up in convents.[54]

However, like men, women could negotiate their 'passing' from one religion to another.[55] One remarkable case occurred on Venetian soil in 1622; in which an ex-Muslim woman who had converted to Catholicism twelve years earlier had sought refuge in the *Fondaco dei turchi* and pressed the Ottoman merchants to ask the sultan's envoy to intercede on her behalf.[56]

Among the sultans' mothers (*valide sultans*) and wives (*haseki sultans*) we also find converts. Between 1533 and 1656, the period known as the 'sultanate of women' (*kadınlar saltanatı*), some of these women had especially strong profiles and obtained considerable socio-political power.

A fine example is the famous sultana Roxelana or Hurrem Sultan, a harem girl of Western origin and the favourite of the sultan Suleiman, whom he – reputedly for love – freed from slavery and married. She became the first female Ottoman celebrity in Christian Europe. She was Suleiman's confidant and they were married until she died, with six children being born out of the union. She was seen both by the Ottomans and by Christian Europeans as a witch who manipulated the sultan by making use of her wit, sensuality, and tears. She was rumoured to be one of the main conspirators in the successful plot to murder Suleiman's son by his concubine Gülbahar (or Mahidevran), Mustafa, who seemed to be well on his way to become the next sultan until he was executed in 1553 on the orders of his father. This story resounded greatly in Christian Europe, and it even appeared in the plot of dramatic works such as *La soltane* (1561; performed ca. 1560) by Gabriel Bounin.[57]

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53 Dursteler, *Renegade Women*, 109-16. Women figure less frequently in inquisitorial sources. As Anna Vanzan states in "In Search of Another Identity. Female Muslim-Christian Conversions in the Mediterranean World," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7, no. 3 (1996): 328, out of the 3,500 surviving inquisitional trials held in Venice between 1541 and 1794, 56 were against Muslims and only 10 of those regarded women. According to Dursteler in *Renegade Women*, 109-16, the reason for this was because they were more tied to their new lands, where men were perhaps freer to move or where they had children, and because, if they returned, they more easily blended in – while men had been circumcised, for example. Vanzan nuances the significance of these numbers: not only did renegades hardly ever return to Venice, and those who did avoided antagonising church officials, but the Venetian returns were particular circumstances since the Venetian patriarch often intervened directly when having apostates revert to Catholicism rather than keeping rigorous records (Vanzan, "In Search of Another Identity," 328).

54 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 167.

55 Dursteler, *Renegade Women*, 109-16.

56 Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore*, 83. Many more examples can be found in Dursteler's book *Renegade Women*, which studies the broad Mediterranean context. In the stories Dursteler recounts, he describes how women actively crossed geographical and religious frontiers across the Mediterranean or in border lands in order to change the course of their own lives.

57 Heather Madar, "Before the Odalisque. Renaissance Representations of Elite Ottoman Women," *Early Modern Women* 6 (2011): 26-27. The wedding between Suleiman and Roxelana was exceptional to say the least: since Bajazet I, no sultan had ever married, nor did they live monogamous lives. See Galina I.


La piu bella e piu fauorita donna
del gran Turcho dita la Rossa
In Venetia per Mathio Pagan in Fre
zaria tien per insegna la Fede

In summary, it is clear that the early modern Mediterranean is best treated as a complex reality, and not as an opposition between separate civilisations. At the intersection of transcultural contact, we find different interconnected stakeholders: political institutions and the Inquisition, slaves and converts, merchants and dragomans, travellers and the inhabitants of borderlands. The arrival of such figures in Venice, and the Venetians' outbound journeys, provided occasions for the subjects of the *Serenissima* to observe the Ottomans. However, as Bronwen Wilson states, the Venetians also travelled from home. Printed books brought the 'other' closer to them.[58]

3 HAVING THE OTTOMAN AT HAND THROUGH BOOKS

3.1 WHAT CAME BEFORE

Besides the evidence which shows how Venetians and Ottomans crossed physically and ideologically blurred borders, another component which makes up the creation of the dramatic 'Turk' is the sixteenth-century literary idea of the 'other', complete with its imagery and stereotypes.

> IMAGE 4 – Matteo Pagani, *La più bella e più favorita donna del gran turcho dita la Rossa*, 1540-1550 – © London, The Trustees of the British Museum, 1878,0713.4166 – Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

On this point, it must first of all be noted that the Ottoman seems to have inherited the stigma which the Persians had been endowed with by the ancient Greeks. It is worthwhile to expand on the evolution of these assumptions before turning to the Italian literature produced on the Ottoman during the sixteenth century.[59]

Nancy Bisaha has pointed out how cultural dissimilarity was perhaps first expressed by the notion of 'barbarism'. A 'barbarian' was someone who, instead of Greek, spoke a language which sounded like "bar-bar" and was impossible to understand. The term was used in a neutral way

Yermolenko, "Introduction," in *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture*, ed. Galina I. Yermolenko (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 5-7.

58 Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 4-6.

59 For the subchapter "What Came Before", I have drawn largely on Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 43-93; and Daniel J. Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism. Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Perception of Other*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David R. Blanks (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 207-30.

until the outbreak of the Persian wars in the fifth century B.C. According to Bisaha, although many Greek states collaborated to successfully ward off the Persian invasion, the impact was so great that the Greeks started to perceive 'themselves' and 'the other'.

These 'others' were seen as barbarians. At first the Persian barbarians were portrayed as delicate and luxurious cowards, but they were progressively viewed as inferior. During the Hellenistic and Roman Republican periods, 'barbarians' came to signify more than simply non-Greek speakers. 'Barbarians' included uncultured, unrefined and brutal men, or – thirdly – foreigners, typically viewed in an inimical light.

Through Stoicism, the idea that *everyone*, and not just foreigners, could possess barbaric features gained a foothold. The Romans saw Easterners as effeminate, sensitive, and unenterprising cowards who wore decadent clothes and were prone to fraud and sweet talk, as opposed to their decisive, warring selves. When the first Christians affirmed themselves, they too pleaded for inclusiveness, even for 'barbarians'. But this changed when cruelties against the Christians were committed by the 'barbarians', who were soon after seen as savages.

Scholars generally note that both 'learned' and 'popular' views influenced how Islam was seen in medieval Christian Europe. The former wished to put an end to the expansion of Islam, which they saw as a heretical and fraudulent movement led by an impostor-prophet. The second told heroic stories of Christian crusaders and knights who conquered Muslim enemies. Both the 'high' and the 'low' narratives created negative images of the Ottomans.

According to Bisaha, the early humanists revised this image from a secular standpoint – the first in several centuries – through the mediation of the classical texts they rediscovered. Some scholars acknowledge that medieval themes persisted but insist that the 'Turkish barbarian' was a humanist novelty,[60] while others maintain that the humanists recycled medieval ideas.[61] Whereas Bisaha claims that the term 'barbarian' arose from a Western sense of superiority and was increasingly applied to Muslims,[62] others assert that representations of wicked Ottomans sprang not from a sense of superiority but from the fear of being conquered.[63]

60 Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 42-44; James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders. Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 121–123.

61 Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962), 271-307; Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 149-54; Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent. The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1967), 147-48.

62 Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 77–78.

63 Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento," 199-200; Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 209-10.

Bisaha writes that the language in which the Ottomans were described changed after the trauma of 1453. The unstoppable 'Turk' was now the barbarian, and the Ottoman inherited traits of former enemies of the Christians: among others, the Trojans, the Scythians, the Mongols, Gog, and Magog.[64] The Ottoman enslaved, raped, and massacred the people of Constantinople. He opposed the Catholic faith and Western civilization, and a crusade had to be organised to stop him. The humanist idea of the Ottoman as the new barbarian reiterated the Greek and Roman opposition between barbarism and civility.

The term 'barbarian' was used frequently and increasingly after 1453, and the term 'Turk' was gradually extended to Muslims in general. Indeed, early modern Italians used the term to denote either Ottoman subjects, ethnic Turks or Muslims since the Ottoman Empire had become the leading Muslim state. 'Turk' could also refer to any combination of these three.[65]

However, the religious aspect of Ottoman identity was discarded in favour of its ethnic and barbaric components. This reduced their importance and relegated them to a regional, even tribal phenomenon. At the same time, they were seen as an evil, oppressive Eastern empire, which was excessively sensual, wealthy, tyrannical and powerful.

Another layer which was added to the Ottoman was the epic one. The wars between Christians and Muslims, including the Veneto-Ottoman wars or clashes like the Spanish Reconquista (ca. 718-1492), gave birth to a flourishing genre of epic poetry which counted Ludovico Ariosto's (1474-1533) *Orlando furioso* and Torquato Tasso's (1544-1595) *Gerusalemme liberata* among its greatest sixteenth-century exponents. The focus on the epic battle between Ottomans and Christians returned in early modern spectacle, together with the idea of the sensual and wealthy Ottoman.

3.2 THE OTTOMAN IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY VENETIAN LITERATURE[66]

Carlo Dionisotti's "La guerra d'Oriente nella letteratura veneziana del Cinquecento", with its focus on *rimatori*, is a characteristic example of the contemporary research that was carried out on Italian 'Turkish literature', which has often occupied itself with poetry such as laments or epic.[67] This was a genre which exploded after Lepanto,

64 Palmira Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans. Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 48.

65 Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, 257-58; Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," 115.

66 This subchapter is chiefly based on Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, except when otherwise indicated.

67 Such as Marina Beer and Cristina Ivaldi, eds., *Guerre in ottava rima*, vol. 4, *Guerre contro i turchi, 1453-1570* (Modena: Panini, 1988); Carlo Dionisotti, "La guerra d'Oriente nella letteratura veneziana del Cinquecento," in *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo medioevo e rinascimento*, ed. Agostino Pertusi (Florence:

but the Ottoman was the subject of many kinds of writings than only poetry. Christian Europeans produced countless texts in which Ottomans figured, such as historiography, prophecies, and conversion stories. Venice was a trendsetting epicentre of the sixteenth-century growth of 'Turkish literature', which displayed an increasing interest in the Ottomans from the 1450s onwards and would determine the portrayal of the Ottoman at least until the eighteenth century.

This portrayal and idea of the Ottoman was mainly influenced by Luther, Erasmus and Machiavelli, who respectively promoted a crusade, an attitude of pacifism, or a political analysis of the Ottomans. Regarding the Italian peninsula, Pedani adopts a slightly different classification of writings on and assessments of the Ottoman. First, controversialist writers viewed the Ottomans as the great enemy of the Catholics and urged a reaction of carrying out a crusade. Second, irenist writers distanced themselves from such oppositional thinking. They saw the Ottomans as heretics, but underlined that the Ottomans had a lot in common with them and hoped that they would spontaneously convert to Catholicism if they were taught the true faith well. Third, panegyrical authors praised the sultans and their subjects. Fourth, authors of informative books attempted to spread knowledge about unfamiliar habits and looked at the Ottomans from a pragmatic point of view.

In Venice, the irenists and especially the controversialists did not find fertile ground: the Venetians were much too pragmatic, Pedani says, wishing first to know the Ottomans well before holding them in contempt or praising them. Laudatory poems of them were rare, but Pedani cites a poem from the *Biblioteca civica* of Treviso which most likely originated in the Veneto and honoured Selim I. Not infrequently writers lauded the Ottoman because they were hostile to the Roman church or because they hoped that the Ottomans would serve as a military ally.

Rather, the Venetians wrote copious informative works on the Ottomans. Some of these sources were created to meet practical needs by translators or cartographers. Among the most well-known names were Antonio Manuzio, Francesco Sansovino, or Giovanni Battista Ramusio. Some travelled and explored the Orient, such as Marc'Antonio Pigafetta, who fled Venice after having been accused of murder and travelled between Vienna and Istanbul. Some accumulated information from having known the Ottomans from up close, like Giovanni Maria Angiolello, who was captured and enslaved at the siege of Negroponte in 1470 and

Sansoni, 1966), 471-93; Alain Godard, "Le Camp Païen et Ses Héros Dans La Jérusalem Délivrée.," in *Quêtes d'une Identité Collective Chez Les Italiens de La Renaissance*, n.d.; Andrea Moudarres, *The Enemy in Italian Renaissance Epic. Images of Hostility from Dante to Tasso* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 2019); Angelo Pagliardini, "Cristiani e pagani nell'epica cavalleresca italiana," *Carte di viaggio* 1 (2008): 35-58; or Simona Mammana, *Lèpanto. Rime per la vittoria sul turco. Regesto (1571-1573) e studio critico*, Studi e testi 33 (Rome: Bulzoni, 2007).

later became the treasurer of Mehmet II from 1468 to 1483, before returning to a quiet life as a notary in Vicenza. Ambassadors and their households, too, gathered intimate knowledge on the Ottomans because of their professional dealings.[68]

Having determined the general ideas of the 'Turk' which underlie Italian and Venetian writings, it is useful to review the different kinds of literature which Venetians had access to, and the images of the Ottoman that appear in these texts. The literature on the 'Turks' shaped individual Venetians' image of the Ottoman. It also likely shaped Venetian 'Turkish drama', which did not exist in a vacuum but presumably interacted with stories and information about the Ottomans.[69]

In what follows, I have subdivided the Venetian sources on the Ottomans in three categories. First of all, I will discuss the source types which describe the Ottoman 'reality' as it was perceived by the Venetians ('Describing the Ottoman'). Second, I will discuss literature in which an image of the Ottoman is constructed ('Inventing the Ottoman'). Finally, sources which made prevalent use of images, allowing people to visualise the Ottomans, are presented ('Imagining the Ottoman').

As it is impossible to cover all that has been written and published in primary and secondary sources regarding Venice and the Ottomans, I will attempt to sketch some genres which provided information on and helped to shape the image of the 'Turk'. These were of course often linked to the types of contact that have been traced between the Ottomans and the Christian Europeans.

3.2.1 *Describing the Ottoman*

While the fifteenth century remains a century of ignorance with regard to the Ottoman Empire's political and religious institutions, in the sixteenth century the Venetians acquired a more correct and complete understanding through commercial and diplomatic contacts, especially the *relazioni* of the *baili*. The *relazioni* were diplomatic reports that the *bailo* enunciated in front of the senate and doge upon his arrival in the *Serenissima*. In Venice, these typically contained not only an overview of the diplomatic situation but also a description on the relevant state. In these descriptions, the *baili* did not fail to underline favourable elements of the Ottoman Empire, such as the military superiority, the speed of the Ottoman jurisdictional system, and the efficiency of the institutions and bureaucracy.

However, the image generally remained gloomy. Religiously speaking, Islam was still seen as a heretical sect as it was in the Middle Ages, a concept which overshadows the newly gathered information regarding its religious institutions,

68 Pedani, "L'Italia, Venezia e la Porta"; Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, 259-61.

69 This is no less true for non-scripted plays. See Fabrizio Fiaschini, "'Carte tritellate come crauti'. Indagini sulla cultura dell'attore tra Cinque e Seicento," *Commedia dell'Arte. Annuario Internazionale* 2 (2009): 151-88.

dogmas, and ceremonies. Islam was an instrument wielded by the sultans to enlarge their territories and bring their subjects to servility, which as Preto states, is perhaps the only element of Ottoman religion that Venetian nobility was interested in.[70]

Furthermore, it is in the *relazioni* that we find a growing trend after Lepanto of viewing the sultan as a decadent despot and the Ottomans as barbarians. The Ottoman government was presented as an absolutist, despotic and tyrannical rule, which treated its subjects like slaves, and whose subjects were money-grabbing, coarse, despotic barbarians with strange habits. The elite was perceived as an example of blood-ridden cruelty, greatly feared by the Ottoman people.

Representations of this kind reflect not only on the Ottoman system, but also on the values of the Venetian system. The *relazioni* are thus not as remote to the standard Venetian as one may think. They should have been secret by law, but in reality they circulated among Christian European leaders and cultural societies. Some of them were even made public in *Il Tesoro politico*, which was printed in 1589 in Cologne.[71]

One of the first historiographical works on the Ottomans was the *Historia turchesca*, usually ascribed to Giovanni Maria Angiolelli.[72] It was first published in 1559 by Ramusio in his compilation *Navigazioni e viaggi* as "Breve narrazione della vita e fatti degli Scià di Persia Ussun Hassan e Ismaele". The Cinquecento saw a growth of historiography, especially in Venice, by authors such as Giovantonio Menavino, Paolo Giovio and Teodoro Spandugino. The broader audience, however, preferred more accessible writers like Benedetto Ramberti, who wrote *Delle cose de' turchi*, or Francesco Sansovino, who counted among his works *Albero della casa othomana* (1572), *Gl'annali overo le vite de' principe et signori della casa othomana* (1570), and *Dell'historia universale dell'origine et imperio de' turchi* (1560).

Sansovino's publications were popularising compilations of already written works on the Ottomans intended for a broad audience. They were highly sought-after by both more and less cultured readers, who were curious for a comprehensible picture of the Ottoman, and we can still find his works in people's libraries until the end of the seventeenth century. Though his *Historia universale*[73] holds the Ottomans in high esteem for their well-functioning administration, military

70 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 93.

71 Other than Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, see Matteo Alvino, "Le relazioni diplomatiche dei baili del XVII secolo. Sulle tracce del dispotismo ottomano," *Montesquieu.it. Inserto Dintorni*, 2020, 1-17; Pedani, "L'Italia, Venezia e la Porta," 67; and Valensi, *Venise et la Sublime Porte*.

72 Babinger adds some critical notes to this attribution in "Angiolello, Giovanni Maria," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 3 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1961), 276-77.

73 Sansovino printed his *Historia* several times. It is also known that he adapted its contents because of the Inquisition's dissatisfaction with it; however, the influence of his rewritings on his positive appraisal of the Ottomans has yet to be studied (Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 177).

discipline and the peaceful cohabitation of their subjects, his contemporary Paolo Paruta underlines the Ottoman ferociousness and their animosity to the Catholic faith and Venice. It is only because of the senate's prudence and the support which other Christian countries offered to Venice at times that the Ottomans could not conquer all of the Republic's Levantine possessions. It is a good thing, then, Paruta concludes, that Venice has tried to keep the peace. According to Preto, official Venetian historiographers such as Paruta were more interested in the creation of a favourable image of Venice, than they were in thoroughly treating the Ottomans as 'barbarians'.

More sensational publications and prophecies were produced on the ongoing wars and Ottoman society. These expanded on the mythical origins of the Ottomans, their wealth, their unstoppable army, and the fascinating family histories of the sultans, who had so many wives and slaughtered their brothers since they were rivals to the throne. By invoking biblical or other prophecies and alleged signs offered by the universe, they foresaw a future in which Christian Europe would be victorious.

Pedani notes that prophecies were not at all popular in Venice since it was a genre which expressed Rome's official viewpoint and Venice was notoriously anti-papist. Still, prophecies appeared during wartime, in 1538-1540 and 1570-1573, to keep the morale high. These mostly spread contents borrowed from outside of Venice and were more concerned with their own city's corruption (the Venetians brought calamities over their own heads) than they were with religiosity. Just before and after Lepanto Venice did witness an explosion of prophecies, but when this long-hoped-for victory was won, the literary current and the Lepantine myth swiftly died out.[74]

A great number of journalistic prints spread from Venice to Christian Europe, such as pamphlets, leaflets and accounts of real events and battles or even of invented episodes which were supposed to have taken place in Istanbul. Midway between 'journalism' and literature, we find the genre of *avvisi* and printed accounts. These covered the Veneto-Ottoman political and military events. The accounts often invoked divine will, not infrequently basing themselves on events which had taken place during battles that were interpreted as wondrous, and praised illustrious figures who had participated in them. One of the Venetian traumas was the fall of Famagusta, a fortress in Cyprus. In 1571 the *capitan del regno di Cipro* Marcantonio Bragadin had been tortured and flayed alive by the Ottomans. The story of the siege and Bragadin's martyrdom still survives in five eyewitness accounts that describe Bragadin's heroism and the horrors which they have seen.

74 Pedani, "L'Italia, Venezia e la Porta," 59-61.

Other, less gruesome and personal accounts were offered by travellers' stories, which often praised the wonders of Istanbul. Those composed by the *baili* and Venetian officials contain a lot of interesting historical information and often imitated classical models. In contrast, Preto warns that pilgrims' stories do not inform us at all about Ottoman society, its politics or its economy. Normal travel stories do, but they consider these aspects from a Catholic perspective.

Though it is acknowledged that travels motivated by purely 'antiquarian' curiosity for the 'other' did not occur until the eighteenth century, scholars disagree on the impact of travellers' accounts on the home front. Some claim that they had a decisive impact and that they reinforced certain stereotypes while being blind to the positive aspects of the 'other' they encountered. Others downplay the role of travellers, stressing the importance of diplomacy.[75] Rouillard, for example, asserts that travellers' observations were not very influential and someone like Guillaume Postel even sympathised with the Ottomans while advocating a crusade.[76]

The writings of slaves and renegades often tried to make sense of their situation by reflecting on God's purpose for them. Their letters to the home front, which were often read publicly, describe the maltreatments they suffered during transport to the Orient and during their daily lives. They might have seen this as a form of punishment for their sins or as a way that God put his 'flock' to the test.

Indeed, when and if they returned, sometimes having become runaway slaves, renegades usually testified in front of the Inquisition to having converted to save their skin, but to having remained Catholic at heart. Before the Inquisitors, they needed not only to create a captivating narrative, but also to demonstrate that they were now genuine Catholics; their inner drive to convert was key to the Catholic authorities. Renegades typically emphasised that they had been afraid, mistreated and obliged to convert.

A certain Marco Lombardo, for example, testified in 1632 that "violentem[en] te mi circoncisere, et mi fecero per forza parlar turchezo, et confessai di esser turco per paura della morte che mi minacciavano, io però havevo continuam[en]te nel core Iddio, la vergine et li santi, quali sempre honorai con le mie or'oni di giorni et di notte."[77] However, conversions usually happened voluntarily, all the more so because the Qur'an prohibited coercion.

Similar socially acceptable narratives made sure that the blame for converting fell outside the renegades' wishes and facilitated their re-entry into Catholic society. Nonetheless, the Venetians looked down on renegades and treated them

75 For a brief *status quaestionis*, see Verbaere, "Turks."

76 Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520–1660)* (Paris: Boivin, 1938), 354–356.

77 Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," 150.

with suspicion. Diplomats considered their conversion as a surrender to the sultan, politically and juridically; as the Venetian *bailo* Gianfrancesco Morosini put it: "Tengono per grandezza il poter dire: Io sono schiavo del Gran Signore".[78] Renegades were viewed as opportunists seeking economic gain and social promotion, political traitors rather than persons who had seen the religious light.[79]

3.2.2 *Inventing the Ottoman*

The number-one ranking in the literary charts of sixteenth-century 'Turkish texts' was without a doubt poetry, a genre which boomed between the 1450s and 1571 in Venice. Lyric poetry, which was particularly intent on conveying the author's emotions, most directly voiced the shifting dynamics of Veneto-Ottoman relations following military events. Many *lamenti* were produced which depicted a desperate, defeated sultan, typically after important battles. In the form of poetry, the Ottoman was insulted, while God and the Venetian senate were asked to rid the Venetians of their threatening shadow. As in the prophecies, the authors of these works hoped that the infidels would be defeated and converted. However, these texts remained literary constructs based on traditional themes.

In reality, Venice usually returned quickly to a state of peace with the Ottomans, which in turn had effects on the literature produced. Dionisotti claims that after 1530 Venetian poetry was devoid of epic and war, neglecting to call for a crusade. The *Serenissima* was depicted as a beacon of peace and calm. Even if Lepanto represented an occasion for a mass output of poetry, both in Latin, Italian, and dialect, Dionisotti noted that this poetry was pure rhetoric which did not demonstrate true religious, political or ideological fervour, but instead adopted traditional images and celebrated Venice's principal heroes of Lepanto, Bragadin and Querini. This neutrality continued in 1573, Dionisotti goes on, when Venice re-established friendly relations with the Ottomans.[80]

Preto considers Celio Magno as the only *poeta impegnato* of Lepanto who was committed to expressing himself in a gracious, religiously inspired style. He values popular poetry in dialect (such as *bergamasco*, *pavano*, *friulano* or *veneziano*) better. This was still refined and composed by well-read authors, but in his view it was a genre which was more vivid and raw. It tried to adhere to the ideas and mentalities of the lower classes and their imaginary of the Ottoman. In doing so,

78 Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," 114.

79 Besides Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 105; see Dursteler, "Fearing the 'Turk' and Feeling the Spirit"; Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate"; and Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands."

80 Dionisotti, "La guerra d'Oriente nella letteratura veneziana del Cinquecento". For the poetry published regarding Lepanto, see Mammana, *Lèpanto*.

it used verbal expressions which were more satiric, passionate and hostile toward the 'Turk' (for example, in a poem by Antonio Molino or "il Burchiello", the sultan was a drunk sex-driven "can fotuo").

Besides longer compositions, poetry also included epigrams, puns, versed enigmas, or short poems containing anagrams and alliterations of Ottoman names. I have not found any Venetian epic poems with an Ottoman subject similar to Ariosto's or Tasso's canonical epics, but at times allusions are made, for example in Danese Cataneo's *Amor di Marfisa* (1562). Epic poems were written which celebrated the victory at Lepanto even up to ten years later, as in Gaspare Caffarino's *Il naval conflitto di christiani con turchi, e la gloriosa vittoria della Santa Lega del serenissimo don Giovanni d'Austria* (1571) or Vincenzo Metello's *Il Marte di messer Vincenzo Metelli Giustinopolitano, ove sotto bellissime favole et inventioni si descrive tutta la guerra di Cipro* (1582).[81]

Novelle were another beloved genre in the contemporary Venetian milieu. While its medieval variant showed an enthralling Oriental world, the contents become crueller when the Ottomans put military pressure on Christian Europe after the events in Constantinople in 1453. Sebastiano Erizzo and Giovanni Sagredo, two Venetian authors of *novelle*, exemplify the connections between Venice and the Ottomans through their high realism.

Erizzo's *Le sei giornate* (1567) offers a tale set in Istanbul, where an impoverished noble by the name of Evasto is forced to become a merchant and falls in love with Filene. Two other *novelle* by Erizzo, however, showcase the increasing violence found in the genre. In the first, the sultan is depicted as a barbaric character against the background of the Veneto-Ottoman wars. He lacks all virtues which are in the medieval *novelle* attributed to Oriental rulers. The second records the incursions in the Friuli region, with Mehmed II playing the part of the instigator of atrocities of war, as opposed to the Venetian hero Pietro Mocenigo.

Curiously, the sixteenth century also saw the production of fake letters supposedly addressed to the Christian European rulers by Mehmed II. Such letters depicted a tyrant who frightened and threatened his interlocutors; they in turn wrote prudent answers which exposed the wickedness of the sultan. The letters were filled with references to classical culture and ideas, which testifies to their likely focus on 'high-class' readers.

81 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 192-93.

3.2.3 *Imagining the Ottoman*

The dramatic representation of the 'Turk', both in text and on stage, is based on presuppositions of what the Ottoman and his clothing looked like. These presuppositions would logically have been shared by the authors of theatre, creators of dramatic performances, and readers and spectators,[82] since they had to be clear and recognisable. Visual images also helped to create this image of the 'standard' Ottoman.

Preto reminds us, for example, of the many paintings which present Ottoman themes and the victory at Lepanto, especially those by Vittore Carpaccio, Titian and Jacopo Bassano. The detail of Carpaccio's *Miracle of the Relic of the Holy Cross at the Rialto Bridge* which introduces this chapter testifies (completely at the back) to the presence of individuals dressed in Oriental white robes in Venice. Painters might have travelled to Istanbul, like Giovanni Bellini, or observed Ottoman diplomats and merchants in Venice.

Besides seeing Ottomans in public spaces, Venetians could also imagine them at home. Scholars today concur that seeing the 'other' invites the 'self' to reflect on their own identity. For example, as the Ottoman Empire expanded in the sixteenth century, its traditionally assigned geographical space had to be recoloured on the maps, and thus rethought by Christian Europe.[83]

More significantly for the present interests, Venetians could *see* the Ottoman at home through costume books. This genre was very popular in the Cinquecento. It existed in printed form, but manuscript versions circulated as well. Costume books contained portrayals and explanatory texts on peoples from various continents, regions or cities, their dress, and their traditions. Many nations and continents were described, among which were Ottomans and Venetians of both sexes and of all standings. They explained the deeds of sultans or the 'typologies' of Ottoman subjects and soldiers. Moreover, costume became an increasingly important element of local history books.

Rather than representing reality, these books were mostly works of fantasy that represented a world which had become very diverse and large, as the discovery of the New World had made clear. The fictional images of strange, foreign peoples

82 Drama was not always written to be performed: especially in the earlier stages of the Humanist and Renaissance reinvention of ancient drama, dramatic publications were sometimes simply read without being performed. Other plays, on the contrary, were performed several times on courtly occasions, such as Giraldi's tragedy *Orbecche* (1543) which was staged three times in 1541 in Ferrara alone for the Estense court and several times again in 1543. Some were less fortunate: a staging of Sperone Speroni's tragedy *Canace* (1546) had been prepared, but was never performed.

83 Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans*; Palmira Brummett, "The Lepanto Paradigm Revisited. Knowing the Ottomans in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 63-93.


32
SINAN BASSA, CAP. GENERALE
DEL' ESSERCITO DI MAVMET IMPE.
DE TVRCHI.
Franco Forma

were very often borrowed and replicated throughout the different works. It has been argued that these books were read out of curiosity by non-travellers, that they enabled moralising reasoning (since, in viewing the other, I critically examine myself, though mostly coming to the conclusion that I am socially superior), proto-ethnographic readings, or that they functioned as a practical guide (if I go to the Orient, I will be able to identify the different kinds of people I will encounter) and guide for artists (if I have to paint an Ottoman, I can look at costume books to depict him 'correctly'). Amanda Wunder has also suggested that costume books do not depart from the notion of the barbaric warrior-'Turk', but rather reinforce it.[84] The reciprocity of the costume book-mechanism is considered essential: the viewer-and-reader is always called to reflect upon himself, and departs from himself and his own experience to reflect on the images.

Linked to this genre were portrait books and books of physiognomy. Giacomo Franco's *Effigie naturali dei maggior prencipi et più valorosi capitani di questa età con l'arme loro* (1596), for example, bundles portraits of Christian leaders and the Venetian doge, Christian military leaders, and Oriental leaders and military leaders. Through these works, the increasing demand for information about the Ottoman was accompanied by an increasing demand for illustrations. Images and painted portraits of Ottomans were even displayed in the private space of the home, though at the same time real Ottomans in Venice were being harassed.

During the last quarter of the Cinquecento, the new sultan's ascent to power and the renewed peace between Venetians and Ottomans prompted the production of images of the sultans. Before then, it was only during the moments when war broke out that portraits of sultans were in high demand. These portraits seem to have caused such heavy emotions, that some readers slashed a sultan's portrait with a pen or erased his face.

The most famous example of another genre which invokes self-reflection is Giovanni Battista Della Porta's *De humana physiognomonia* (1586). His work divulges the knowledge of human physiognomy, which studies the outward traits of the body and face to discover a person's natural disposition and psyche.

> IMAGE 5 – Giacomo Franco, *Sinan Bassà*, from: *Effigie naturali dei maggior prencipi et più valorosi capitani di questa età con l'arme loro* (Venice: Giacomo Franco, 1596) – © New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

According to Wilson, stereotypes on the Ottoman were not yet focused on facial features. A hooked nose, for example, was not a feature of ethnicity as we would interpret it today, but could

84 Robyn D. Radway, "Christians of Ottoman Europe in Sixteenth-Century Costume Books," in *The Dialectics of Orientalism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marcus Keller and Javier Irigoyen-García (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 177-78.

express multiple traits such as a tendency to steal, magnanimity, top-notch military skills or regality. Instead, stereotypes circulated through language – the texts explaining the images in these types of books – and were focussed on actions. The traits associated with hooked noses refer to actions and behaviour.

Prejudices such as "*bestemmiare/bere/fumare come un turco*" are all focused on *behaving* like an Ottoman, not *looking like one*. These kinds of illustrated books, Wilson affirms, offered a very direct confrontation with the 'other' to discover the 'self'. And the Ottoman 'other' had exactly that which was lacking in the Venetians, that which they held in high regard and were terrified of.[85]

4 KNOWING THE OTTOMAN IN VENICE?

A final component concerning the dramatic creation of the Ottoman, besides images created in books about what he should be or look like, is the presence of prejudice and (mis)belief regarding the 'other'. These may have helped to determine character types and their behaviours when the fixed characters on which early modern drama is based, to whom we will return in the next chapter, 'turn Turk'.

Many stereotypes were born out of ignorance or because the Venetians misunderstood Ottoman values and habits. Preto notes, for example, that it is difficult to grasp to what extent the Venetians wished to view the 'other' on the basis of real knowledge and how far they simply wished to see a myth created. Did they perceive the 'other' based on that myth and deceive themselves that the created image of the Ottoman was the truth? To what extent is the literature based on medieval themes such as Mohammad being an impostor or Oriental elements in genres like epic poetry? To what extent is it based on knowledge of the Ottomans or on partly fantasised newsflashes which may be exaggerated or falsified? Discerning reality, traditional constructs and fiction here is not an easy task.[86]

This chapter has registered a strange paradox: though scholars have convincingly argued that political, cultural and religious boundaries were never absolute in the Mediterranean, we find almost solely negative stereotypes in the texts and images of Ottoman figures.

Renegades were viewed with suspicion, and were considered traitors and opportunists. The Ottomans were seen as a wealthy people of drunkards, though Islam prohibits alcohol, and luxurious people whose sultans had many women.

85 Radway, "Christians of Ottoman Europe in Sixteenth-Century Costume Books"; Eugenio Refini, "Bodily Passions. Physiognomy and Drama in Giovan Battista Della Porta," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 40, no. 1 (July 21, 2017): 121-39; Wilson, "Reflecting on the Turk in Late Sixteenth-Century Venetian Portrait Books"; Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 186-255 especially.

86 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 72-73.

They were frequently portrayed as monstrous, uncivilized, greedy barbarians who abused their slaves. Their sultans were decadent tyrants who murdered rivals to the throne, threatened Western leaders and enslaved their people. Islam was an instrument to reach this goal and they all formed a heretical sect to coerce Catholics into converting. The Ottomans were enemies of the faith against whom the Catholics were fighting a crusade. However, everything considered, inciting literature seems to have been short-lived in Venice. Some authors and diplomats praised the organisation of the Ottoman legal system, bureaucracy, army and their peaceful society, and the illustrated portrait books conveyed the image of the sultans as skilled military leaders.

Besides Ottoman men being described as libidinous, women were also sexualised. This tradition was already present in the Middle Ages, when Christian European authors represented Muslim women as potential lustful seductresses of Christian men. In the Early Modern Period, similar descriptions continued: same-sex affairs were reported to occur, in the bathhouse but especially at the sultan's harem or *seraglio*, and with good-looking wanton women at its centre. Indeed, the bathhouse was perceived as *the* site which witnessed scenes of sensual liberty and self-indulgence.[87] The image of the *seraglio* is also linked to the Western notion of Eastern despotism. In the harem, the tyrannical sultan was believed to hold orgies, and this space came to stand for a corrupted rule, as Leslie Peirce has shown.[88]

The importance of the harem cropped up in the sixteenth and especially the late seventeenth centuries, and significantly continued to determine the Orientalist imagery of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[89] Heather Madar states, however, that it is hardly represented in images.[90] She contends that, contrary to later Orientalist depictions of harem women, apart from some eroticising exceptions,[91] early modern portraits of elite Ottoman women of the *seraglio* are generally not explicitly contextualised in the harem, although their clothing is exotic and affirms their 'otherness'. In the Early Modern Period, these women are mainly characterised as interesting figures who possess political importance and a certain social status.[92] Their portraits are not based on observation but combine Orientalising fantasies with information of a questionable authenticity.[93]

87 Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 2. See pages 3-5 for textual examples of this imagery from the sixteenth century.

88 Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem. Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3; cited in Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 2.

89 Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 2.

90 Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 5.

91 Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 5-10.

92 Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 1.

93 For example, only her husband or family members could see a woman unveiled: Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 24-25.

Whereas the images were relatively neutral, Madar claims that texts contain plenty of fantastic descriptions regarding the harem.[94] Kahf asserts that Muslim women in medieval and early modern literature are portrayed as blonde and not dark beauties; already in Boccaccio, they are simply enterprising women.[95] Literature hardly distinguished between Muslim and Catholic women.[96] Maids, queens, wives, mothers, or concubines were simply types of women, opposed to men but not specifically linked to their Catholic or Muslim identity.[97]

In the Middle Ages, the typical female Muslim was the "enamoured Moslem princess". She was the sole Muslim woman that appeared in the text, was a woman of high standing who actively pursued her Christian lover, was imprisoned by her father, liberated him and went to Christian lands and converted for him. She had a brazen, assertive disposition and was promiscuous and over-talkative.[98]

Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, Kahf distinguishes two evolutions regarding Muslim women as literary characters. Some literary texts that hardly oppose Christian to Muslim women made Muslim women the equals of Western women. Other texts, such as Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), distinguished between Christian and Muslim women and opposed this contrast and the ideology that underlay it.[99] Tasso subdivides the medieval "enamoured Moslem princess" into three types who meet the basic stereotypical requirements but represent variations on this theme.[100] Muslim women in early modern literature were, in addition, less combative or exuberant than the medieval ones. They are opposed to other characters because they are women, not because they are 'Muslim women'.[101]

Besides these literary stereotypes, Preto registers the following ones regarding Ottomans whom Venetians met in person. They were vulgar, had no literary culture worth the name or printing presses, and were ignorant and uncivilised.[102] They were depicted as being incapable of behaving properly or showing affection,

94 Madar, "Before the Odalisque," 5.

95 Mohja Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts. 'Una Mujer a La Morisca Vestida,'" in *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman. From Tarmagant to Odalisque*, by Mohja Kahf (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 63. Moreover, in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587-1590), the beauty of the daughter of the Egyptian sultan Zenocrate is described in the manner in which English women in love sonnets are portrayed, namely in terms of precious gems, pearls and ivory (Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts," 70).

96 Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts," 58-59.

97 Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts," 70.

98 Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts," 73.

99 Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts," 70-71.

100 Kahf, "The Muslim Woman in Renaissance Texts," 73-80.

101 Mohja Kahf, "Introduction," in *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman. From Tarmagant to Odalisque*, by Mohja Kahf (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 5.

102 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 142.

and their lust for men and women alike knew no limits; they were seen as pursuing pleasure even outside of marriage. Being modest and servile with the strong and proud with the weak, they were without scruple and always rapacious, subversive, and ungrateful. Indeed, they became disagreeable and grovelling when times became rough; and when things took a turn for the better, they became bold and even arrogant. Most importantly, they were greedy and corrupt, and would do anything for money. Indeed, out of a force of habit – and, rather, on principle – they were false and two-faced. Therefore, they easily broke their word, betrayed or entrapped people; but despite their falseness they were honest tradesmen. At the same time, the word 'Turk' became synonymous for "cruel", "ferocious" and even "bloodthirsty". These stereotypes inform us about the image which the average Venetian had created of the Ottoman based on informative writings.[103]

Indeed, when the authors of poetry celebrating the victory at Lepanto came to use *turco* as a synonym of *eretico*, *cane* or *assassino*, this was a mere high-end literary transposition, Preto says, of the image of a delinquent Ottoman originating from the popular language.[104] It is especially the cruelty which resurfaces in the texts which Venetians produced. The 'Turkish threat' surely helped to preserve such thinking in Christian Europe.[105]

Preto expands on how individuals and writings influenced the Venetians' ideas on the Ottoman. His working assumption is that the patricians are more culturally prepared to understand the politico-military situation in the Ottoman Empire and the vast literature on the Ottoman. This literature was written by cultivated men and included stereotypes, fears and hopes. The circulation of ideas around the Ottoman among the illiterate populace was different.

Preto reminds us of other channels through which knowledge of the Ottoman could have spread. Through *avvisi* and sermons, the Venetians received not only information on the situation in Friuli but also resentful messages on the infidels and on individuals changing religious and political sides. The reaction was one of politico-religious hate. Even episodes of sudden collective fear towards the Ottoman were registered, all of which led to negative literary stereotypes (they are ferocious *barbari* and *cani*) and the use of idioms such as *bestemmiare/bere/fumare come un turco*. In this way, the Ottoman became a very negative figure.

Preto warns us that the average Venetian who did not travel to the East or the Balkans did not clearly distinguish between Ottomans and other 'Orientals' or 'foreigners'. Though the occasional Ottoman official passed through Venice,

103 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 143-46.

104 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 72.

105 Michael Frassetto and David R. Blanks, eds., *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Perception of Other* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 3.

their missions were too brief and infrequent to leave a lasting impression of the Ottoman mentality and outward appearance.

Also from slaves and merchants little information could be gained. Upon captivity, Muslims were often almost immediately either killed or exchanged for prisoners taken by the enemy, and if they did become members of patrician households, slaves went rather unnoticed. Ottoman merchants, Preto warns, were never as large a community as the Venetians were in Istanbul, even when they were installed at the *Fondaco*, so they could hardly influence the population's ideas and knowledge on the Ottoman. Francesca Trivellato has also asserted that Christian Europeans did not necessarily have a favourable opinion of the Ottomans merely because they traded with them.[106]

A more lasting impact was rather gained from personal contact with Ottomans or with Venetians returning from the Ottoman Empire and their written narratives, as well as from literature and popular representations of these Orientals. Particularly decisive for the image of the Ottoman were public spectacles and processions. The inspiration behind how to stage Ottoman behaviour, clothing, symbols and iconography can be found in 'high' literature, but Preto affirms that 'low class' contact with Ottomans present in Venice may also have helped to establish an idea of the Ottomans' outer appearance and clothing.[107]

In conclusion, the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire were at peace for the largest part of the sixteenth century. To ensure good trade relations and maintain the wealth of the republic, Venice continuously aimed at keeping the peace with the 'Turks'. Nonetheless, in the 1530s and 1570s important military campaigns were launched by the Catholics, in which Venice participated in order to safeguard its *stato da mar*. The victory at Lepanto from 1571 was crucial in defining the Venetian understanding of the Ottomans.

Many negative stereotypes circulated afterwards. Muslims were portrayed as violent barbarians, wealthy and lustful. They were guided by a powerful, tyrannical sultan. At the same time, Pedani has underlined how Venice largely avoided polemical literature. We have indeed seen that many Christians and Muslims interacted peacefully, and that knowledge on the 'Turks' circulated in many printed texts and images.

106 Francesca Trivellato, "Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work," *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 1 (n.d.): 153–154.

107 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 71-89.

Appraisals of the Ottomans varied from being extremely negative to being admiring. Though more nuanced views also circulated, especially those produced by the intellectual elite, Preto underlines that the enduring collective image of the Ottomans was especially formed by public spectacles and processions.

It is here, as we proceed to explore the performance culture surrounding the Ottoman, that we stand at the crossroads between 'high' literature and 'popular' spectacles. In the following chapter, I will trace the ways in which the 'other', and specifically the Ottoman, appeared in early modern Christian European and Venetian spectacle, and the way in which he was considered in theoretical treatises.


Rus.
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CHAPTER TWO

THE OTTOMAN IN EARLY MODERN SPECTACLE

1 IN THEORY

Now that the historical context and the image of the Ottoman that emerges from it have been made clear, both as concrete typologies that appear in the Venetian social fabric and as characters that appear in the literary imagination, this second chapter will turn to answer the question how these real types and literary characterisations of Ottomans are represented in early modern spectacle and drama.

The focus on the Ottoman as the most significant 'other' in early modern spectacle is highlighted in theoretical works: the Cinquecento is, after all, a century in which theorists rework classical tragedy and comedy and reflect at length on the writing of drama. Before turning to the actual performative appearances of the Ottoman, it is therefore worthwhile to turn to dramatic theory. Sixteenth-century theoretical reflections on drama contain some surprising exoticist elements long before the eighteenth century, which was famous for its exoticism.

As Nicola Savarese has written, it is not surprising that the sixteenth century is a period of rebirth for the portrayal of difference, since Christian Europeans tried to establish their own uniqueness as they explored the world beyond. These reflections include a perception of the differences between 'East' and 'West', be it in terms of the dress of 'other' peoples, the impressions of 'other' peoples' political regimes, religions or philosophies, or travel accounts,[1] as described earlier. As Savarese underlines, it is in the costume and outward appearance that the 'other' can immediately be recognised.[2]

> IMAGE 6 – Jacques Callot, *Illustration for the first act of the tragedy* Il Solimano *by Prospero Bonarelli* (Florence: Pietro Cecconcelli, 1620) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-5791

A first, essential type of theoretical reflection on drama and spectacle are dramatic 'paratexts'. Paratexts are counted as any kind of text which surrounds a printed work, such as an introduction, index, title

1 Nicola Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente* (Rome: Laterza, 2004), 64-65.

2 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 40-41.

or notes, as elaborated by Gérard Genette in his classic *Seuils*, which even regards interviews as *paratextes* of modern books. In Genette's study, dramatic paratexts are not easily classified compared to other types of paratexts.[3] However, scholars of the Early Modern Period are cautious to apply the term uncritically to early modern paratexts.[4]

Not only was the paratext the *locus* where the author could shape his own image and put himself in the spotlight, but it also had practical importance to both author and dedicatee,[5] and it was where authors expressed their poetic ideas. Regarding the paratexts of early modern plays, Philiep Bossier and Rolien Scheffer have both recently emphasised their importance to the dramatic genre. For the authors of stage texts, the introductory parts were the places where they declared whether the genre, which was gradually modernising, should be conservative rather than innovative compared to its ancient models.[6]

Theoretical reflections as we find them in paratexts often refer regularly to Horace's *Ars poetica* (ca. 20 B.C.), which, besides the art of poetry, also focuses on the *ars drammatica*. *The* authority consulted in the Early Modern Period, however,

3 Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987).

4 Scholars have looked at the early modern paratext in various ways. In general, Bossier and Scheffer connected the development of the paratext as a genre on its own in the Cinquecento to print becoming an art in its own right. In the paratext, the author, who now took on the 'mask' of the professional writer, reconstructed his or her ideas and personal network. Bossier and Scheffer are interested in the paratexts' contents and adopt literary and historical approaches, whereas others, such as Smith and Wilson's and Santoro and Gioia Tavoni's volumes, approach them from the viewpoint of book historians. See: Philiep Bossier and Rolien Scheffer, "Introduzione," in *Soglie testuali. Funzioni del paratesto nel secondo Cinquecento e oltre/Textual Thresholds. Functions of Paratexts in the Late Sixteenth Century and Beyond. Atti della giornata di studi, Università di Groningen, 13 dicembre 2007*, ed. Philiep Bossier and Rolien Scheffer (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2010), 14-18; Marco Santoro and Maria Gioia Tavoni, eds., *I Dintorni Del Testo. Approcci Alle Periferie Del Libro. Atti Del Convegno Internazionale (Roma, 15-17 Novembre 2004; Bologna, 18-19 Novembre 2004)* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2005), 18-19; Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, eds., *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For a more elaborate *status quaestionis*, see Lies Verbaere, "'By Consultation of Elevated Minds'. The Role of Paratexts in Giovanni Battista Calderari's Comedies," ed. Teodoro Katinis, Claudia Crocco, and Ruben Celani, *Renaissance Studies. Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies. Special Issue on Paratexts, Dissemination and the Book Market in Early Modern Venice (1500-1650)* 38, no. 1 (2024): 143-62.

5 As Marco Paoli describes, both parties had something to gain. The author wished to obtain financial recompense from the dedicatee, whose sponsorship allowed the book to be printed and reach a large audience which discovered the favourable portrayal of the dedicatee in the book. Should the *mecenate* not pay, the author was allowed to change dedicatee, but the dedicatee's name continued to appear even in later prints while the author received no extra reward from them. For these and other directives, see Marco Paoli, "*Ad Ercole Musagete*. Il sistema delle dediche nell'editoria italiana di Antico regime," in *I dintorni del testo. Approcci alle periferie del libro. Atti del convegno internazionale (Roma, 15-17 novembre 2004; Bologna, 18-19 novembre 2004)*, ed. Marco Santoro and Maria Gioia Tavoni (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2005), 149-65. Paoli stresses that both authors and patrons often neglected these unwritten rules. For example, to avoid not getting paid and acquire more funding, authors sometimes dedicated one work to more than one benefactor. Such abuses were condemned by Giovanni Fratta in his dialogue *Della dedicatione de' libri, con la correttion dell'abuso, in questa materia introdotto, dialoghi del signor Giovanni Fratta, nobile veronese* (Venice: Giorgio Angelieri, 1590).

6 Bossier and Scheffer, "Introduzione," 12-13; Luigi Allegri goes further into the subject in "Teoria e poetica del teatro moderno," in *Storia del teatro moderno e contemporaneo. Vol 1. La nascita del teatro moderno. Cinquecento-Seicento*, ed. Roberto Alonge and Guido Davico Bonino (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 1183-1205.

is Aristotle and his *Poetics* (ca. 335 B.C.), which analyses the genres of epic poetry and tragedy. A reading of these texts and Vitruvius's *De architectura* (ca. 30-20 B.C.), which was translated by Daniele Barbaro in 1556,[7] leads me to conclude that they contain no explicit references to 'otherness'.

We can consider Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (ca. 360-355 B.C.) as an early example of theoretic treatise which underlined the *meraviglia* that "le cose lontane" can generate in an audience. Aristotle says that this *meraviglia* can be felt when one is confronted with strangers and fellow citizens, as well as with alienating linguistic expressions:

> Allontanarsi dall'uso comune fa sì che sembri più solenne [il linguaggio]. La stessa impressione che gli individui provano nei confronti degli stranieri e dei concittadini, la provano anche nei confronti del linguaggio. Per questo occorre rendere esotica la lingua: si prova meraviglia per le cose lontane e ciò che produce meraviglia risulta piacevole.[8]

In many of the tracts that I have consulted, I found no mention of how to stage 'others'.[9] However, a similar connection to Aristotle's between "cose lontane" and

7 These three texts by Aristotle, Horace and Vitruvius are central prescriptive texts for Renaissance drama and its stage. See Roberto Alonge, "La riscoperta rinascimentale del teatro," in *Storia del teatro moderno e contemporaneo. Vol 1. La nascita del teatro moderno. Cinquecento-Seicento*, ed. Roberto Alonge and Guido Davico Bonino (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 90-93; and Allegri, "Teoria e poetica del teatro moderno," 1184-85. The first comments on these ancient models and, at the same time, thorough reconsiderations of dramatic theory are found in Francesco Robortello's *In librum Aristotelis De Arte Poetica Explicationes* (1548) and Lodovico Castelvetro's *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta* (1570). I consulted the following editions for the three basic dramatic theorical texts: Aristotele, *Poetica. Introduzione, traduzione e commento di Daniele Guastini*, ed. Davide Guastini (Rome: Carocci Editore, 2010); Orazio, "De Arte Poetica Liber/ Arte Poetica," in *Tutte Le Opere*, ed. Luciano Paolicchi (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1993), 1066-1129; and Vitruvio, *I dieci libri dell'architettura. Tradotti e commentati da Daniele Barbaro*, trans. Daniele Barbaro (Rome: Bardi Editore, 2006).

8 Aristotele, *Retorica. Introduzione, traduzione e commento di Silvia Gastaldi*, ed. Silvia Gastaldi (Rome: Carocci Editore, 2014), 275.

9 Aristotele, *Poetica*; Orazio, "Arte Poetica"; Daniele Barbaro, "Della eloquenza," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 2 (Rome: Laterza, 1974), 335-451; Lodovico Castelvetro, Poetica *d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta*, ed. Werther Romani (Rome: Laterza, 1978); Giason Denores, "Breve trattato dell'oratore," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 3 (Rome: Laterza, 1974), 101-34; Giason Denores, "Discorso intorno a que' principii, cause et accrescimenti che la comedia, la tragedia et il poema eroico ricevono dalla filosofia morale e civile e da' governatori delle republiche; onde si raccoglie la diffinizione e distinzione della poesia nelle predette tre sue parti e la descrizione particolare di ciascheduna," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 3 (Rome: Laterza, 1974), 373-419; Pino da Cagli, "Breve considerazione intorno al componimento de la comedia de' nostri tempi"; Nicolò Rossi, "Discorsi intorno alla comedia," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 4 (Rome: Laterza, 1974), 27-57; Sebastiano Serlio, *Regole generali di architetura sopra le cinque maniere degli edifici cioè thoscano, dorico, ionico, corinthio et composito, con gli essempi dell'antiquità che per la magior parte concordano con la dottrina di Vitruvio* (Venice: Francesco Marcolini da Forlì, 1537); Gian Giorgio Trissino, "La poetica (I-IV)," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 1 (Rome: Laterza, 1970), 21-158; Vitruvio, *I dieci libri dell'architettura. Tradotti e commentati da Daniele Barbaro*. Unfortunately I do not know Latin, so for a general overview of the contents of Robortello's rhetorical and poetic ideas I relied

their effect on the observer runs like a thread through those few sixteenth-century texts that do emphasise – in an almost 'exoticist' fashion – the outward aspects of the Oriental 'other' in drama. As Savarese has noted, one of the first early modern authors to assert the necessity of performing in foreign costumes is Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinzio in his *Discorsi […] intorno al comporre dei romanzi, delle comedie, e delle tragedie, e di altre maniere di poesie* (1554, already published in 1543 as *Discorso intorno al comporre delle commedie e delle tragedie*):[10]

> Non sarà nondimeno se non bene che nell'una e nell'altra scena [i.e. comedy and tragedy] siano gli abiti degli istrioni di lontano paese. Perché la novità degli abiti genera admirazione, e fa lo spettatore più intento allo spettacolo che non sarebbe se vedesse gli istrioni vestiti degli abiti ch' egli ha continuamente negli occhi.[11]

Besides claiming that the unfamiliarity with actors' foreign dress gives rise to admiration, Giraldi underscores that it makes the spectator more focused on what happens on stage. Leone de' Sommi, who probably wrote his *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche* in the late 1560s or at the beginning of the 1570s,[12] elaborates more extensively on the topic:

> Ma perché ogni novità più piace assai, riesce molto piacevole spettacolo veder in scena abiti barbari et astratti dalle nostre usanze, et quindi aviene che riescono per lo più così vaghe le comedie vestite alla greca. Et per questo, più che per altra cagione, fo io che la scena della comedia nostra che vedrete martedì (piacendo a Dio) si finge Costantinopoli, per poter introdurvi abiti così di donne come di uomeni, inusitati fra noi, onde spero d'aggiunger vaghezza non poca allo spettacolo, oltre che più ci parrà sempre verisimile il veder succeder fra genti strane, e che non conosciamo, di quelle cose che per lo più nelle comedie si rappresentono, che vederle acadere tra cittadini co' quali abbiamo continova pratica.[13]

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on Marco Sgarbi's recent book *Francesco Robortello (1516-1567). Architectural Genius of the Humanities* (New York London: Routledge, 2020), 77-102 and 103-38 respectively.

10 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 68.

11 Ferruccio Marotti, *Lo spettacolo dall'Umanesimo al Manierismo. Teoria e tecnica. Storia documentaria del teatro italiano.* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974), 235; also cited in Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 68.

12 Ferruccio Marotti, "Nota sulla datazione," in *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, by Leone De' Sommi, ed. Ferruccio Marotti (Milan: Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1968), 77-79. Only a manuscript copy from the late eighteenth century has survived: see Ferruccio Marotti, "Nota al testo," in *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, by Leone De' Sommi, ed. Ferruccio Marotti (Milan: Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1968), 80-82.

13 Leone De' Sommi, *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, ed. Ferruccio Marotti (Milan: Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1968), 50.

In this passage, in which de' Sommi discusses the verisimilitude of the dramatic costume, he makes three other claims regarding 'otherness' with respect to Giraldi's perception of 'otherness' as generating admiration and focus. Firstly, "abiti barbari et astratti dalle nostre usanze" ensure that a play becomes more enjoyable, attractive to look at, and "verisimile". In other words, according to de' Sommi, the comic action is increasingly credible if it takes place among foreign, unknown peoples rather than among 'ourselves', in the world which the spectator knows and observes daily. He goes on to expand on tragedy, where the effect proves even more successful:

> Et se questo riesce ben nelle comedie, come per isperienza ne siamo certissimi, tanto più succederà bene nelle tragedie. Nel vestir delle quali dovrà sempre chi le guida esser deligentissimo, non vestendo mai (se sia possibile) i suoi interlocutori a i modi che modernamente si costuma, ma nelle maniere che su le scolture antiche, o su le pitture figurati si veggono, con quei manti, et con quelli abbigliamenti co' quali si figurano così vagamente, quei personaggi de gl'antichi secoli. Et perché tra i più belli spettacoli si mostra bellissimo il veder comittiva di uomeni armati, lodo che si facci comparire, in compagnia de i re o de i capitani, sempre alcuni soldati et gladiatori guarniti all'antica ne i modi che nelle castramentazioni de i primi tempi si dissegnano, quando però la occasione lo patisca.[14]

Regarding tragedy, de' Sommi exhorts stage professionals to not use modern costume, but to resort to ancient dress. It is especially attractive, he states, to see soldiers and gladiators dressed in the fashion of the ancients, but only when necessary.

Angelo Ingegneri's *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (1598) closes the line-up, Savarese says, of Cinquecento authors of dramatic treatises that mention 'otherness':[15]

> Dintorno ai vestimenti, […] noi, usando in ciò maggior libertà e pigliando le cose più in univesale [*sic*] per meglio conformarci al moderno costume, ch'è ito molto avanzando di larghezza e di pompa, saremo contenti di considerare che, come le persone si distinguono fra di esse mediante il sesso, l'età, la condizione e la professione, così anco i vestimenti in generale si fanno tra di loro differenti. […] Eziandio si variano gli abiti secondo 'l portamento della nazione o della provincia; come a dire, parlando all'antica, la toga s'usava in Italia e 'l pallio in

14 De' Sommi, *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, 50-51.

15 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 68.

> Grecia. E alla moderna, l'abito corto fra i Francesi e gli Spagnoli; in Ungheria, in Polonia e in tutto 'l Levante il lungo; e fra gl'Italiani, in Venezia quella che si dice maniche a gomito; in Lucca e Fiorenza il lucco, in Genova la cappa lunga, in Bologna il robbone e altrove il ferraiuolo o la cappa corta. Sarà per tanto da vedere in qual paese si finga la favola che si rappresenta, e secondo l'usanza di quella nazione si devranno vestire i recitanti.[16]

From Ingegneri's text, which was written at the very end of the sixteenth century, it becomes clear that, by then, modern costumes have become more bombastic and varied. As dress in reality changed from region to region and nation to nation, being adapted to a person's gender, age, status and profession, so too theatrical costumes represented these variations. Savarese also asserts how Ingegneri anticipated a geographically and historically more realistic use of costume which became in vogue from the Settecento onwards.[17]

While Ingegneri suggests providing realistic representations, in the other treatises the authors are concerned with the effect of unfamiliar or ancient costumes. These provide an attractive and enjoyable mise-en-scène that stages credible action (de' Sommi), and makes the audience feel admiration and focus on the play (Giraldi).

An older treatise that slipped Savarese's attention, though I cannot claim exhaustivity on my part, only very briefly mentions the staging of 'others'. In his *La quinta e la sesta divisione della* Poetica (ca. 1549), Giovan Giorgio Trissino explicitly mentions the 'Turk'. Not only is it pleasant to hear unfamiliar words (*barbarismi*) spoken on stage, in his view, but Trissino also describes barbarous nations, and declares that "il Turco se introdurrà arrogante, omicidiario, ignorante, inimico delle virtù e dell'ingegni e della nobiltà".[18] Trissino deems foreign nations such as France, England, or Germany to be 'barbaric' as well, but the quotation makes clear that, to him, the Ottoman is the exact opposite of everything that the Christian stands for. Elsewhere, he claims that

> essendo la poesia […] tutta imitazione, penso che a volere di essa ottimamente trattare sia bisogno essaminare e considerare tre cose. L'una è quello con che si fa questa tale imitazione; l'altra è quali siano quelle cose le quali devemo imitare; la terza è poi a che modo imitare le devemo. Sì come, adunque, ogni imitare o vero contrafare che si fa degli altri uomini si fa (come dice Platone)

16 Angelo Ingegneri, *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche*, ed. Maria Luisa Doglio (Modena: Edizioni Panini, 1989), 29.

17 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 68.

18 Gian Giorgio Trissino, "La quinta e sesta divisione della poetica," in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 2 (Rome: Laterza, 1970), 63-64; for the quotation, see 64.

> con figure e con voce, et Aristotele vi aggiunse anco con colori perciò che a voler ben contrafare un altr'uomo non solamente si pigliano le figure e forme ch'egli ha (cioè la figura di gobbo s'egli è gobbo, o di zoppo, o di guercio, o di altre qualità ch'egli abbia), ma ancora si piglia e si contrafà il suo parlare e la sua voce e talora si contrafà e si piglia il suo colore. Cioè, per contrafare un che sia bianco, si fa bianco; e per contrafare un Moro o Saracino si fa nero.[19]

To imitate nature, and specifically real human beings, we should imitate one's figure, voice, and colour. Therefore, to imitate a Moor or Saracen, one should paint himself black. This brief mention of the practice of blackface brings us to how the 'other' was effectively staged.

2 IN PRACTICE

This focus on the effect of foreign appearance is also emphasised when Ottomans appear in early modern spectacle. The 'umbrella-term' *spettacolo* includes much more than just theatre, and thanks to continued contacts and exchanges with the Orient, it underwent influences from Mongol, Byzantine, Indian, Turkish or Arabic provenance. As in the case of writings on the Ottoman, it must be noted that Orientalizing spectacles, with their use of costumes and scenographies to meet the escapist needs of its audience, often represented realities proper to the Western world and imagination, even if they aspired to authentically reflect the 'other' culture or if their makers acquired more knowledge about the 'other world'.[20]

Orientals first appear in European spectacle in the fifth century B.C., in Greek tragedies which set the Greeks against the barbaric Persians. During the Roman period, when the 'East' was seen less as a threat, classical comedy and tragedy were supplanted by Egyptian and Syrian mime and pantomime players, who played music and danced. This non-verbal tradition was strongly continued in Byzantium after the fall of the Roman Empire, but in Christian Europe the Orient influenced (late) medieval and early modern spectacle in other ways.[21]

Ottoman and Moorish costumes became less strange and inimical because of the increase in political and commercial contact. The Ottoman now adopted a harmless, magnificent, and exotic profile. In the Early Modern Period, he became part of courtly dances, triumphs, jousts, feasts, and state ceremonies such as

19 Trissino, "La quinta e sesta divisione della poetica," 11.

20 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 40-41.

21 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, XXI-XXIV. See the first chapter, "La maschera di Marco Polo. Il mito dell'Asia nel teatro occidentale dall'antichità al Rinascimento" for Savarese's more elaborate discussion on influences by and exchanges with the Orient in ancient and medieval times.

diplomatic missions or the weddings and births of nobles.[22] By coexisting with representations in the private space – in monasteries and *palazzi* – these public events are slightly different in Venice.

Led by an elected doge and not a hereditary prince, la *Serenissima* did not possess a court as was commonplace in other Italian city-states. Instead, patricians and merchants acted as a homogeneous group which took initiative to spread Venetian discourse. As Sisto Dalla Palma affirms, these figures are especially connected to their city's reality, and vice versa the Venetians are attached to their cultural and political centres of initiative. The public space becomes a *locus* of adherence or negotiation. By partaking in public spectacle, a sense of belonging to one's community is awakened and thus a Venetian identity is created and continuously enacted. Part of these representations are also influenced by contact with other European countries and mainly with the Orient.[23] Venice, being a cosmopolitan city, was receptive to foreign presences, especially those of the Ottomans and Moors. It was also, as Ralph P. Locke asserts, a particularly theatrical city where performances evoking the 'strange' and 'foreign' were commonly found.[24]

2.1 SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SPECTACLE AND THE 'OTHER'

Sixteenth-century spectacle is replete with the presence of the 'other'. In what follows, I will try to flesh out the forms of Cinquecento spectacle that can help us to better imagine the modes of appearance of the Ottoman. I will first of all consider spectacle in general, and then I will turn to drama, particularly focussing on the types of Ottoman characters that are staged and on their physical appearance. References to Venice will be made whenever possible.

Kathleen M. Ashley remarks that, in events such as court festivals, royal entries, banquets, pageants and processions, masques and tournaments, Ottoman figures were rarely represented as enemy rogues which embody political messages. Rather, they were flamboyant, brightly coloured, and even cheerful characters.[25]

22 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 65-66.

23 Alessandro Pontremoli and Patrizia La Rocca, *La danza a Venezia nel Rinascimento. Introduzione di Sisto Dalla Palma* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1993), XI-XIII. On Venetian ritual, see Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). A recent contribution on the propagation of Venetian identity through public architecture is Luigi Robuschi, *La Repubblica delle emozioni. Retorica e comunicazione politica nella Venezia rinascimentale* (Milano: Mimesis Edizioni, 2022).

24 Ralph P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 171.

25 Ashley also tries to offer an explanation of the discrepancy between the Ottoman as an enemy which would make us expect a demonising image, and his often positive representation during these spectacular events. She points to the aesthetic effect of Oriental figures like the Ottoman, which serves as a bridge between the foreign and the familiar. Visual markers like gestures and costume define whether something

However, spectacular events seem to have mainly been concerned with conflict. Decorations during jousts and feasts recalled Oriental elements, and participants in tournaments were dressed as Ottomans, Arabs or Tartars.[26] At times this included the donning of a face-mask representing an Ottoman or Moor. Knights also trained their combat skills on horseback while riding into fixed targets, which were often heads or life-size wooden statues of Ottomans and Moors, complete with helmets, turbans, and blackened faces. The fight with the Ottoman symbolically permeated knightly combat culture, but also during courtly festivities full-scale battles between Muslims and Christians were regularly re-enacted. These parades often involved re-enactments of maritime combat, which reinforced the idea of the Christian dominion of the seas and were accompanied by the music of drummers and trumpeters.[27]

In Venice, a city intimately tied to its lagoon, the *volo del turco* was a famous event which occurred during carnival from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards. The *compagnie delle calze*, associations of young Venetian noblemen who were always ready to organize a party – especially theatrical shows – hired adventurous acrobats to inaugurate the carnival by walking on ropes which extended from the *campanile* on Piazza San Marco to the lagoon where they were tied to boats.[28] Edward Muir and Jaffe-Berg have argued that these tightrope walkers were real 'Turks'.[29]

The event, Jaffe-Berg suggests, not only drew attention to the importance of water to the Venetians, but also to the rivalry between the Venetian and the Ottoman. The rope walker hovered over the crowd on the ground and the lagoon, while at the same time being symbolically subjugated by the Venetian onlookers

is perceived as exotic. Ashley also distinguishes between the audiences in question. When smaller groups with a sense of belonging witnessed the sudden arrival of exotic characters, they came to better understand the "performance code" that encompasses an interaction between Oriental amazement and known ritual practice. However, when a large and varied group of spectators witnesses foreign figures, there is less control over their interpretation or action in the face of these exotic characters. Therefore, Ashley says, public festivities often took care to "enact legislation" in order to keep in check both the spectators' reactions and the representation of the 'other'. See Kathleen M. Ashley, "'Strange and Exotic'. Representing the Other in Medieval and Renaissance Performance," in *East of West. Cross-Cultural Performance and the Staging of Difference*, ed. Claire Sponsler and Xiaomei Chen (New York (N.Y.): Palgrave, 2000), 86-87.

26 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, XXVI, 45, and 65-66.

27 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 53. For re-enactments of naval battles referring to the Ottomans, see Marie-Claude Canova-Green, "Lepanto Revisited. Water-Fights and the Turkish Threat in Early Modern Europe (1571–1656)," in *Waterborne Pageants and Festivities in the Renaissance. Essays in Honour of J.R. Mulryne*, ed. Margaret Shewring and Linda Briggs (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 177-98.

28 Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 171; Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 87-88.

29 Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 171; Erith Jaffe-Berg, "*Ebrei* and *Turchi* Performing in Early Modern Venice and Mantua," in *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. M.A. Katritzky and Pavel Drábek (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 226.



who wished to dominate the 'East'.[30] However, Jaffe-Berg has also contended that Turkish and Jewish performers used their roles as performers in order to make themselves visible as 'others' and negotiate with the Venetians.[31]

The 'Turk' was also a mask used during *carnevale*, and as a figure was often put on display. When news reached the *Serenissima* in October 1571 of the triumph over the Ottomans at Lepanto, the victors reached Venice in the galley *Arcangelo Gabriele* and its crew was dressed up as Ottomans. The Venetian political leader and historian Paolo Paruta writes: "[C]omparve questa galea […] e perché a poppa aveva molti soldati vestiti con abiti turcheschi delle spoglie tolte a' nemici, riuscì la prima apparenza varia e dubbiosa, stando alquanto per la novità ed incertezza della cosa gli animi sospesi." However, as the galley approached and the Venetians heard "Vittoria, vittoria", the people in Piazza San Marco, reassured, happily cried back "Vittoria, vittoria!"[32]

Slavery, a crucial theme for early modern drama as we will see, was also widespread in early modern spectacle. Preto asserts that a favourite theme during pageants for allegorical representations seems to have been a triumphal chariot being dragged along by mock Ottoman prisoners.[33] A description from the carnival in 1571 tells us that eight mock prisoners, bound in chains and dressed in colourful silk jackets with "in testa parte con tulipani et parte con barette lunghe alla turchesca", pulled a float. Behind this triumphal chariot walked 140 "Turchi a guisa de schiavi", and the cart dragged many Ottoman banners behind it. Four *villani* sung mocking songs about the Ottoman: "Turco sassin, can laro, patarin".[34]

> IMAGE 7 – An Oriental horseman in 1606, who probably participated in the celebrations for the wedding of Henri II, duke of Lorraine, and princess Margherita Gonzaga, niece of Maria de' Medici, the queen of France – Jacques Bellange, *Cavalier oriental*, 1602-1616, drawing, 236 x 345 mm – © Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Collection Edmond de Rothschild, 1611 DR/Recto – Image: Thierry Le Mage

During the carnival of 1572, a *mascherata* was organised during which a hundred extras were dressed as Ottoman slaves. Three groups represented Asia (dressed *alla turchesca*), Africa (dressed *alla moresca*), and Europe (dressed *all'italiana*), and they

30 Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia Dell'Arte and the Mediterranean*, 99-100. In this book, Jaffe-Berg does not explicitly claim that the Turkish tightrope walkers were real "Turks", but says that they *represented* Turks. In her later article, Jaffe-Berg, "*Ebrei* and *Turchi* Performing in Early Modern Venice and Mantua", she provides some evidence that the performers likely were actual Ottomans.

31 Erith Jaffe-Berg, "*Ebrei* and *Turchi* Performing in Early Modern Venice and Mantua," in *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. M.A. Katritzky and Pavel Drábek (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 222-41.

32 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 49-50. On the celebrations for Lepanto, see also Mammana, *Lèpanto*.

33 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 88.

34 Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 87-88; for the quotation, see 88. "Laro" means "ladro".

sung a madrigal to celebrate the victory. An allegory of Faith ('Fede') trampled a serpent which represented the Ottoman, and on the last cart, which transported a halved serpent, 'Vittoria' trampled an Ottoman slave.[35]

As this event shows, the 'Turk' was not only represented as 'himself' but was also portrayed allegorically as a serpent, hydra or dragon. This image appeared even more in popular prints than in official art and, as Gibellini underlines, it connected the Christian imagery of the devil as a serpent with that of classical mythological monsters.[36] As Gibellini explains, the association between the Ottoman and the dragon and Caronte are typical for Venetian literature, Venetian processions and at times also celebrative paintings.[37]

When Venice commemorated the founding of the Holy League in May 1571 on the second of July of that same year, various images of the Ottoman were presented to the audience during a procession. They were exhibited on "tribunali", allegorical carnival floats organised by one of the city's *scuole grandi* or confraternities. In the first part of the parade, three young men representing Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint Mark fought a dragon coming out of a cave with their swords. The fierce head of the dragon was topped with a crescent: it represented the *Gran Turco*, as the Ottoman sultan was called. Another carnival float showed Charon, Hades' ferryman, carrying the 'Turk' to hell. We find an account of this in the anonymous *Il bellissimo et sontuoso trionfo fatto nella magnifica città di Venetia nella pubblicatione della Lega* (1571):[38]

> Sopra il primo [tribunale] portavano un grande dracone rappresentatto per il gran Turco, sopra il cui capo era una luna nella quale tre giovani vestiti riccamente con le spade nude percotevano, or l'uno or l'altro, nella ditta luna […]. Seguiva poi un altro tribunale sopra il quale era una barchetta guidata da uno moro nudo con le ale e corna che pareva proprio un diavolo; credo che rappresentava Caronte, e nella sua barca vi era dentro uno vestito da turco.[39]

Another image that was actively connected to the Ottomans was that of the Biblical Judith and Holofernes. In this scene, Judith impersonates Venice as she triumphs

35 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 55.

36 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 22.

37 As are, among others, representations of Venetian heroes as mythical demigods, antique warriors or saints; the fight between demons and angels; or the image of the sea which is red with blood. See Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 10.

38 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 20-22.

39 Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto*, 21-22.

over the undisciplined and barbaric Ottoman Empire, the decapitated military leader Holofernes.[40]

The Ottoman as the undaunted soldier was also manifested repeatedly all over Christianity in courtly ballets – a genre which began to distinguish itself in the 1570s, in which princes traditionally asserted their power. In these dances, the Ottoman took on the shape of vicious or, on the contrary, generous sovereigns; very compliant, foolish or even drunk slaves and servants; or pirates.

The focus was not on religious markers, but on outward characteristics. First of all, as Locke underlines, the combination of odd sounds in the music (for example, the use of rough tones) and Orientalising performances (for example, the use of angular gestures or exotic costumes) could induce the audience to perceive the spectacle as strongly foreign. Second, the dancers' dress enhanced these exotic associations. Typically, male figures were given hooked noses or thick black moustaches, and wore a turban and a scimitar, pistol or dagger. It seems that the skin of these Ottoman soldiers was not always blackened, perhaps because many Muslim neophytes were mobilized from the Balkans during this period; however, Locke does not exclude that pirates may have been painted as darker since they were exceedingly exposed to the sun in real life.

The women, who were portrayed by male dancers, were generally stereotyped as sensual and attractive creatures of the sultan's harem, who were manipulative and wished to outshine each other to become the sultan's favourite. They were often shown as being fair-haired and pale-skinned, since it was believed that Ottoman men preferred foreign women. It is interesting to note the link with literature: in 1617, we are told of a story in which the French king Louis XIII and his male professional dancers and courtiers danced *La délivrance de Renaud*. The ballet described how Armida, the Muslim sorceress from Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), seduced Rinaldo, the champion among the Christian crusaders.[41]

A very particular Orientalising dance which was also performed at court was the so-called *moresca*, although Enrico Fulchignoni emphasises that this very popular dance is curiously absent from treatises on aristocratic dances.[42] The *moresche* first appeared between the eleventh and twelfth centuries and became widespread all over Christian Europe. Savarese suggests that the *moresche* may constitute the first conscious attempt to portray hostilities against the Orient in spectacle.

40 See Barzman, *The Limits of Identity*, especially the third chapter, "Judith Triumphant. Severed Heads on Public Monuments and in Celebrations of Venetian Victory".

41 Ralph P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 143-44, and 163. Locke emphasises that, in similar exoticist courtly ballets, implicit comments were made on courtly life or alternative ways of thinking (152-54).

42 Enrico Fulchignoni, "Oriental Influences on the Commedia Dell'Arte," *Asian Theatre Journal* 7, no. 1 (1990): 34.



Originally, the conflict between Christians and Muslims (or 'Turks', also called *mori* or *saraceni*, especially in medieval times) and folk tales or local encounters with the *mori* were recounted through allegorical representations or dance. By the end of the fourteenth century, as we will see, the *moresche* had their own particular costumes, music, movements, figures, and could even contain a spoken prologue or dialogue. In the fifteenth century, their popularity grew even more and they were inserted into mime spectacles, carnival masquerades, sacred performances (*sacre rappresentazioni*), and in the *intermezzi* or *intermedi* in between the acts of dramatic performances.

Their form changed even further in the sixteenth century. The *moresche* merged with courtly dances and became musical pieces; for example, Orlando di Lasso composed some *moresche* while in Naples. They also abounded in theatrical *intermezzi*; the comedy *Calandria* by the cardinal Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, for instance, which was performed in 1513 in Rome and Urbino and was a model for future Cinquecento drama, featured a *moresca* in the first *intermedio*.

> IMAGE 8 – The Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I had his manuscript *Freydal* on his fictional alter ego of the same name illustrated by his court painters. In it, the emperor takes part in jousts, festivities, and dances. In this watercolour preparatory drawing to *Freydal*, six Oriental characters with long beards are shown wearing brocade robes, turbans and swords – Anonymous (German artist), *Parading Knights in Oriental Costume*, 1512-1515, watercolour, 23,5 x 23,5 cm, from: *Freydal. The Book of Jousts and Tournament of Emperor Maximilian I.* Vol. 3. *Combats on Foot* – © Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1964.8.1760

In the seventeenth century, they were still a large part of baroque *intermedi* and court ballets, and Oriental and Ottoman characters remained in fashion as a result of continued conflicts between Christians and Muslims.[43] In Seicento Italian opera, the *moresca* was frequently used for (serious or comic) battle or victory scenes.[44]

In the *Serenissima*, the *moresca* was also very visible. People disguised themselves by putting on masks and strapping bells to their legs, or by dancing *moresche* on the Venetian bridges and canals.[45] During the *Festa dei tori* in the carnival period, those who were employed in the Venetian arsenal mounted the stages and declared that *moresche* be danced on them.[46]

Indeed, in early modern Italy, besides being a dance form which portrayed combat scenes with

43 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 45-46.

44 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 125.

45 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 171.

46 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 52.

theatrical and pantomimic characteristics, the *moresche* were a part of extravagant spectacles, especially during official occasions such as tournaments and jousts, banquets or theatrical performances, and which were given by both professional or courtier dancers.[47] The *moresche* were considered to be related to Southern Europe and, as Locke notes, connected to eccentricity and foolishness.[48]

Jennifer Nevile and Maria Kavvadia have also pointed out how the contrast between the 'self' and the 'other' was brought to life by these stagings. The performance of 'others', such as through blackface, Nevile argues, served to delineate one's own refined culture. *Moresche* scenes of civility stood in contrast with the barbaric and savage characters that appeared. These unfamiliar figures were exotic and clearly did not belong to one's own society in the eyes of both the audience and participants. They made visible the difference from 'us', Nevile says, and, Kavvadia adds, they were meant to satisfy the elite's soft spot for the wondrous and exceptional.

A variety of scenes entertained the audience, ranging from the pastoral, agricultural, and allegorical, to the exotic and heroic, and further to parody military events. A spectrum of modes of performance accompanied these settings, ranging from mime and dance, usually with grotesque gesticulations and motions to the presence of concise narrative plots. Figures such as vice or virtue appeared, but also 'others' such as jesters, farmers, decrepit old men, savages, wild men, mythical creatures or heroes, and barbarians and 'Turks'.[49]

The *moresche* made use of special effects like fire, scenery adjusted to the contents of the performance, props, and ornate costumes consisting of expensive fabrics, masks and headgear. A prominent feature was the blackening of the face and hands to reinforce the perception of the 'exotic'.[50] For example, Locke cites the dance treatise *Orchésographie* (1589) by Thoinot Arbeau (a pseudonym for Jehan Tabourot),[51] who elaborates on the exterior features and dancing movements of the *moresca*. Arbeau describes how he saw a performance of

47 Locke asserts that low, comical or exotic roles were mostly delegated to professional dancers, and that aristocrats were responsible for allegorical roles such as honour. They only exceptionally danced as exotic figures. A famous example is Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness*, performed in 1605, in which Queen Anne and her female courtiers played "blackamoors". This was viewed with disgust by one observer (Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 140-41).

48 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 115.

49 Maria Kavvadia, "The *Moresca* Dance in Counter-Reformation Rome. Court Medicine and the Moderation of Exceptional Bodies," in *Exceptional Bodies in Early Modern Culture. Concepts of Monstrosity Before the Advent of the Normal*, ed. Maja Bondestam (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 41-42. These pages cite Nevile's interpretation: Jennifer Nevile, *The Eloquent Body. Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington (Ind.): Indiana University Press, 2004). See Kavvadia's essay for a recent bibliography on the subject as well.

50 Kavvadia, "The *Moresca* Dance in Counter-Reformation Rome," 41-42.

51 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 395.

> un garçonnet mâchuré et noircy, le front bandé d'un taffetats blanc ou jaulne, lequel avec des jambières de sonnettes dançoit la dance des morisques, et marchant du long de la salle, faisoit une sorte de passage, puis rétrogradant, revenoit au lieu ou il avoit commencé, et faisoit un aultre passage nouveau, et ainsi continuant, faisoit divers passages bien aggréables aux assistans […]. Les morisques se dancent par mesure binaire: du commencement on y alloit par tappements de pieds, et par ce que les danceurs le treuvoient trop pénibles, il y on mis des tappements des talons seullement […].[52]

Moresca dancers thus often sported yellow or white headbands, had small bells sown to their tights, and blackened their skin. This could also happen, Locke adds, by covering one's face with netting or a mask in a dark colour, and the line between the 'exotic other' and the inhuman was so thin that the dancers at times dressed up as apes. The dance was usually accompanied by a few instruments: drums, a trumpet, a shawm, a transverse flute or pipe; and the small dance steps described by Arbeau were not the only type. The *moresca* could be very physical, performing long jumps, exaggerated measures for steps, grotesque fierce movements and funny parodic gestures.

For example, when two lines of dancers faced each other ready to fight, Locke recounts how Arbeau tells us that they were purposefully made to look ridiculous. The dance step *estocade* ('thrust') required dancers to miss each other while thrusting so strongly that they would stumble onto their next opponent. Similar physical amplifications, along with the use of blackface and foreign costumes, further highlighted the 'otherness' of the Moor or Ottoman.[53]

Another layer of otherness was provided by sound, as is demonstrated by Noémi Ndiaye in her discussion of the racialisation of the *moresche* songs in Naples, which had become standard routines in Neapolitan *commedia dell'arte* performances by the 1550s. Since a frontispiece by Jacques Callot depicts neither the *zanni* (the *commedia dell'arte* trickster-servant) nor Lucia (the black slave girl who became one of the protagonists of the *moresca*) in blackface, Ndiaye deduces

52 Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchésographie, métode, et téorie en forme de discours et tablature pour apprendre à dancer, battre le tambour en toute sorte et diversité de batteries, jouer du fifre et arigot, tirer des armes et escrimer, avec autres honnêstes exercices fort convenables à la jeunesse. Affin d'êstre bien venue en toute joyeuse compagnie et y monstrer sa dextérité et agilité de corps. Par Thoinot Arbeau demeurant a Lengres* (Lengres: Jehan des Preyz, 1596), 94r. On the *moresca*, see folio's 94r-95v. In transcribing the early modern prints, I have distinguished between 'u' and 'v', transcribed '&' as 'et' and 'ij' as 'ii', inserted diacritical marks, separated or united words and regularised the use of capital letters and punctuation marks following modern usage, expanded the abbreviations and corrected typographical errors. The spelling remains that of the primary source. All cursives are mine.

53 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 117–24.

that it must have been sound to have the actors impersonate black characters. She contends that performers of *moresca* songs imitated an African accent.[54]

Locke also mentions that the male singers of *canti carnascialeschi*, polyphonic vocal songs that were especially popular from the Quattrocento onwards in Italian cities and in particular Florence, at times impersonated a social or ethnic group such as the *mori*. They pronounced the Italian lyrics as that specific group would have done.[55] Besides vocally satirising other ethnicities, popular songs could also include textual references to 'others'. Songs on the Ottoman were especially found in Spain, in the territories it controlled such as Naples, and in France. The song *La renegada de Valladolid*, for example, recounted the story of a Spanish woman who was captured and taken to Algiers to spend her days in a harem. She converted to Islam but returned to Spain after being liberated by her brother, and chose to become a nun.[56]

As the *volo del turco*, the 'Turkish' carnival mask, the celebrations in Venice after Lepanto and during carnival, and the *moresche* and racialised songs show, the Ottoman was portrayed in Italy and Venice in a stereotyped and oppositional manner. The military opposition between Muslims and Christians, Christian Europe's victory over 'the East', and the visual othering of the 'other' are all central elements to this depiction.

Male figures were given typical foreign clothing, facial features like moustaches, and their skin was blackened. Female figures, on the contrary, who were not necessarily portrayed by women, were pale-skinned and fair-haired. They were represented as particularly sensual and attractive. Particular attention seems to have been given to the attractive aspects of the Oriental 'other' when represented physically and visually to an audience. This 'othering' may have been exaggerated even further through performers' use of their voice or ridiculous gestures, other than by the spoken word.

2.2 THE DRAMATIC OTTOMAN

2.2.1 *Typecasting the Ottoman*

The 'other' already appeared as a dramatic character in classical theatre. It is possible to identify some surviving plays that prominently treat the Oriental 'other' as a character. Early modern drama based itself on these classical models,

54 Noémie Ndiaye, "Off the Record. Contrapuntal Theatre History," in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance Historiography*, ed. Tracy C. Davis and Peter W. Marx (New York: Routledge, 2020), 229-48.

55 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 170.

56 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 105 and 107.

but also on vernacular models. Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1349-1353) is a well-known source for early modern comedy.

In wat follows, I wish to offer a concise overview of how 'others' in general – in ancient drama – and 'Turks' in particular – in Boccaccio's *Decameron* – are portrayed. These characters are followed by their sixteenth-century counterparts. Of specific interest are the 'roles' of the Ottoman in drama: which dramatic characters does the Ottoman appear as, and do these coincide with the types of Ottomans encountered in reality?

In three ancient comedies from the second century B.C. that were known in the Early Modern Period,[57] many characters dressed up as 'others': as a eunuch in Terence's *Eunuchus* – perhaps by far the most popular ancient comedy in early modern times –, as a Persian and Arabian prisoner in Plautus' *Persa*, and as a foreigner in Plautus' *Poenulus*. The latter play also stages a true 'other': the wealthy Carthaginian – at the time an enemy to Rome – Hanno, who comes to Greece in search of his kidnapped daughters and at times even speaks Punic.[58]

On the other hand, Aeschylus' tragedy *Persai*[59] (first staged in 472 B.C.) thematises the war between Greece and the Persians, and especially the Persian king Xerxes' return after his defeat following the naval battle of Salamis. The play is rather uneventful, but it is interesting that all of the protagonists are Persians. The members of the royal household lament the Persian hybris and its tremendous failure, even praising the Athenians.

In the *Decameron*, Muslims are present as sultans who befriend Jews and Christians (I, 3; II, 9; V, 2; X, 9) or are unmoving and cruel (II, 7; IV, 4). The women are usually the enterprising daughters of sultans (II, 7; IV, 4) or very wealthy Easterners (III, 10), and on one occasion a wise old Saracen woman makes an appearance (V, 2).[60]

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57 A search of the online databases *Universal Short Title Catalogue*, which strives to encompass all early modern prints produced between 1450 and 1650, and *Edit16*, its Italian counterpart counting sixteenth-century books printed both in Italian abroad or in Italy in several languages, shows that these works were known in the Renaissance. The *Eunuchus* was especially widely quoted by dramatic authors.

58 Terence's *Eunuchus* stars the well-off youth Chaerea, who disguises himself as a eunuch to gain access to his beloved, Pamphila, and rape her. In Plautus' *Persa* it is the character of the shrewd slave who is in love. This Toxilus convinces the parasite Saturio to disguise his daughter as an Arabian prisoner, and his friend and slave Sagaristio to impersonate a Persian in order to fool the slaver who owns his beloved. Plautus' *Poenulus*, on the contrary, treats the stranger and enemy Hanno with greater empathy.

59 Nearly all editions found on the *USTC* and *Edit16* databases insert *Persa* in omnibus volumes in the Greek original, so their degree of dissemination can be questioned, though a large number of copies survive (see *USTC* which enumerates the number of remaining copies). There are fewer translations into Latin, but among them is a translation of Aeschylus, *Vetustissimi tragoediae sex, quot quidem extant, summa fide ac diligentia è Greco in Latinum sermonem, ad verbum conversae* (Basel: Johann Oporinus, 1555). For the reception of classical Greek literature in Renaissance Italy, see for example Nigel Guy Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy. Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (London: Duckworth, 1992).

60 I, 3: The sultan Saladino unsuccessfully tries to trick what he believes to be an avaricious Jew into affronting him by asking which of the three religions – Islam, Christianity or Judaism – is true, but Melchisedech

We can summarise the figures from these literary models as follows in FIGURE 1:[61]

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE	GENRE	'OTHER'	CHARACTER TYPE
Aeschylus, *Persai*	**472 BC (first performance)**	Ancient tragedy	Xerxes, king of Persia	King • Real 'other'
			Atossa, queen of Persia, mother of Xerxes and wife of Darius	Queen • Real 'other'
			Messenger of Xerxes	Messenger (soldier) • Real 'other'
			Ghost of Darius, former king and father of Xerxes	King (ghost) • Real 'other'
			Chorus of statesmen	Chorus (elder Persian statesmen) • Real 'others'
Terence, *Eunuchus*	**161 BC (first performance)**	Ancient comedy	Dorus, eunuch slave	Slave • Real 'other'

is able to avoid the danger by recounting the well-known tale of the three rings and deciding that it is impossible to know. Though initially cunning, Saladino ultimately decides to tell Melchisedech the truth, who then lends him money.

II, 7: Alatiel, the daughter of the sultan of Babylon, Beminedab, is sent away by her father to marry the king of Algarve, but circumstances arise which ensure that the journey lasts four years, during which she ends up in the hands of nine men, before she eventually marries her intended. She encounters, among others, a king of Morea and a Turkish king.

II, 9: Zinevra, the wife of a Genovese merchant, escapes when she is accused and condemned to death by her deceived husband. After cross-dressing as a man, she ends up in the East, where she attends the sultan, who becomes very fond of her. After unveiling herself, the sultan helps her to escape her predicament and gives her many riches, after which she returns home with her husband.

III, 10: Alibech is a non-Christian girl from Tunisia, who is taught the art of love by a monk called Rustico, under the pretence that this is how the Devil is put in hell.

IV, 4: Gerbino, descendant of the king of Sicily, falls in love with the daughter of the king of Tunis, lord of Sicily, and she with him. The Tunisian king, however, sends his daughter away on a ship, and as Gerbino tries to save her, both lovers die.

V, 2: Upon hearing of the death of her beloved, Martuccio, Gostanza leaves in desperation and ends up in Susa, where she meets the king of Tunis and a wise old Saracen woman.

X, 9: The sultan Saladino of Babylonia, wishing to know the Christians better to prepare for war, is disguised as a merchant and befriends messer Torello from Pavia.

61 I did not include specific character types for Boccaccio's *Decameron*, since this work does not pertain to the comic genre.

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE	GENRE	'OTHER'	CHARACTER TYPE
			Chaerea, young man	Young lover • Fake 'other' (disguised as a eunuch)
Plautus, *Persa*	**2nd century BC**	Ancient comedy	Sagaristio, slave	Slave • Fake 'other' (disguised as a Persian merchant)
			Girl, daughter of Saturio	Young lover (slave) • Fake 'other' (disguised as an Arabian captive woman)
Plautus, *Poenulus*	**Ca. 189-187 BC (first performance)**	Ancient comedy	Collybiscus	Servant (overseer) • Fake 'other' (disguised as a foreign soldier)
			Hanno, Carthaginian man	Father • Real 'other'
Boccaccio, *Decameron*	**Ca. 1349-1353**	Collection of *novelle*	Saladino, sultan	Real 'other' (I, 3)
			Melchisedech, Jew	Real 'other' (I, 3)
			Alatiel, daughter of sultan Beminedab	Real 'other' (II, 7)
			Beminedab, sultan	Real 'other' (II, 7)
			Moorish king	Real 'other' (II, 7)
			Turkish king	Real 'other' (II, 7)
			Sultan	Real 'other' (II, 9)
			Alibech, non-Christian girl	Real 'other' (III, 10)
			Daughter of the king of Tunis	Real 'other' (IV, 4)
			King of Tunis	Real 'other' (IV, 4)
			King of Tunis	Real 'other' (V, 2)

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE	GENRE	'OTHER'	CHARACTER TYPE
			Old Saracen woman	Real 'other' (V, 2)
			Saladino, sultan of Babylonia	Real 'other' (X, 9)

FIGURE 1 – Character types of the 'other' in ancient drama and the *Decameron*

In early modern Italy, classic dramatic schemes and characters were updated to fit with modern times. The two genres that this dissertation focusses on, comedy and tragedy, both show the emerging mercantile society with its vices and concerns about sexual and pecuniary relations, and the dangerous ambitions of courtly life with its often moral and lethal consequences. I found no evidence of an Ottoman presence in the pastoral genre, which is perhaps to be expected since the genre considers the bucolic adventures of shepherds, nymphs and satyrs.

Plays were often performed in more elite courtly and academic contexts. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, professional actors called *comici dell'arte* – or simply *comici* – specialised in reciting non-scripted plays.[62] They could do this because they based themselves on existing schemes for dramatic characters; each actor specialised in performing and improvising a specific part.[63] The standard roles derived from ancient models were subdivided into three 'levels' which facilitated performance for the actor, who specialised in, for example, the older roles.

These were: the older generation of *anziani* or parents (in which figures like merchants or physicians appeared in comedy or tyrants and wet-nurses in tragedy); the younger generation (*innamorati* trying to obtain the love of their sweethearts in comedy, heroes weighed down by duty in tragedy); and the lowest level of the slaves and servants (tricksters who concoct plans to help their young masters in love, or messengers recounting the tragic action, too gruesome to be

62 *Commedia dell'arte* is a term which indicates the art (*arte*) of the actor (*comici*), and has nothing to do with the general supposition that they would have recited only comedy. The *comici* performed tragedies and pastorals as well. Siro Ferrone is very clear on this point: Siro Ferrone, *La Commedia dell'arte. Attrici e attori italiani in Europa (XVI-XVIII secolo)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2014).

63 The *comici* worked with *canovacci*, which were very concise scripts that described the broad outlines of the plot, but they had to improvise their lines themselves, as opposed to the prescriptive text provided by regular comedy and tragedy. 'Improvisation' does not mean, however, that the actors took to the stage without rehearsing or preparing. Rather, the *comici* each studied by heart all kinds of textual repertoires for their character, such as love poetry for the *innamorati* or military treatises for the *capitano*, and gestures that fitted these characters. They internalised the different mannerisms of the characters to such a degree that, once on stage, they were able to improvise the dialogue in a very natural way. See Fabrizio Fiaschini, "'Carte tritellate come crauti'. Indagini sulla cultura dell'attore tra Cinque e Seicento," *Commedia dell'Arte. Annuario Internazionale* 2 (2009): 151-88.

physically staged). The captain, the *innamorato*, or the servant were typical roles, that were especially common in comedy. These roles could be performed under various conditions: messengers, for example, could be farmers or soldiers, or *innamorati* could be enslaved or could convert to another religion.

When Ottomans become dramatic characters, they can similarly be categorised into roles. The table below (FIGURE 2)[64] provides a chronological overview of all Ottoman characters appearing in sixteenth-century Venetian drama. I have listed the following characters according to their roles, indicated their particular position if applicable, and marked whether they are real Ottoman characters, characters posing as Ottomans, characters transposed to Antiquity that represent Ottomans, or characters with names that allude to Ottomans.[65] The roles' particular conditions, when explicated in the plays, are put in brackets.

I exclude non-Ottoman characters like Lucida and Emilia, the Persian women from Groto's *Emilia*. Some of these characters are only mentioned and never actively appear on stage. I have excluded works by non-Venetian authors and included dramas that are set in ancient mythical times but really refer to the Ottoman and recent events. Only the so-called *scenari Correr*, an edited volume of *commedia dell'arte canovacci* that is listed here, can with certainty be placed in a Venetian context. I have included it for reference, but the collection of scenarios probably dates from the seventeenth century. All authors – apart from Aretino[66] – originate from the Venetian Republic.

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE, PLACE	PROVENANCE AUTHOR	GENRE	OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE, CONDITION, TYPE OF OTTOMAN
Pietro Aretino, *Talanta*	**1542, Venice**	Arezzo (Republic of Florence)	Regular comedy	Lucilla, painted and dressed as a male Saracen	*Innamorata* (slave) • Fake Ottoman (disguise)
Daniele Barbaro, *Tragedia*	**1541-1548, manuscript**	Venice	Regular tragedy	Ottoman messenger	Messenger (soldier) • Real Ottoman

64 The date and place are those of the first printed edition, or in the case of Barbaro's *Tragedia* the approximate period in which the manuscript was written.

65 Apparently, names were a way of making fun of 'others'. Christian Europeans seem to have found it funny to give sub-Saharan Africans curious nicknames ('Nerone', 'Moretto') or surnames ('Blanco'). We encounter, for example, a 'Moretto' in our corpus. Lowe underlines that such an obvious error was probably what made the practice funny. Moreover, she says that people from African descent were constrained to repeat and internalise this "mistake", which was debasing. See Lowe, "Introduction," 12.

66 Aretino, however, spent a great deal of his life in Venice and greatly influenced the Venetian theatrical scene, which is why I have included him in my corpus.

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE, PLACE	PROVENANCE AUTHOR	GENRE	OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE, CONDITION, TYPE OF OTTOMAN
				Solimano, lord of Asia	King/Tyrant (sultan) • Real Ottoman
Lodovico Dolce, *Fabritia*	**1549, Venice**	Venice	Regular comedy	Fabritio, dresses up as an Ottoman woman	*Innamorato* • Fake Ottoman (disguise)
				Moro, servant who dresses up as a Syrian merchant	Servant/slave • Fake Ottoman (disguise) • Name recalls Ottoman
				Turchetto, page	Servant/slave • Name recalls Ottoman
Andrea Calmo, *Rodiana*	**1553, Venice**	Venice (?)	Plurilingual comedy	Maddalena, Saracen servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman
Andrea Calmo, *Il Travaglia*	**1556, Venice**	Venice (?)	Plurilingual comedy	Arpago, runaway servant of *messer* Proculo, dressed as an Ottoman	Servant/slave • Fake Ottoman (disguise)
Vincenzo Giusti, *Irene*	**1579, Venice**	Udine (Republic of Venice)	Regular tragedy	Zalamosso, king of Armenia	King/Tyrant • Ancient character that represents Ottoman
				Armenian soldiers	Messenger (soldier) • Ancient character that represents Ottoman
Luigi Groto, *Emilia*	**1579, Venice**	Adria (Republic of Venice)	Regular comedy	Chrisoforo, Ottoman servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman
				Polidoro, Ottoman old man	Father (*anziano*, merchant) • Real Ottoman
				Arpago, Ottoman pimp	Pimp • Real Ottoman
				Rustica, Ottoman maidservant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE, PLACE	PROVENANCE AUTHOR	GENRE	OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE, CONDITION, TYPE OF OTTOMAN
				Flavia, Ottoman slave woman	*Innamorata* (slave) • Real Ottoman
				Tropio, Ottoman servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman
				Neofilo, Ottoman young man	*Innamorato* • Real Ottoman
				Polipo, Ottoman young man	*Innamorato* • Real Ottoman
				Fronesio, Ottoman old man	Father (*anziano*) • Real Ottoman
				Erifila, Ottoman courtesan	Courtesan • Real Ottoman
				Fracassa, Ottoman captain	Captain • Real Ottoman
				Vespa, Ottoman page	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman
				Crapulo, Ottoman cook	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman
				Rigo, Ottoman porter	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman
				Barbaro, Ottoman merchant	Merchant • Real Ottoman
Francesco Mondella, *Isifile*	**1582, Verona**	Verona (Republic of Venice)	Regular tragedy	Messenger of Mustafà	Messenger (soldier) • Real Ottoman
				Mustafà, leader of the Ottoman army	Captain (tyrant, general) • Real Ottoman
				Selim, Ottoman prince	King/Tyrant • Real Ottoman
Giovanni Battista Calderari, *La mora*	**1588, Vicenza**	Vicenza (Republic of Venice)	Regular comedy	Laureno, Capecci brother	*Innamorato* • Fake Ottoman (disguise)

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE, PLACE	PROVENANCE AUTHOR	GENRE	OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE, CONDITION, TYPE OF OTTOMAN
				Turchetto, servant to the Capecci	Servant/slave • Name recalls Ottoman
				Fatma, Moorish slave woman	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman (Islamic woman)
Giovanni Battista Calderari, *La schiava*	**1589, Vicenza**	Vicenza (Republic of Venice)	Regular comedy	Teresa, slave of the courtesan Caterinicca	Courtesan (slave, convert) *Innamorata* • Real Ottoman
				Zarut (Alfonso), slave of the captain	Servant/slave (convert) • Real Ottoman
				Ahyssa, mother of Teresa and Zarut	Mother (*anziana*, convert) • Real Ottoman
Valerio Fuligni, *Bragadino*	**1589, Pesaro**	Vicenza (Republic of Venice)	Regular tragedy	Lieutenant of Mustafà	Captain • Real Ottoman
				Mustafà, pasha general of the Ottoman army	Captain (tyrant, general) • Real Ottoman
				Agha of the janisarries	Captain • Real Ottoman
				Selim, Ottoman sultan	King/Tyrant (tyrant, sultan) • Real Ottoman
Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *La turca*	**1597, Venice**	Unknown; Venice (?)	Regular comedy	Famelica, slave of Masutio Beltrame	Courtesan (slave, convert) • Real Ottoman
				Imerale, Ottoman	Captain (*anziano*) • Real Ottoman
				Rambuc, Ottoman servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman

AUTHOR, WORK	DATE, PLACE	PROVENANCE AUTHOR	GENRE	OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE, CONDITION, TYPE OF OTTOMAN
				Converso, servant	Servant/slave • Name recalls converts
Anonymous, *Isole*[67]	**17th century (?), Venice**	Unknown	Improvised comedy	Maumet (Orazio), believed to be the son of Alì, but really the son of the doctor	*Innamorato* (convert) • Fake Ottoman
				Isole (Clarice), believed to be the daughter of Alì, but really the daughter of the doctor	*Innamorata* (convert) • Fake Ottoman
				Alì, Ottoman old man	Father • Real Ottoman
Anonymous, *Ausa*	**17th century (?), Venice**	Unknown	Improvised comedy	Zanni, servant	Servant/slave • Fake Ottoman (disguise)
				Livio, young man	Servant/slave • Fake Ottoman (disguise)
				Scapino, innkeeper	Servant/slave (innkeeper) • Fake Ottoman (disguise)

FIGURE 2 – Character types of Ottomans in Venetian sixteenth-century drama

In FIGURE 1, the number of 'real' 'others' are greater than the number of 'fake' ones. This trend is continued in the Early Modern Period, and even if we do not count Groto's *Emilia*, which is not very representative because the cast consists almost exclusively of Ottomans, the 'real' 'others' still exceed the 'fakes'. Both in the ancient models and in the medieval and early modern corpus from FIGURE 1 and FIGURE 2, it is significant that the 'other' is a strikingly 'normal' character. He is more present in comedy than in tragedy.

In sixteenth-century Venetian theatre, the Ottoman progressively appears more frequently on stage as time goes by, and Lepanto seems to be a watershed in

67 For *Isole* and *Ausa*, see Carmelo Alberti, ed., *Gli scenari Correr. La commedia dell'arte a Venezia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1996), 46-49 and 128-33. These are plays dating from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, though the consensus seems to be the seventeenth, which have been written for the Venetian stage, as a notice at the end of the *raccolta* states.

this regard. More than the naval battle of Lepanto itself, the conquests of Nicosia and Famagusta seem to have been essential to Venetian dramatic production, since the Holy League and Lepanto are hardly, if at all, mentioned in the dramatic texts. Groto predicts Lepanto as a future moment of payback for the Venetians that lost Cyprus: "Quel che è avvenuto a Cipri a noi può simile- / mente avvenir, però debbiam dolersene", as the old Ottoman Fronesio tells us.[68]

The other dramas that explicitly refer to the 1570s are all focused on the loss of Cyprus; Giusti's *Irene* took "il soggetto […] da avvenimenti parte veri et parte finti, presi così quelli come questi, dal miserabil soccesso della perdita del regno di Cipri et della città di Nicosia",[69] while Mondella's *Isifile* does not mention explicitly that it took inspiration from events at Famagusta and Bragadin's martyrdom, although this is clear from the names of the army commanders (Selim and Mustafà). The same events are also the subject matter of Fuligni's tragedy *Bragadino*.

Moreover, whereas in the earlier period the Ottoman is a rather fragmentary background figure, and often the Italian characters are simply disguised, after 1573 he becomes a rounder character in his own right. Progressively, he seems to have become a real character rather than a disguise, though the *canovaccio* of *Ausa* still features three 'fake Ottomans'. However, there does not seem to have been a theological evolution from 'fake Ottomans' to 'real Ottomans', especially if one takes a look at the *comico* Flaminio Scala's *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* (1611), a collection of published *commedia dell'arte* scenario's. In many of his *canovacci*, characters dress up in order to not be recognised.[70]

All character types from FIGURE 2 appear in the sources cited in FIGURE 1, except for the comic mother, military leader, and convert, and the military leader from tragedy. It is thus safe to say that Boccaccio's plots on the comic Muslim characters were less of an inspiration than the early modern plays which we will discuss. No-one befriends a sultan, for example. In both genres, it is more likely that their authors turned to ancient drama for their plot material and for the character types they decided to stage.

In early modern tragedy, the sultan and his entourage are enemies to the Catholics, differently from Aeschylus' *Persai*, in which the Persians are the only protagonists. Groto's *Emilia* is more similar to *Persai* because of the Ottoman protagonists that populate the comedy alongside the two Persian women coupled

68 Luigi Groto, *La Emilia, comedia nova di Luigi Groto cieco di Adria. Recitata in Adria, il dì primo di marzo 1579, la domenica di carnesciale, sotto il reggimento del clarissimo signor Lorenzo Raimondo* (Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1579), II.6, 34v-35r.

69 Vincenzo Giusti, *Irene, tragedia nova di messer Vicenzo Giusti* (Venice: Eredi di Francesco Rampazetto, 1579), A4r.

70 See the comedy *Isabella astrologa* in Flaminio Scala, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative, overo La ricreatione comica, boscareccia, e tragica: divisa in cinquanta giornate; composte da Flaminio Scala detto Flavio Comico* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Pulciani, 1611), 107r-111r.

to the 'Turks' Polidoro and Polipo. In tragedy, the Ottoman on scene, whether an actual Ottoman or an ancient character representing the Ottoman, is a messenger in the guise of a soldier, a captain, a king in the shape of an Ottoman sultan, or a tyrant. This last role is incarnated by the king himself or by the sovereign's representative, the military general.

In comedy, the Ottoman is cast as a captain, a courtesan who is enslaved or converts, a merchant or father who also takes the shape of the merchant, an *innamorata* (convert, slave), an *innamorato* (convert), a merchant, a mother (convert), a pimp, servants or slaves (convert). The 'Turk' can be a character that dresses up as an Ottoman or a real Ottoman. A very particular example of this second case is Groto's *Emilia*, which is set in Istanbul with its entire cast of Ottomans except for two Persian women. A minority of characters is listed because their names recall the figures of Ottomans and Moors. It can be presumed that both procedures – the dressing up as Ottomans and the use of names that call them to mind – created a comical effect.

A particularly notable comic character is the convert. The only Venetian play to stage conversion as one of its main themes is Calderari's *La schiava*, while Loredano's *La turca* and the *commedia dell'arte* comedy *Isole* from the *scenari Correr* collection showcase converts in the sense that they are figures who are believed to be Ottomans (*Isole*) or have been captured by Ottomans (*La turca*) but are actually Christians in origin. Indeed, as Savarese notes, the theme of abduction was already a *topos* in ancient literature and was especially strong in the *commedia dell'arte*. The plays of the *comici* further refine this Oriental subject matter by adding both true and Catholics-turned-Ottomans (princes and princesses, merchants, slaves), and cases of mistaken identity.[71]

These were figures that appeared in real life. Among those Ottomans that the Venetians encountered, it was not so much the dragomans or diplomats, missionaries and pilgrims or border residents that appear in the overview above. Rather, Venetian comedy and tragedy display more exciting figures: the merchants and travellers, male *and* female slaves and converts, the soldiers, tyrannical sultans and military leaders. From FIGURE 2 it is less clear, but the corsairs and pirates abducting family members, and once even a sultana in Giovanni Battista Andreini's play *La sultana* (1622), also make up the plots of Italian 'Turkish theatre'.

2.2.2 *Creating and Performing the Ottoman*

From what has been discussed so far regarding the actual mise-en-scène of early modern spectacle, we find a clear emphasis on antagonism, exoticism, and what

71 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 77.

seem to be stereotyping themes and roles. Moreover, theoretical treatises promote the use of exotic figures to draw spectators' attention in drama.

This is perhaps not so surprising as it may seem if one recalls that plays were divided into five acts which could last up to and over four hours. The audience could not go far if they wished to see the play, though many of them were standing the whole time and probably longed to move their legs. According to Nino Pirrotta, the birth of the five act-play may not have been solely due to the ancient example, but also to the practical necessity of people's attention being strained and to introduce a clear structure in the performance. With this in mind, from the 1480s onwards *intermedi* or *intermezzi*, spectacles-within-a-spectacle which recaptured spectators' focus after concentrating for a long time on the play's narrative, were increasingly performed during dramatic performances. The *intermedi* saw the light in the northern Italian courts, with Ferrara as an important forerunner.[72]

Pirrotta notes that these *intermedi* should be clearly distinguished from the acts themselves in between which they were situated. Thus, while the drama consisted almost exclusively speech and contained some musical touches introduced in a realistic way, as the ancients prescribed, the *intermedi* in-between all but eliminated the spoken or sung word and usually consisted of rhythmic gesture and music.[73] The performers were mostly professionals. Also, since *divertimento* was key, dance, music, buffoonery and lavish or 'savage' costumes were as well.

Exotic subjects appeared both in 'low' and 'high' *intermedi*, which respectively portrayed coarse or serious figures such as fighting people or Fortune ('Fortuna'), men disguised as animals or 'high' foreign rulers in royal processions. The presence of Ottomans or Moors was not unusual. Not only did *moresche* dances at times appear in *intermedi*, as has already been mentioned, especially as a combatant or triumphant dance at the end, but the *moresche* songs did as well.

Around 1555 these tunes began to appear in print, and their popularity rose in parallel with the increasing presence of slaves from African descent, who became domestic servants in Italian aristocratic households and were now visible to non-travellers. The *intermedi* would advance semi-directly into *balli* used in between operatic acts, testifying to Venice's interest in the Ottomans. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century opera especially saw an explosion of exotic elements and characters,[74] after mythological and divine characters had populated Italian opera in its early years, from around 1597 to 1607.[75]

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72 Of course, *intermezzi* also had a political meaning linked to the event during which they were staged: Roy Strong, *Art and Power. Renaissance Festivals, 1450-1650* (Woodridge: The Boydell Press, 1984), 133-44.

73 See the chapter "Musiche in commedia in funzione realistica" in Nino Pirrotta, *Li due Orfei. Da Poliziano a Monteverdi. Con un saggio critico sulla scenografia di Elena Povoledo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 91-142.

74 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 165-74.

75 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 208-9.

The *moresca* was especially popular in the *Serenissima* between 1450 and 1460 as part of the repertoire of the buffoons,[76] who can be considered one of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition's ancestors. These *buffoni*, with their *moresche* routines and *lazzi* (physical jokes and comic mini performances), were masters in mimicking many types of characters and foreign extra- or intra-European speech. Among the many tongues which the actors could articulate was the *schiavonesco*, a hybrid language consisting of Northern Italian-Venetian and Slavish used in Venice to communicate with the Slavs; he also uttered Turkish words.[77] The practical use of linguistic inventions to be able to understand one another was thus incorporated into comedy. In Andrea Calmo's *Il Travaglia* (1556), the slave Arpago is disguised as an Ottoman and talks Turkish:

> Emin t derum bir Tangri ichium xhi gemmi ahlem hona sichiur eder giormey ptur bir daxchi bulassil guosel selnini. Ghit Venedik! sulxhi padissa tirgimmise chrimine schosum hel padissaxch che chie bunum bexlighin surer.[78]

Scholars have considered the exotic touch that Turkish speech brings to the stage and noted that the introduction of Turkish only served acoustic or stylistic purposes.[79] However, Aldo Gallotta and Daria Perocco have both separately underlined the realism of Turkish speech in drama.[80] Perocco, for example, showed how Ottoman characters on scene in the late sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century are diversified through their language and their manner of speaking, as well as through dress. Thus, whereas Giovanni Francesco Loredano's Ottoman merchant Imeriale in the comedy *La turca* (1597) speaks in a perfect Italian, other characters imitate Turkish, such as Arpago in Calmo's *Il Travaglia*. In Della Porta's *La sorella* (1604), the servant Trinca pretends to know Turkish and talks to a 'Turk', translating the replies for his master; but when an Italian appears who has sojourned for some time in Istanbul, his deceit is revealed:

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76 Fulchignoni, "Oriental Influences on the Commedia Dell'Arte," 34.

77 See Piermario Vescovo, "*Il vespro delle voci*. Langues hybrides sur la scène vénitienne de la renaissance," in *Langues hybrides. Expérimentations linguistiques et littéraires (XVe-début XVIIe siècle) / Hybridsprachen. Linguistische und literarische Untersuchungen (15.-anfang 17. Jh.)*, ed. Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou and Paul J. Smith (Geneva: Droz, 2019), 217-32.

78 "Giuro per un solo Dio, lodato da tutti, che non ho visto un'altra città così bella. Va' a Venezia! Io dico grazie all'interpretazione della pace col sultano, il quale ne trae i vantaggi." Andrea Calmo, *Il Travaglia. Comedia di messer Andrea Calmo, nuovamente venuta in luce, molto piacevole e di varie lingue adornata, sotto bellissima invenzione al modo che la fo presentata dal detto autore nella città di Vinegia. Testo critico, tradotto e annotato, a cura di Piermario Vescovo*, ed. Piermario Vescovo (Padua: Antenore, 1994), II.1, 92-93.

79 Gallotta, "L'elemento turchesco nelle commedie *La sorella* e *La turca*," 509.

80 Gallotta, "L'elemento turchesco nelle commedie *La sorella* e *La turca*"; Perocco, "Turchi in commedia. In Italia fra la fine del Cinquecento e l'inizio del Seicento."

LO SCHIAVETTO COMEDIA

DI GIO: BATTISTA
Andreini Fiorentino.

DEDICATA
ALL'ILLVSTRISS. SIG.
GIROLAMO PRIVLI
Meritiſſimo Figliuolo di ſua Serenità.

CON LICENZA, ET PRIVILEGIO.



IN VENETIA, M. DC. XX.
Nella Stamperia di Gio: Battiſta Ciotti.

PEDROLITO Mi fo la croce. *Ierusalas adhuc moluc acoceras marisco, viscelei huvihavete carbulah*.

TURCO *Erecercheter biradam suledi, ben belmen ne sulodii chomis purce sulemes*.

PEDROLITO Dice che è vero che un uomo l'ha parlato, ma che non intendeva che dicesse.

A similar playful dialogue between a real and a fake Ottoman appears in Della Porta's *La turca* (1606). A typical exclamation used by the Ottomans here is "Brè, brè, brè". '*Bre*' means as much as '*piglia*', and the cry is even used by the Catholics who in *La turca* are disguised as Ottomans. As for the other way around, the Ottomans perfectly mix both Turkish and Italian when speaking to each other. A third author discussed by Perocco, Giovanni Battista Andreini, the son of two famous professional actors, Francesco and Isabella Andreini, adopted another approach comprising three gradations of the Turkish language in *La sultana* (1622).

The Ottomans mimic the broken Italian which the Ottomans would use when conversing with Italians, though in other scenes they speak the language perfectly. Whilst talking among themselves, they adopt a curious Turkish language when they wish not to be understood, which is an imitation of Turkish that is recognisable for the audience. Indeed, Perocco underlines how these mysterious dialogues are estranging yet familiar to the spectator. In *La sorella* the Ottoman unwittingly exposes the servant's trickery. The use of Turkish, Perocco says, not only reflects everyday reality, but most of all emphasises how the Ottomans were outsiders to the plot's development, or on the contrary, that hearing Turkish reminded the audience that the Ottomans may change the course of the plot in ways unknown to them.[81]

> IMAGE 9 – In Andreini's *Lo schiavetto* (1612), the actress Virginia Andreini played the role of the blonde female protagonist Florinda, who cross-dresses as a male black slave – *Title page to* Lo schiavetto *by Giovanni Battista Andreini* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1620) – © Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Res/P.o.it. 35, title page

In some of the dramas in which the Turkish language appears, it is therefore plausible to think that a stereotyped vocal representation of the Ottoman took place, like Ndiaye and Locke discerned in song. Moreover, as Savarese recalls, costumes used by actors, extras or dancers in

81 Perocco, "Turchi in commedia. In Italia fra la fine del Cinquecento e l'inizio del Seicento," 279 and 284 especially for the general conclusions. For the dialogue cited from Della Porta's *La sorella*, see 279. On the authenticity of the Turkish language, see Gallotta, "L'elemento turchesco nelle commedie *La sorella* e *La turca*", on Della Porta's *La sorella* and *La turca*, and Piermario Vescovo, "Nota al testo," in *Il Travaglia. Comedia di messer Andrea Calmo, nuovamente venuta in luce, molto piacevole e di varie lingue adornata, sotto bellissima invenzione al modo che la fo presentata dal detto autore nella città di Vinegia. Testo critico, tradotto e annotato, a cura di Piermario Vescovo*, by Andrea Calmo, ed. Piermario Vescovo (Padua: Antenore, 1994), 25-27, who considers Arpago's Turkish insert in *Il Travaglia*.


Ennio lume offeria
IL
SOLIMANO
TRAGEDIA
DEL
CO. PROSPERO
BONARELLI
MO AL
SER. GRAN DCA
DI
TOSCA
NA
Con due lettere Discorsiue
AL S. ANTONIO BRVNI
Iac. Callot Fa. in aqua forte

profane and sacred representations or *danze moresche* recalled Oriental elements.[82] Foreign clothing had become popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but it was initially mainly worn by simple extras.[83] In the course of the sixteenth century, Orientalising details, characters, costumes, and themes increasingly appeared in courtly festivals, dances, regular comedy and tragedy, and *commedia dell'arte* scenarios.[84]

Just as Bronwen Wilson asserts that printed images made the Ottoman a familiar and recognisable figure, Savarese underlines that the Ottoman and his clothing became well known as images started to circulate in print in the Quattrocento. The caftan, scimitar and especially the turban became emblematic for this specific 'other'. The turban came to indicate not only the infidel but also the extremely wealthy[85] – in line with the stereotype of the Ottomans' riches.

Besides scimitars, beards, headgear, and the use of foreign music, the 'other' could be represented by blackface, as we have already seen. In the Middle Ages, the colour white symbolised good and Christianity, while the colour black stood for evil and the diabolical. In the later Early Modern Period these connotations remained. Black still indicated the diabolical and evil, vice, rage, folly, and sexual deviance. But the colour black also came to designate the 'other' because black *talking characters* began to be staged.

The actor could be made black by using make-up – Richard Blunt has collected some make-up recipes – as well as masks and black cloth. It was important, as Blunt emphasises, that the way in which the actor transformed himself into a black character conformed to its uses. The actor had to opt for an easily discarded disguise if he had to remove it on scene, or, conversely, for a more permanent black guise if it had to stay fixed during battle scenes or amorous embraces.[86]

> IMAGE 10 – Jacques Callot, *Title page to the tragedy* Il Solimano *by Prospero Bonarelli* (Florence: Pietro Cecconcelli, 1620) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-5790

82 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, XXVI, 45, and 65-66.

83 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 41.

84 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 41-42, 45, and 65-66.

85 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 66.

86 Richard Blunt, "The Evolution of Blackface Cosmetics on the Early Modern Stage," in *The Materiality of Color. The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments*, ed. Andrea Feeser, Maureen Daly Goggin, and Beth Fowkes Tobin (London: Routledge, 2016), 217-34; Farah Karim-Cooper, "The Materials of Race. Staging the Black and White Binary in the Early Modern Theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 17-29; Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For a recent discussion on whether racism existed in the Early Modern Period, and on *blackface*, see Hornback, *Racism and Early Blackface Comic Traditions*. In the second chapter, Hornback discusses the *commedia dell'arte* figure of Arlecchino, with his black mask and at times African looks in the images, as subject to racialised representations.

This is information which scholars have gathered from the English context; with regard to Italian early modern drama, the few existing studies seem to confirm the use of similar practices for make-up.[87] Savarese underlines that theatre practitioners did not intend to make characters true to reality; rather, the Early Modern Period was still a realm of semi-fantasy. For example, during a triumphant cortege for the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in 1526, participants dressed up as Indians sported both native American headgear with feathers and Eastern turbans.[88]

Historical descriptions of performances and didascalic notes can also help us imagine the attire of Ottoman characters on the Italian stage. In a text describing the *Ballo di donne turche insieme con i loro consorti di schiavi fatti liberi danzato nel real Palazzo de' Pitti davanti alle serenissime altezze di Toscana, il carneval dell'anno 1614* (1614) performed in Florence in 1615,[89] we find the following account of male dancers dressed as women in Ottoman clothing:

> Compar[e] un ricco vascello alla riva d'Arno, nello sbarco che da esso fanno, furno sei turchi et dieci [*sic*] donne turche, adorne di abiti alla turchesca e molte gioie. Alla armonia di diversi strumenti or da l'una et or da l'altra cantarono e'seguenti versi et molti altri appresso.[90]

Their outward appearance is described more precisely as:

> Scapilliate in testa, berettone di raso turchino con molte gioie e perle et con piumagi d'aironi; camice con maniche larghe come cotte fino a mezza gamba e sopravesta di raso turchino, guarnite di passamani et abotonature d'oro alla turchesca; calzette iscarnatine con legaccia con oro et maschera al viso di donna giovane.[91]

The presence of jewellery and feathers calls to mind an image of wealthy, alluring Ottoman women. The men were also richly dressed,[92] wearing

87 For a *status quaestionis* and a contribution to blackface in Italian drama, see Lies Verbaere, "Riscrittura, travestimento e *blackface* nella commedia italiana. *La mora* (1588) di Giovanni Battista Calderari," *Il castello di Elsinore* 90 (2023).

88 Savarese, *Teatro e spettacolo fra Oriente e Occidente*, 66.

89 Federico Ghisi, "Le musiche per 'Il ballo di donne turche' di Marco da Gagliano," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 1, no. 1 (1966): 21.

90 Ghisi, "Le musiche per 'Il ballo di donne turche' di Marco da Gagliano," 21. L'indicazione "*sic*" è dalla mano dell'autore del saggio, Ghisi.

91 Ghisi, "Le musiche per 'Il ballo di donne turche' di Marco da Gagliano," 29.

92 Of course, the rich apparel of dancers and other performers reflected the wealth and prestige of the prince in a courtly context: see Barbara Sparti, "The Function and Status of Dance in the Fifteenth-Century Italian Courts," *Dance Research. The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 14, no. 1 (1996): 42-61.

> turbanti in capo bianchi con berrettino rosso con gioie e piumaggio d'uccello; veste a uso di robette per fino sotto al ginocio, di telette di seta turchina et oro a liste per guarnizioni e abotonature; calzette bianche e legaccie pure con oro.[93]

We can find mentions of similar dress in texts of theatrical performance. The "*robbe*" that were necessary for the performance in the above-mentioned Venetian *scenari Correr* comedies, for example, cite a "borsa con danari, da turco per Alì e Isole" and "[robbe] da turco per Zanni".[94] I have also checked Scala's *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative*, which prescribes "habiti da schiavi, e catene di ferro" or "armature assai, spoglie assai, veste longe alla turchesca".[95]

The plays of an author like the Florentine Andreini provide us with insights into the physicality of the performance. In *La turca*, first published in 1611, Andreini gives the instructions that "molte camicie large, per vestire i turchi" should be provided, but that "di sotto terranno gli habiti turcheschi, in modo che quando vorranno gli scoprano" for the ninth scene of the third act.[96] The Ottomans should also sport "bandiere turchesche con lune in quelle dipinte" and "spade, e rotelle assai".[97] It is worthwhile to quote here "L'ordine del trionfo che va nel fine della *Turca*" in full:

> Carro bello, adorno di molte armi turchesche, tulpanti et bandiere, con varie lune in quelle dipinte.
> Sopra vi sarà il capitano armato di bellissima armatura, con gran penne nel murione et bellissimo scudo, et una mazza dorata nella destra mano.
> Occhialì et Mehemet dovranno tirare il carro a mani legate, et altri turchi dalli fianchi pur lo spingeranno.
> Vi sarà una gran bandiera tutta a lune, archi, e freccie, che si strascinerà per mano di Trulla, et quella sarà seguitata da turchi legati et isolani a piedi et a cavallo, inghirlandati d'alloro et con facelle accese, quali al suono di trombe et di tamburi e di schioppi dovranno passeggiare due volte la scena.
> Posto poscia il carro in mezzo et de' vinti et de' vincitori, quali sovra la scena formeranno una meza luna, dovranno cessar le trombe et altri strepiti, sin ch'è disciolto il nodo della favola.

93 Ghisi, "Le musiche per 'Il ballo di donne turche' di Marco da Gagliano," 29.

94 Alberti, *Gli scenari Correr*, respectively 46 and 128.

95 Scala, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative*, respectively 107v and 235v. For non-Ottoman Oriental presences in Scala, also see Silvia Carandini, "L'Oriente in maschera nelle 'invenzioni' dei comici dell'Arte," in *Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna/The performing arts and exoticism in the modern age*, ed. Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione (Napoli: Turchini, 2006), 31-32.

96 Giovanni Battista Andreini, *La turca, comedia boschereccia, et maritima, di Giovanni Battista Andreini fiorentino comico Fedele* (Venice: Paolo Guerigli, 1620), 180.

97 Andreini, *La turca*, 182.

LA TVRCA

COMEDIA

BOSCHERECCIA,

ET MARITIMA,

DI GIO. BATTISTA ANDREINI

Fiorentino Comico Fedele.

DEDICATA ALL'ILLVSTRISS. SIGNOR

Sig. & Padron mio Colendiſs.

IL SIG. VINCENZO GRIMANI

Meritiſſimo Podeſtà in Vicenza.

Con licenza de' Superiori, & Priuilegio.



IN VENETIA, M DC XX.

Appreſſo Paolo Guerigli.

> Finito il tutto con la stessa ordinanza, ma però disciolti i turchi et inghirlandati, si dovrà tirar il carro sovra il quale vi saranno il capitano Occhialì e Mehemet, così due volte passeggiato il palco finirà il trionfo, et la comedia, la quale se non sarà stata così barbara nella conversazione de' savi lettori, com'ella è barbara di nome, cercherà l'auttore, che a questa sua prima piacevole fatica alcun'altra ne segua, e forse di maggior gusto a chi è di non ordinario gusto.[98]

The *trionfo* combines the theme of slavery and the conquered Ottoman with the comic happy ending acted out in a spectacular scene. Andreini's later play *La sultana* also has an "Ordine per recitar *La sultana* con gran facilità" included which describes what actors would have to make use of. In the first scene of the second act, "la sultana sarà vestita da schiavo, et havrà addosso una canacca di perle, et altre gioie, un gran gioiello, et un cinto bello; di più havrà una bella borsa dove mostrerà d'haverci dentro 100 cecchini".

In the fifth scene of the same act, the *nudrice* were "vestita alla levantina", the host of their inn should carry a "tromba e stendardo con entrovi delle meze lune" and among other objects, the *sultana* should carry a "chitarra alla spagnola", an instrument associated with Muslim and Moorish slaves.[99]

In the first scene of the fourth act, there will appear "trombe, tamburi, 2 camelli carichi con duo timpani, una cennamella, 2 cimbali per duo mori", and in the tenth scene "trombe, tamburi voci dicenti 'Viva, viva l'ambasciador persiano', e qui uscirà seguitato da 6 cavalieri alla spagnola vestiti, et egli havrà un seguito di 12 turchi, 6 nobili, e 6 servitori, quali havranno 2 torcie per uno, cioè i servi; ci saranno pur 6 staffieri con lo stesso ordine di torcie".[100]

A tragic example of the spectacular Ottoman is offered by Prospero Bonarelli's tragedy *Il Solimano*, published in Florence in 1620. In commenting on *Il Solimano*, Locke connects the use of exotic costume to the spectator in a practical and not in an exoticist way. He asserts that, in the seventeenth century, stage scenery was mostly not exoticising in style, no matter where the scene was set. In contrast, the actors on stage would have worn adapted clothing to remind the audience (literally '*far presente*', I would add) that the performance was set in the Ottoman Empire.

> IMAGE 11 – The title page of Andreini's *La turca* (1611) depicts an Ottoman woman – *Title page to* La turca *by Giovanni Battista Andreini* (Venice: Paolo Guerigli, 1620) – © Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 4970-A ALT MAG, title page

98 Andreini, *La turca*, 183-84.

99 Emily Wilbourne, "*Lo Schiavetto* (1612). Travestied Sound, Ethnic Performance, and the Eloquence of the Body," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 1 (2010): 23.

100 For all these quotations, see Giovanni Battista Andreini, *La sultana, commedia di Giovanni Battista Andreini fiorentino* (Paris: Nicolas Della Vigna, 1622), Aa iir-Bb iiiv.

In the case of *Il Solimano*, the Baroque development of stage machinery allowed the possibility of representing sultan Solimano's burning palace to entice the audience visually, also in opera and ballet. Similarly the exotic theme allowed for the presence of the supernatural or the magical; this saw to the escapist interests of the audience. Especially in Venice, stage machinery – even simple artifices that merely changed the scenery[101] – and exotic themes were further developed in the Seicento.[102]

This chapter has shown how the 'Turk' took the shape of a soldier or military practice target in tournaments in parades, and in courtly ballets and *moresche* that of a slave, soldier or even a pirate. Allegorically this 'other' could also be personified by a hydra, serpent or dragon, or by biblical or mythological figures such as Holofernes or Charon. The 'Turk' was portrayed as a military enemy, and outward characteristics were emphasised to show his 'otherness'. 'Turkish' men were often painted black and sported Oriental weapons and clothing, complete with fashionable details such as turbans and black moustaches. On the other hand, performers portraying 'Turkish' women were pale and fair-haired. Evidence suggests that othering also took place through the use of exotic gestures, languages and accents. In summary, the physical representation of the Ottoman in spectacles and processions largely rested on clichés.

In drama specifically, the 'other' has been an important figure since Antiquity. He has appeared as a eunuch, as a protagonist dressed up as a foreigner, an Arab or Persian prisoner, or the enemy of Rome, a Carthaginian who speaks in his own tongue. In Aeschylus' *Persai*, we even encounter an all-Persian cast which grieves their loss in the war against Athens.

In early modern Italy, authors of dramatic treatises began to reflect on the exotic stranger. They concluded that, by using this figure and his language, the audience could experience wonder, admiration and delight and be more concentrated on the play. Trissino alone explicitly mentions the 'Turk', whom he feels should behave like an ignorant, arrogant, immoral, and ferocious stage character. To portray an Ottoman, he says, one should use black make-up, and

101 For an introduction on stage machinery, see Luigi Allegri, "Una nuova scena per un teatro nuovo," in *Storia del teatro moderno e contemporaneo. Vol 1. La nascita del teatro moderno. Cinquecento-Seicento*, ed. Roberto Alonge and Guido Davico Bonino (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 1207-30; and Pirrotta, *Li due Orfei*.

102 Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 211-14. Erith Jaffe-Berg asserts that the presence of Oriental props and costumes grew in the seventeenth-century *commedia dell'arte* scenario's: Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia Dell'Arte and the Mediterranean*, 100-101. See also Jaffe-Berg, "After the Laughter Dies Down". Also in the seventeenth-century, a popular opera theme regarding the 'Turk' was provided by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century epic poetry, with as most notable authors Ariosto and Tasso, though more or less fantastic narratives with a link to recent Veneto-Ottoman affairs were recounted as well (Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 218).

an actor's physical bearing and accent are also pivotal in order to portray certain characters. Authenticity only became important by the end of the Cinquecento, when Ingegneri underlined that characters should dress in a life-like way.

In early modern drama, the physical depiction of the Ottoman is similar to the general representation in spectacle. The 'Turks' donned exotic clothing and accessories, such as jewellery, feathers, caftans, scimitars, flags or slaves' chains. Othering is also achieved by using exotic scenery and music, and by writing realistic Turkish texts to recite. Through dress, make-up, gestures and accents, the 'Turk' was thus realised on the early modern Italian stage.

ARGOMENTO.

Il soggetto della presente Tragedia è tratto da auuenimenti parte veri & parte finti, presi cosi quelli come questi, dal miserabil soccesso della perdita del Regno di Cipri et della città di Nicosia, seguita l'anno M. D. LXXI.

famagosta

La Tragedia è uscita da le mani de l'Autore tutta in un contesto: ma ella è stata, da chi si sia, distinta in Scene senza saputa sua, et altrimenti di quello, ch'egli hauendolo à fare, osseruato haurebbe.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CORPUS

In this chapter, I will describe the authors and content of my corpus. I had originally included Giusti's *Fortunio* in my corpus, first published in 1593 in Venice by Niccolò Moretti. This comedy was taken into consideration because the action takes place in Genoa a year after the fall of Nicosia (1571), and two of the characters are described as Cypriot merchants. Therefore I presumed that these characters would be considered as 'Turks', or set side by side with them. I was, however, able to verify that these merchants from Cyprus, which was Ottoman territory in 1593, are not in the least associated with the Ottomans, which made me exclude the comedy from my corpus, since one of my criteria is the presence of Ottoman characters or characters dressing up as Ottomans. It is, however, interesting to note this fact: Giusti's treatment of the Cypriot merchants suggests that Cyprus was still seen as a dominion closer to Italy and Venice than to the Ottoman lands.

In describing the twelve plays, I will focus on the Italian editions from the Cinquecento, while also taking into account which paratexts they contain and whether these evolve over time. My research is based on the *editio princeps* because the dedicatory letters do not mention any considerable variations between the texts. I also mention for each play whether the early modern printed book yields any information about its premiere or other performances, and whether the author reflects on the presence of Ottoman characters in the paratextual material from a theoretical point of view.

Besides the information provided on the book itself, its contents, and the staging of the play, a short biography of the authors will be offered,[1] with a particular focus on their status as dramatic authors or connections to Ottoman themes. For those more closely connected to Venice, the centre of the Republic, we can probably assume that they encountered Ottomans in some form at one point of their lives. The chapter closes with a discussion on the two analytical chapters, chapters four and five.

> IMAGE 12 – Edition from Vincenzo Giusti's *Irene*, containing handwritten notes, photo taken at the Venetian Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana – © Lies Verbaere

1 Dates mentioned of works by these authors are from the first printed edition.



1 PIETRO ARETINO, *TALANTA*, 1542 (COMEDY)

Though he hardly needs an introduction, it is worthwhile to note some details from Pietro Aretino's life (Arezzo, 19/20 April 1492-Venice, 21 October 1556). From modest origins he was able to construe a blooming career. In 1527, aged thirty-five, he moved to Venice, where he lived for twenty-nine years until his death. One of the fields in which Aretino was a major gamechanger in Venice, as Giorgio Padoan asserts, was drama. He not only contributed to Venetian theatre itself, but also introduced regular comedy in the *Serenissima*,[2] also called 'erudite comedy', which was the humanist way to modernise classical comedy. These comedies were mainly meant to be read.[3]

Aretino's first comedy, *La cortigiana*, had already seen the light two years before his arrival in Venice, in 1525. An author who virtually tackled every genre in existence, he subsequently added to his dramatic record of achievements the comedies *Il marescalco* (1533), *Lo hipocrito* (1542), *Talanta* (1542), and *Il filosofo* (1546), and the tragedy *Orazia* (1546). Most of Aretino's production was put on the *Index librorum prohibitorum* (*Index of Forbidden Books*) in 1557, and his *opera omnia* definitively in 1559, although this did not prevent his works from spreading.[4]

Regarding Aretino's links with the Ottomans, it is known that the doge Andrea Gritti's son invited Aretino to join him in Istanbul; however, the author declined, and subsequently he published an open letter to reproach the French king Francis I for his alliance with the Ottomans. This letter was entitled *Copia de una letera del divino Pietro Aretino al christianissimo re di Franza, ne la quale essorta sua maestà a entrare in legha con tutti gli altri signori et prencipi christiani, a destruttione et ruina de l'immanissimo turcho, nimico de la santa fede di Christo*, and it was probably published after 1537.[5]

> IMAGE 13 – Titian, *Portrait of Pietro Aretino*, 1545, oil on canvas, 77,6 x 96,7 cm – © Florence, Palazzo Pitti, 1912 no. 54

2 Padoan, *La commedia rinascimentale veneta (1433-1565)*, 185.

3 Deanna Shemek and Jane Tylus, "Aretino's Theater," in *A Companion to Pietro Aretino*, ed. Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 238.

4 Eleonora Carinci, "The Imitation of Pietro Aretino's *Vita Di Maria Vergine* and *Umanità Di Cristo* in Italy after the Council of Trent," in *A Companion to Pietro Aretino*, ed. Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 409-32. Carinci describes not only how Aretino's dramatic works were republished under false author names and titles, but also how, even after the Council of Trent, his religious production was used as a model by various authors. For Aretino's biography, I have relied on Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Pietro Aretino*, ed. Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini (Leiden: Brill, 2021), especially 5-7, besides the timeline at XV-XIX, and; Giuliano Innamorati, "Aretino, Pietro," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 4 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1962), 88-104.

5 Brian Richardson, "Pietro Aretino and Publication," in *A Companion to Pietro Aretino*, ed. Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 480; Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Copia de vna letera, al Christianissimo Re di Franza, ne la quale essorta sua Maesta a entrare

It would seem, however, that he was not necessarily prejudiced against the Ottomans, or that he was, at least, in contact with these 'others'. His letter to Francesco Alunno, dated 27 November 1537 and which was intended to show his own importance, not only describes how many Italians came to see him, but also that "a me vengon Turchi, Giudei, Indiani, Franciosi, Todeschi e Spagnuoli".[6]

It is Aretino's *Talanta* that interests us most of all. First published in 1542 (Venice, Francesco Marcolini) and again in 1553 (Venice, Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari et fratelli) and 1588 (without mentions of place and printer on the frontispiece, although the edition has been identified as being printed in London by John Wolf),[7] all three frontispieces tell us that the play was composed at the request of the Venetian *Sempiterni*, a *compagnia delle calze*, and recited by them with great pomp. We know that this performance took place during the carnival of 1542 and that the *apparato* was designed by Giorgio Vasari.[8]

The paratexts of the first edition from 1542 consist of two letters: a dedication to Cosimo de' Medici preceding the play text, and a letter addressed to Alessandro Piccolomini following it; these two letters are copied in the 1553 and 1588 editions. The latter print of *Talanta* is contained in *Quattro comedie del divino Pietro Aretino, cioè* Il marescalco, La cortegiana, La Talanta, L'hipocrito, *novellamente ritornate, per mezzo della stampa, a luce, a richiesta de' conoscitori del lor valore*, and closes with a request by John Wolf, who wished to divulge the *Tragedia di Christo* mentioned in Aretino's letter to Piccolomini. The paratexts contain nothing of interest regarding the figure of the Ottoman or the actual staging of the play.

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in legha con tutti gli altri signori & prencipi christiani, a destruttione & ruina de l'immanissimo turcho," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed January 6, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/titolo/CNCE002388.

6 Paul Larivaille, "Aretino as a Writer of Letters," in *A Companion to Pietro Aretino*, ed. Marco Faini and Paola Ugolini (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 445; see letter 257 to Francesco Alunno in Pietro Aretino, *Lettere*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli, vol. 4.1 (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1997), 356.

7 John Wolf reprinted banned works by authors like Aretino or Machiavelli and assigned them counterfeit frontispieces, something which was also done by many other editors around Europe. Similar disguised editions could be taken illegally to Italy by bookmen to readers looking for banned literature; see Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 199.

8 Among others, see for example Christopher Cairns, "Teatro come festa. La scenografia per la *Talanta* del 1542 e l'influenza del Vasari," in *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita. Atti del convegno (Roma-Viterbo-Arezzo; 28 settembre-1 ottobre 1992; Toronto, 23-24 ottobre 1992; Los Angeles, 27-29 ottobre 1992)*, vol. 2 (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1995), 231-43; Eliana Carrara, "Vasari. Apparati per la Talanta," in *Pietro Aretino e l'arte nel Rinascimento*, ed. Anna Bisceglia, Matteo Ceriana, and Paolo Procaccioli (Firenze: Giunti, 2019), 156-57; Antonella Fenech Kroke, "Un théâtre pour *La Talanta*. Giorgio Vasari, Pietro Aretino et l'apparato de 1542," *Revue de l'art* 2, no. 168 (2010): 53-64; David McTavish, "Apparato Dei Sempiterni, Venezia, per La Commedia Di Pietro Aretino, *La Talanta*," in *Giorgio Vasari. Principi, Letterati e Artisti Nelle Carte Di Giorgio Vasari. Catalogo Della Mostra Di Arezzo (26 Settembre-29 Novembre 1981)*, ed. Laura Corti et al. (Florence: Editrice EDAM, 1981), 112-16; and Giangiacomo Scocchera, "Il Programma e l'apparato. Contributi Allo Studio Dell'allestimento Della *Talanta*," *Teatro e Storia* 10, no. 17 (1995): 365-402.

Be that as it may, the play *does* address the figure of the Ottoman, albeit in a restricted fashion. The comedy takes place in Rome around the time of the carnival. The courtesan Talanta is wooed by captain Tinca, by *messer* Vergolo *venitiano*, and by the young Orfinio. The older lovers give Talanta a *saracinetto* and a *schiavettina* as a present. This plan is not well received by captain Tinca's daughter, Marmilia, who used to sleep with the girl, or by Armileo and Marchetto, two young men who are in love with the slave girl. The Saracen boy is really a young girl, Lucilla, and the girl is actually a young man, Antino, a fact about which Armileo is oblivious, but Marchetto and Marmilia are very much aware, although they do not know that the objects of their affections are twins. The servants of Marchetto and Marmilia reunite their young masters with their lovers, but Armileo's servant's plan is thwarted.[9] The young man then spots the slave girl, who is in fact a third sibling.

Next enters *messer* Blando, who has arrived in Rome to find his triplets and tells his story. Sultan Solimano's army, he reports, has taken over the city where Blando lived. For their own safety, Blando painted his own face and that of one of his daughters black like the Moors. Before he could paint the other two, he was captured and enslaved together with the third child for four years, and then liberated. Blando's former master then told him that his son and daughter were sold to a merchant from Ancona, and it is revealed that Lucilla and Antino are in Rome. The young couples – Marchetto and Lucilla, Marmilia and Antino, and Armileo and Oretta – are celebrated, and the prostitute Talanta is paired up with the young Orfinio.

2 DANIELE BARBARO, *TRAGEDIA*, CA. 1541-1548 (TRAGEDY)

Daniele Barbaro (Venice, 8 February 1514-Venice, 13 April 1570) belonged to a noble Venetian family and attended the University of Padua, where he was in touch with many intellectuals of his time, interested himself in subjects such as Aristotelianism, and co-founded the Accademia degli Infiammati in 1540, where he became doctor in the arts. He was additionally active in Venetian politics.

In 1545 he took up public office in Venice, and in October 1548 he was elected as ambassador at the English court until 1551. In 1550 he was proclaimed successor

9 Basing itself heavily on Terence's *Eunuchus*, the idea was to make his master visit the 'slave girl' in Talanta's house; he had identical carnival outfits made for Armileo and Talanta to go out together, since Armileo feigned to be in love with Talanta. Armileo had to get lost in the crowd, and his servant would take his place alongside Talanta wearing the same costume. Armileo, who was wearing the same clothes as Talanta, could then return to Talanta's home to enter the house and be with his beloved, while her servants believed him to be the courtesan herself. Before his plan could be executed, however, the 'slave girl' had already been returned to Marmilia.


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to the patriarchy of Aquileia with the consent of the Venetian senate, though he was never ordained as such. He did, however, attain the position of cardinal, and actively participated in the Council of Trent, but mostly dedicated himself to the Republic and cultural activities.

While he does not seem to have been personally involved in Ottoman-Venetian relations, his political interests are visible in the *Tragedia*, which was never published but survives integrally in an autograph manuscript (Marc. It. IX 29 = 6590), while some verses (1743-1805) appear in another manuscript (Marc. It. I 33 = 4856, at c. 6). Both of these are kept in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

A single folio before the opening scene of the *Tragedia* announces that the tragedy was "fatta da [Mons. Daniele Barbaro] nell'anno della qua etta 24 e scritta di sua propria mano". The work was composed between 1541, when the events described took place, and 1548, since a letter from that year by Pietro Aretino addressed to Barbaro praises the tragedy.[10]

Barbaro's *Tragedia* recounts the siege of Buda from 1541, after which Hungary became a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire and would continue to be so until the eighteenth century. The tragedy's royal protagonist, Isabella, finds her kingdom assailed by both Habsburg and Ottoman forces after her husband, John I Zápolya, has died. Their son and heir, John Sigismund Zápolya, is still an infant. Isabella and her faithful *secretario* fear that Solimano will break his oath, take the kingdom and remove the queen and her son. They are contrasted with two opportunist *consiglieri* who assure the queen that Solimano does not mean any harm.

The tragedy is quite devoid of action, and mostly revolves around the question whether the *Gran Turco* can be trusted or not, so fear and lamentations are central to the play. As is customary for the genre, facts of battle and victory are recounted through messengers that exit and enter the castle of Buda where the scene is set.

> IMAGE 14 – Barbaro's translation of Vitruvius is displayed on the table at which he is seated – Paolo Veronese, *Portrait of Daniele Barbaro*, 1556-1562, oil on canvas, 105,5 x 121 cm (detail of) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-4011

The *barone* describes how a haughty Solimano demands that the queen send her son to him, which causes her to invoke her dead husband, lamenting her fate since she is sure her son will die. Barbaro's *Tragedia*, however, does not end in blood and gore. In the end, the queen consents to send her son with his nurses to the enemy camp, complaining about her harsh destiny.

10 Daniele Barbaro, "Tragedia," ed. Corinne Lucas, *Quaderni veneti* 15 (1992): 7. In April 1548, Aretino writes a letter to Barbaro: "Tornando mo a la tragedia da voi rivista, con il medesimo giudizio che l'avete composta, a me pare ella istupenda. Onde me ne rallegro come di cosa uscitami del proprio ingegno; e rileggendola mi piace nel modo che mi è cara." See letter 453 in Pietro Aretino, *Lettere*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli, vol. 4.4 (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1997), 280.


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However, rather than being killed, Isabella and her son are sent away to Transylvania, a vassal state which they can rule while Solimano himself rules over Buda until little John becomes of age. Though they survive, this situation still sends Isabella and her chorus in tears; Solimano had proved himself not trustworthy.

3 LODOVICO DOLCE, *FABRITIA*, 1549 (COMEDY)

Descended from a noble but poorly reduced family and orphaned at an early age, Lodovico Dolce (Venice, 1508/1510-Venice, January 1568) enjoyed the protection of doge Leonardo Loredan and the Corner family, who helped him to study at the University of Padua. Upon returning to Venice, his hometown for which he expresses a great love in his texts,[11] to survive[12] he became a teacher and an editor. In 1541 he started working for the Giolito printing-family, translating and commenting on Latin and Greek classics, and becoming the writer of numerous works in many genres – a so-called 'polygraph'. He exercised this profession up to his death.

His work never made him a wealthy man, but he produced a disproportionate number of publications compared to other *poligrafi*.[13] Thus, Dolce was an important figure, and he was recognised as such at the time, in the re-elaboration and dissemination of knowledge and especially vernacular literature – all the more since he worked for Venice's largest printing house,[14] though the Giolito family was not the only editing house he worked for.[15] He was especially attentive to publish popular genres and closely followed the book market while trying to direct the interests of the public. This led him to author various dialogues, tragedies, and comedies in an assiduous fashion.

> IMAGE 15 – Portrait of Lodovico Dolce, from: Lodovico Dolce, *Le prime imprese del conte Orlando* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1572) – © Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute

11 Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce, Renaissance Man of Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 14.

12 Dolce belonged to a branch of his family that was not allowed to participate in the *Maggior Consiglio* of Venice – the converse branch that was allowed had died out in 1248 – but served as state secretaries as citizens instead of as patricians, a class to which the issue of Lodovico's brother Daniele would belong again after 1648. Though his own father worked for the Republic, Lodovico opted not to enter in public service and instead devoted himself to literature.

13 For a study of the statistical data on and sociocultural importance of fourteen Venetian intellectuals, among whom we find Dolce, see Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere*.

14 Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, 13-14.

15 Anne Neuschäfer, *Lodovico Dolce als dramatischer Autor im Venedig des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2004), 6. See section B of this book for more information on Dolce's job at the Gioliti and elsewhere.

Dolce's interest in theatre grew particularly in the 1540s, when he was in his thirties.[16] He was a celebrated author of comedy and tragedy, both in Italy and abroad, and his plays were regularly staged with success.[17] He published the five comedies *Il ragazzo* (1541), *Il capitano* and *Il marito* (both 1545), *Fabritia* (1549), and *Il ruffiano* (1551), and several tragedies, among which *La Marianna* (1565) was quite famous and one of his more original works. Some of these are rewritings or outright translations from classical or dialectical sources, such as the Senecan tragedies he edited.[18]

Dolce also notably edited some 'Turkish works'. He translated a Latin compilation of letters supposedly written by Mehmed II to Christian sovereigns, and their replies, by Laudivius Zacchia (1473) into Italian: *Lettere del gran Mahumeto imperadore de' turchi scritte a diversi re, prencipi, signori, e repubbliche con le risposte loro* (1563). He also edited Sebastiano Erizzo's *Le sei giornate* (1567), which contains three *novelle* with Ottoman elements. Dolce was also interested in epic poems, a genre that traditionally juxtaposes Christians and Turks. He edited and commented Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, and published his own on the models of the same Ariosto and of Boiardo: *Sacripante* (1535), *Le prime imprese del conte Orlando* (posthumous, 1572), and the popular poem *Stanze composte per la vittoria africana novamente avuta dal sacratissimo imperatore Carlo Quinto* (1535). In the *Stanze*, Dolce tackles contemporary history and depicts Charles V as a modern-day crusader fighting against the Turks.[19]

His comedy *Fabritia* also contains references to Ottoman characters. It was published for the first time in 1549, and, while the frontispiece only declares "aldi filii", it has been established that this first edition appeared in Venice at the hands of the heirs of Aldo Manuzio 'il vecchio'. This was followed by a 1560 edition (Venice, Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari; both of which were separately and included in *Comedie di messer Lodovico Dolce, cioè* Il ragazzo, Il marito, Il capitano, La Fabritia, Il ruffiano) and another edition in 1587 (Venice, heirs of Bartolomeo Rubini).

Only the first edition bears a dedication to a certain "molto valoroso e onoratissimo signore messer Stefano Rizzo", about whom I found no biographical information.[20] The dedication states that *Fabritia* was performed before it was

16 Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, 167-68.

17 Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, 59.

18 For all of the above, including the footnotes unless otherwise mentioned, see Giovanna Romei, "Dolce, Lodovico," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 40 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1991), 399-405; Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, 8-24; and Neuschäfer, *Lodovico Dolce als dramatischer Autor im Venedig des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 1-31 and 481-84.

19 See Pia Schwarz Lausten, "Lodovico Dolce," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 6. Western Europe (1500-1600)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

20 Lodovico Dolce, *Fabritia*, ed. Chiara Trebaiocchi (Manziana: Vecchiarelli Editore, 2015), 95. Chiara Trebaiocchi, too, the editor of the critical edition to Dolce's *Fabritia*, was unable to discern who the

printed, but no particulars are given about the staging and the figure of the 'other' is not addressed.

The story revolves around two siblings from Mantova and their love-lives. Father Atanagio is introduced as depressed because his daughter Lisetta was married to Giulio, who has perished at sea while on business, having never consummated the marriage. However, Lisetta had remained pregnant after her aunt, before this wedding, put her into the arms of an unknown young man. The unwanted pregnancy thwarts the ambitions of Atanagio – who wants to find another match for his daughter – and Giulio – who is alive and returns, but is crestfallen at the news. However, when Lisetta gives birth to a son, it is revealed that Giulio was Lisetta's lover, and everything is set right.

The plotline centring on Lisetta's brother Fabritio is more of interest to us. Being in love with a young girl who is about to be sold by a *ruffiano* or pimp, but is too poor to buy her himself, Fabritio has to depend on his cunning servant Moro. After Fabritio tries in vain to obtain money, Moro comes up with a plan. Fabritio will dress up as a Christianised Ottoman girl, and Moro as a Syrian merchant.

Moro then agrees to ask the *ruffiano* to keep his slave with him in his house for two days while he is away, so that Fabritio can be with his beloved. Fabritio flees to an inn with the girl while Moro, still disguised as a Syrian merchant, tries to scare off the *ruffiano* so that he leaves Mantova and they wouldn't have to pay him, only to hear that the girl is the daughter of a *gentilhuomo* from Bergamo, and who has already made an appearance on scene. The parasite characters try to benefit from this knowledge, and tell the *messer* Pomponino, a bergamasque *dottore*, that Moro – still dressed as the merchant – stole his daughter from them.

In the end, however, the truth is revealed, and the girl, named Caterina, and Fabritio are married. Besides Fabritio dressing up as a turchetta and Moro as a Syrian merchant, and the names of the two servants, Moro and Turchetto, another scene recalls Ottoman elements. Terpening even translates the denomination 'Moro' as 'the Moor', a rendition that is significant.21 A great deal of the plot centres on money and the perceived disgrace of Atanagio's daughter, which even drives messer Atanagio mad, and in IV.22 he becomes the "gran Macometto" who wants to impale his interlocutor and runs after him like a raging bull. Many comedies, such as Machiavelli's *Mandragola* or Ruzante's *Anconitana*, refer to the punishment of impalement, which was especially common in 'the East'.[22]

dedicatee was (see footnote 1).

21 Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, 86-87.

22 Dolce, *Fabritia*, IV.22, 302-303; also see note 321.

*38. V. 61.

RHODIANA

COMEDIA STVPENDA ET

ridiculoſiſsima piena d'argutiſſimi moti, & in uarie lingue recitata, ne mai piu ſtampata.

COMPOSTA PER IL *famoſiſsimo* Ruzzante.

Con Gratia & Priuilegio.



IN VINEGIA, appreſſo Stephano di Aleſsi, alla Libraria del Caualletto, Al Fontico dei Todeſchi, in calle della Biſſa.

1553.

4 ANDREA CALMO, *RODIANA*, 1553 (COMEDY)

In our next case, we have little information about Calmo's life (Venice (?), 1510/1511-Venice, 23 February 1571), apart from what we know from few documentary sources; most information can be derived from his *Lettere* in which Calmo represents himself.[23] He seems to have belonged to the middle class. Though he at times describes himself as coming from a humble class of fishermen, his testament shows that he, his daughters, his parents and his brothers were all well off. He appears to have been a painter, like his father, and a member of the academy *Scuola dei Liquidi* and the *Scuola Grande di San Marco* confraternity, where he held various positions.

But Calmo is mostly known as a playwright and actor who met with success both on the printed page and on stage, particularly at the Venetian carnival. Calmo also exchanged letters with several artists, such as Aretino, though Zorzi notes that he does not seem to have enjoyed lasting friendships with any influential persons, but rather with musicians or actors. Moreover, two of the witnesses to his testament are a barber and mediator. So, he seems to not have distinguished himself from this *milieu*, nor was he as successful in creating a network of patrons and peers, contrary to the somewhat more famous writer and actor Angelo Beolco.

As a professional dramatic author, Calmo wrote four *egloghe piscatorie* and six comedies. They are filled with long speeches in various foreign languages, both Italian and other dialects – as was in fashion – and foreign characters. His performances were also physical, like those of the Venetian *buffoni*'s, which in part prefigured the *commedia dell'arte* tradition which put the actor at the front. We know that the comedy *Rodiana* was represented at the carnival of 1540, and Piermario Vescovo is hesitant to consider the pirated *Rodiana*-editions as exactly the same as the original script performed.[24]

> IMAGE 16 – Title page to Andrea Calmo's *Rodiana*, 1553, erroneously attributed to Angelo Beolco ('Ruzante') at the time (Venice: Stefano di Alessi, 1553) – © Vienna, Österreichische National-bibliothek, *38.V.61 ALT PRUNK, title page

Calmo not only cites the *messinscena* from 1540 in Venice in his dedicatory letter to *Il Travaglia*,

23 Ludovico Zorzi, "Calmo, Andrea," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 16 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1973), 775.

24 Piermario Vescovo, *Da Ruzante a Calmo. Tra "signore comedie" e "onorandissime stampe"* (Padua: Antenore, 1996), 230; For Calmo's biography, I based myself on Zorzi, "Calmo, Andrea"; and Vescovo, *Da Ruzante a Calmo*, 211-34, a biographical note that is the fruit of careful archival research.

but also one in Treviso "sotto il felice regimento del clarissimo messer Giovanni Lippomani".[25] No other information regarding *Rodiana*'s staging or the 'Turk' is given.

All printed editions of this play are supposedly written, as all their title pages suggest, by the "famosissimo Ruzzante" or Angelo Beolco, who was in Calmo's *compagnia*. Calmo, the actual author of the comedy, is not mentioned on any frontispiece. First published in 1553 in Venice by Stefano Alessi, *Rodiana* then saw the light again in 1561 (Venice, Domenico Farri), 1565 (Venice, Giovanni Bonadio), and twice in 1584 (Vicenza, Giorgio Greco and Girolamo Brescia – in the same year Greco and Brescia included *Rodiana* in *Tutte le opere del famosissimo Ruzante*) – and twice in 1598 (Vicenza, heirs of Perin libraro; both separately and again as *Tutte le opere del famosissimo Ruzante* by the same printers).

They contain no paratexts from the author; only the 1584 edition contains a preface by the typographer Giorgio Greco from Vicenza. The 1584 and 1598 editions of *Tutte le opere del famosissimo Ruzante* were dedicated to Vespasiano Zogiano, a *gentiluomo* from Vicenza, and written by Greco.

Though a letter to a certain "signora Pompilia" describes a trip Calmo undertook to the Orient, visiting places like Alessandria, Cairo, Damascus and Istanbul,[26] this does not shine through in the *Rodiana*, which is one of the least 'Turkish' plays in my corpus. The comedy stages the story of a torn-apart family and takes place in Parma.

The father, Teofilo, is chased off the island of Rhodes and takes his son, Roberto, to Parma while his mother, Liguria, and daughter, Delia, stay behind. All but Roberto change their names: Teofilo calls himself Demetrio, and Liguria and Delia discover Teofilo's new location and travel there, calling themselves Beatrice and Sofronia. Beatrice is courted by both Roberto's friend Federico and his father Cornelio, while Roberto falls in love and sleeps with Felicita, Federico's married mother. The servants intervene, of course, and in the end all indecent situations are resolved.

Besides minor comic references and insults in the dialogues to the Ottomans or *Gran Turco*, one of the characters is Maddalena, a Saracen servant. She has a very minor role. In IV.7 she discusses with her master, Cornelio, who wants to enter the house and is angry because she kept him waiting. In IV.9 she is exhorted by Cornelio to let him enter when Felicita has locked him out. In the final scene (V.10) she closes the recognition scene with the intention of bringing about a

25 Andrea Calmo, *Il Travaglia, comedia di messer Andrea Calmo. Nuovamente venuta in luce, molto piacevole et di varie lingue adornata, sotto bellissima invenzione al modo che la fo presentata dal detto autore nella città di Vinegia* (Venice: Stefano Alessi, 1556), a2.

26 Andrea Calmo, *Le lettere di messer Andrea Calmo riprodotte sulle stampe migliori. Con introduzione ed illustrazioni*, ed. Vittorio Rossi (Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1888), IV, 43, 351-52.

happy wedding, shouting "Foga foga camin! currì tutti: messer, madonna, che me brusa, oh pobarita mi!" ("Fuoco fuoco camino! correte tutti, signore, signora, che mi brucio, oh povera me!").[27]

5 ANDREA CALMO, *IL TRAVAGLIA*, 1556 (COMEDY)

The Ottoman experience that Calmo describes in his letter to *signora* Pompilia rather finds its expression in *Il Travaglia*. After being published for the first time in 1556 (Venice, Stefano di Alessi) and republished identically in 1557 by the same printer, the *pièce* was reprinted in 1561 by Domenico Farri in Venice.

This time, Calmo himself dedicates the 1556 edition to a Count Ottaviano Vimercato, complaining that his *Rodiana* was stolen from him and printed without him being able to dedicate it to Vimercato. The front matter is identical in all editions, and contains no relevant information regarding the mise-en-scène or the 'other'.

The main plot is again romantic: in Venice, the boy servant Travaglia – actually Ersilia – is in love with her master Camillo – actually Valerio – but he has to intermediate between him and the girl he loves, the *madonna* Leonora. A Greek *ruffiana* promises Travaglia/Ersilia, and her father and brother – Collofonio and Policreto –, both of whom are also in love with Leonora, that she will help them in their love affairs; at first in exchange for a reward, but later on she helps the sincere young *innamorati*.

Another subplot centres around the *messer* Proculo – actually Polinesso –, a merchant from the Republic of Ragusa in Croazia. Proculo/Polinesso is a worried father. His daughter Leonora's honour is at stake, and he has lost his son eighteen years ago because his *servo* Arpago abducted him and sold him to an Italian gentleman of Ravenna. As one of Proculo's servants is asked by *messer* Collofonio to help him, he encounters Arpago, Proculo's slave. Arpago is dressed as an Ottoman and speaks in Turkish. Enslaved by the Ottomans, he was able to flee and arrives in Venice to ask for his former master's forgiveness, but he immediately flees the scene when Collofonio accuses him of having stolen a stola from him. When Arpago appears next, a good deal later in the plot, he meets Archibio, Camillo/Valerio's tutor, who knows the identity of Proculo's son and agrees to help him.

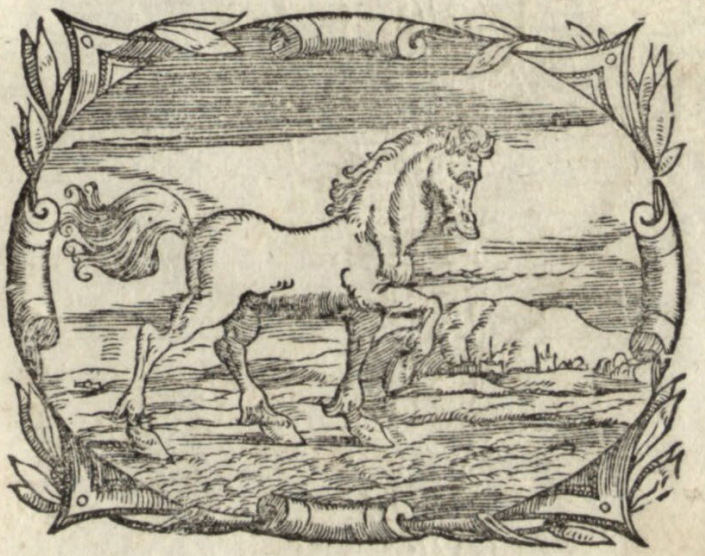
The play ends with all the destined-to-be-together-couples united – after a parodic rewrite of Terence's *Eunuchus* in which Collofonio believes that he is taken to Leonora's chamber hidden in a chest but is intercepted and arrested, and

27 Andrea Calmo, *Rodiana, comedia stupenda e ridicolosissima piena d'argutissimi moti e in varie lingue recitata*, ed. Piermario Vescovo (Padua: Antenore, 1985), 224-25.

IL TRAVAGLIA
COMEDIA
DI M. ANDREA CALMO.

Nouamente uenuta in luce molto piaceuole, & di uarie lingue adornata, ſotto bellißima inuentione.

AL MODO CHE LA FO
preſentata dal detto Autore, nella
H.I.V. *Città di Vinegia.*
Con Gratia, & Priuilegio.



In VINEGIA, appreſſo Stefano di Aleſsi, alla libraria del Caualetto, in cale dalla Biſſa, al ponte de San Lio. 1556.

the young *innamorati* are brought together at night. Camillo/Valerio's identity is explained and Arpago is forgiven by Proculo, who gives him his freedom. Leonora and Policreto are married, and Camillo/Valerio – who is now revealed to be Leonora's brother – and Travaglia/Ersilia love each other.

6 VINCENZO GIUSTI, *IRENE*, 1579 (TRAGEDY)

Vincenzo Giusti (Udine, 1532-Udine, January 1619) was a notary from a well-to-do family who in 1551 was admitted as a member of Udine's *Collegio dei notai*, and in 1566 was appointed chancellor of the same professional association. Franco Pignatti suggests that he was probably among the initiators of the Udinese Accademia degli Sventati in 1606, since he was admitted to the academy only a few weeks after its foundation with the nickname of 'Stanco'. He was also a member of the Venetian Accademia Uranica.

Giusti was first and foremost an author of drama. *Irene* was his first tragedy, which was written and published in 1579 in Venice by the heirs of Francesco Rampazetto. He continued to write theatre up to 1610: apart from *Irene*, he wrote the tragedies *Almeone* (1588), *Hermete* (1608), *Arianna* (1610), and *Alessio* (n.d.); the comedies *Fortunio* (1593), and *Il miscuglio* (n.d.); and the pastoral play *Elpina* (1595). He seems to have been quite an appreciated author since most of his plays were performed at a certain point in Venice or Udine.

Moreover, some important intellectuals of the time were aware of his writings. Giason Denores, for example, Pignatti says, mentions Giusti as an Aristotelian in his *Apologia contra l'autore del Verato* (1590) and his *Poetica* (1588). I found no proof in these two texts that Denores goes into detail regarding Giusti's work. Another intellectual, Muzio Manfredi, tried more than once to draw Giusti into a dispute that he had with Angelo Ingegneri, the author of *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche*, who was part of the commission that had rejected Manfredi's *Semiramis* and Giusti's *Alessio* – among others – as the tragedies to-be-performed at the inauguration of the Vicenzan Teatro Olimpico in 1584. However, no evidence survives to suggest that Giusti partook in the dispute.

> IMAGE 17 – Title page from the first edition of Andrea Calmo's *Il Travaglia* (Venice: Stefano di Alessi, 1556) – © Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Res/P.o.it. 220, title page

Both Denores and Manfredi were important figures in the field of dramatic theory. Denores was a noble member of different Venetian academies and the Paduan Accademia dei Rinascenti. He was in contact with authors such as Lodovico Dolce or Pietro Aretino, and he was a prominent theorist of drama. In 1586 he wrote a discourse on drama (*Discorso di Iason Denores intorno a que' principii,*



cause, et accrescimenti che la comedia, la tragedia et il poema heroico ricevono dalla philosophia morale et civile et da' governatori delle republiche), and in 1588 he composed a treatise on poetics (*Poetica di Iason Denores nella qual per via di definitione et divisione si tratta secondo l'opinion d'Aristotele della tragedia, del poema heroico, et della comedia*). Manfredi wrote a dramatic treatise replying to Ingegneri's objections to his *Semiramis*, which was never published and seems to have been lost. Giusti seems to have been appreciated by the authoritative Denores and Manfredi.

Giusti's works often revolve around the conflict with the Ottomans. After Lepanto, he published a *Boscherezza canzone nella felicissima vittoria christiana contra infideli* (1571). The young *innamorati* from Giusti's comedy *Fortunio*[28] are separated because of the events in Cyprus; the comedy is set in Genoa a year after the fall of Nicosia, but I have excluded it from my corpus since it features no Ottoman characters. The war of Cyprus, and more specifically the torture and murder of Marcantonio Bragadin, the captain of Famagusta, triggered the writing of *Irene*. This tragedy was staged for the first time in 1590, and then in 1601 by the Venetian company of Federico Ricci (called 'Pantalone'), at the public expense of the city of Udine.

After its first edition in 1579, it was republished in 1580, again by the Rampazetto family from Venice. The publisher Francesco Sansovino, a grand disseminator of information on the Ottomans through works such as the *Dell'historia universale dell'origine et imperio de' turchi* (1560), provided a dedication for the book.[29] Sansovino addressed his dedicatory letter to the *Irene* to "il magnifico et illustre signore Alberto Lavezola, gentil'huomo veronese".[30] Lavezola was a noble literary man from Verona, who was one of the founders of the Accademia Filarmonica of Verona.[31] In it Sansovino declared that he was unable to present Lavezola with a worthy literary product of his own, so he decided to present him with the very deserving comedy of Giusti.

> IMAGE 18 – Portrait of Vincenzo Giusti from his *Irene*, photo taken at the Venetian Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana – © Lies Verbaere

The dedicatory letter is identical in both editions of *Irene*. It does not mention the performance of the piece, nor does it hint at the theme of the Ottomans. To the 1580 edition a celebratory poem, dedicated to Giusti, by Giacomo Bratteolo was added. Like

28 Pignatti reminds us that *Fortunio* has been erroneously attributed to Pietro Aretino in the past because the Milanese Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense holds a manuscript entitled *Fortunio commedia satirica di Pietro Aretino*.

29 Franco Pignatti, "Giusti, Vincenzo," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 57 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2001), 198-200.

30 Giusti, *Irene*, 2r-3v.

31 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Lavezola, Alberto," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA000262.

Giusti, Bratteolo was a noble man from Udine and a member of the Accademia degli Sventati with the nickname of 'Sollecito'. He mostly authored poetry, like the one included in *Irene*.[32]

Neither the celebratory poem nor the dedicatory letter are of great interest. In Giusti's *Boscherezza canzone nella felicissima vittoria christiana contra infideli* as well as in the dedicatory letter to his *Fortunio*, Giusti makes no comment on the Ottomans or on dramatic poetics.

Irene is explicitly based on the events which took place at Famagusta in 1571. This is stated explicitly in the *argomento*: "Il soggetto della presente tragedia è tratto da avvenimenti parte veri et parte finti, presi così quelli come questi, dal miserabil soccesso della perdita del regno di Cipri et della città di Nicosia".[33] In classical Cyprus, the Armenian king Zalamosso – an *alter ego* for the Ottoman commander from 1571 – has laid siege to the city of Salamina – which stands for Famagusta. Zalamosso sees himself as the rightful heir to the throne of Cyprus by marriage, while the long-lost royal descendent Calasiri was elected king.

The play opens after Calasiri has surrendered the city, and the peace is announced. The Cypriot king Calasiri – Bragadin – then goes to Zalamosso's tent to hand over his sceptre, though Irene, Calasiri's queen, has bad premonitions about the situation. The statue of the god Apollo announces that the throne should be painted in blood, but it is unclear whether the blood should be the courtier Iti's or the tyrant Zalamosso's. This is interpreted erroneously: Iti believes that he should kill himself in order to save his country, while the actual victim should be the enemy king. As Iti approaches the throne to commit suicide, Zalamosso believes that it is an attempt on his life, and orders all of Calasiri's military and religious leaders and citizens to be killed.

The Cypriot king himself is tortured slowly to the point when he dies, and his young son is forced to witness this horrific scene. The child's arms are cut off, and Zalamosso smashes his skull. Iti is fed to the dogs. Near the end of the tragedy, Irene is presented with a gift by Zalamosso. A box contains the severed head of her husband and hands of her son. The desperate woman kills herself by falling onto a sword. Irene's *nutrice* decides to take her own life as well and follow her mistress in death. The *choro* laments these events.

32 Maria Cristina Cescutti, "Bratteolo Giacomo. Precettore, poeta," in *Dizionario Biografico dei Friulani. Nuovi Liruti II. Età veneta*, accessed December 26, 2023, www.dizionariobiograficodeifriulani.it/bratteolo-giacomo-iacopo/.

33 Giusti, *Irene*, A4r.

7 LUIGI GROTO, *EMILIA*, 1579 (COMEDY)

The life of Luigi Groto (Adria, 7 September 1541-Venice, 13 December 1585) had no joyous start: besides becoming blind at a young age, the estate he inherited from his father[34] in 1544 was flooded and destroyed by the Po river, distressing the family, but Groto's education would ensure him a stable honest living. The 'cieco d'Adria', however, was already known in the 1550s to be a gifted poet and orator. He was appointed a public professional teacher in Adria in 1565 and eventually obtained the professorship he strove for in 1585, yet his death prevented him from assuming it.

Groto appeared before the Inquisition more than once, because he was accused of heresy and because he was in possession of prohibited books, such as Aretino's works. This resulted in him abjuring and being removed from his post as a teacher, putting him in economic difficulties and causing him to search for benefactors and to be more careful in his orations and publications. However, he avidly started to contribute to public life again, and – which is of more interest to us – started to publish anti-Ottoman works. Valentina Gallo even defines the battle of Lepanto (1571) as "l'occasione per rilanciarsi in qualità di letterato pubblico".[35]

Groto was also a director and a very active writer of dramas, some of which we only know the titles. Among the surviving ones are his *dramma sacro Isac*; the tragedies *Dalida* and *Adriana*; pastoral dramas *Calisto* and *Il pentimento amoroso*; and the comedies *Emilia*, *Il tesoro* and *Alteria*. His works were often reprinted and performed, and Groto greatly promoted Adrian culture.

He was among the founders of the Adrian Accademia degli Illustrati (1565) and theatre. The Illustrati organised many spectacles in Adria and constantly pressed Groto to provide them with dramatic texts. However, it has been questioned to what extent his plays' complex language and *intrecci* were compatible with a supposed pedagogical scope and were accessible to a large audience.[36] In the 1580s, which marked his greatest period of fame, he abandoned his dramatic projects until, in 1584, he published *Alteria*, and was asked by Giambattista Maganza

34 The origins of Groto's family is a subject of discussion: some say that he descended from a family of landed gentry, while Barbara Spaggiari challenges this noble descent. It is, however, certain that the Groto branch which Luigi belonged to consisted of judges, lawyers and notaries. See: Rachele Fassanelli, "Groto, Luigi," Ereticopedia. Dizionario di eretici, dissidenti e inquisitori nel mondo mediterraneo, 2015, ereticopedia.wikidot.com/cieco-d-adria. The reference is to Barbara Spaggiari, ed., *Le* Rime *di Luigi Groto, cieco d'Adria* (Adria: Apogeo, 2014).

35 Valentina Gallo, "Groto, Luigi," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 60 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2003), 22.

36 Sandra Clerc, "Tradizione, sperimentalismo, innovazione. Per l'edizione delle opere teatrali di Luigi Groto," *Studi giraldiani. Letteratura e teatro* 6 (2020): 106.

ORATIONE

DI LVIGI GROTO

CIECO,

AMBASCIATOR DI HADRIA.

Nella Creatione del Sereniſs. Prencipe di Vinegia,

NICOLO PONTE.



IN VENETIA, Appreſſo Fabio, & Aguſtin Zopini fratelli. 1578.

L'Hadriana Tragedia fatta nouamente dall'iſteſſo autore, ſi uende a Sant' Angelo da i ſopradetti.

("Magagnò"), a member of the Vicenzan Accademia Olimpica, to perform[37] in the Teatro Olimpico's first spectacle, *Edipo tiranno*.[38]

But before that, Gallo asserts, Lepanto had been a way for Groto to re-establish himself after his reputation had been burnt down.[39] His 'Turkish works' were (re) printed quite extensively: an *Oratione di Luigi Groto cieco, ambasciator di Hadria, fatta in Vinegia, per l'allegrezza della vittoria ottenuta contra turchi dalla Santissima Lega* (1571); a *Trofeo della vittoria sacra, ottenuta dalla christianissima Lega contra turchi nell'anno MDLXXI, con diverse rime raccolte* (1572); and an *Oratione di Luigi Groto cieco, ambasciator di Hadria, nella creation del serenissimo prencipe di Vinegia, Luigi Mocenico, nella quale si rallegra della sua dignità, et essorta tutti i prencipi christiani all'impresa contra turchi* (1571), re-elaborated as *Oratione di Luigi Groto cieco, ambasciator di Hadria, fatta al serenissimo principe Luigi Mocenico, et alla signoria di Vinezia, con la lettera del monsignor Cornelio vescovo di Bitonto al signor Marcantonio Colonna doppo la vittoria christiana contra il turco* (1572).

In his comedy *Emilia*, Groto brings to life the Oriental 'other'. After a first edition in 1579 (Venice, Francesco Ziletti), *Emilia* reappeared in 1583 at the Venetian *caratteri mobili* of Fabio and Agostino Zoppini, two brothers who again printed the *commedia* in 1586. The three versions are identical; what the first edition does contain as a surplus is a portrait of the author. The dedicatory letter to Adria's governor, "l'illustrissimo signor Giovanni di Lecce,[40] cavaliere et procurator di San Marco" is indistinguishable in all editions, as is the poem praising the literary enterprises of the 'cieco' by "signor Antonio Beffa Negrini", a literary man, academic and judge in Mantua.

All frontispieces mention that *Emilia* was "recitata in Hadria, il dì primo di marzo MDLXXIX, la domenica di carnesciale, sotto il reggimento del clarissimo signor Lorenzo Raimondo",[41] the rector, who had ordered the mise-en-scène, as Groto tells us in his dedicatory letter. Apart from mentioning the fact that an ancestor of Giovanni di Lecce was an ambassador to the sultan at the beginning of the sixteenth century, while another fought the Mamluks, no mention is made of

> IMAGE 19 – Portrait of Luigi Groto, from: *Oratione di Luigi Groto* (Venice: Fabio and Agostino Zoppini, 1578) – © Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 P.o.it. 176#Beibd.5, title page

37 Whether he played Tiresias, Oedipus or both, is still subject of debate: see Fassanelli, "Ereticopedia."

38 For Groto's bibliography, I based myself on Gallo, "Groto, Luigi"; Fassanelli, "Ereticopedia"; and Clerc, "Tradizione, sperimentalismo, innovazione," 100, 106-7. Also see Antonio Lodo, "Cronologia grotiana," in *Luigi Groto e il suo tempo. Atti del convegno di studi (Adria, 27-29 aprile 1984)*, vol. 1 (Rovigo: Associazione Culturale Minelliana, 1987), 15-22.

39 Gallo, "Groto, Luigi," 22.

40 All three editions read "Giovanni da Legge", but Salvatore Di Maria soundly corrects this to "Lecce": "Groto's *Emilia*," 85.

41 All texts mention "Rimondi"; the correct spelling can be found in Gallo, "Groto, Luigi," 23.

the 'Turks'. Groto's poetic considerations do not ponder on the fact that the 'other' is the undisputed protagonist of this comedy.

Groto's dedicatory letter to *Il pentimento amoroso* from 5 March 1576 mentions *Emilia* as being quite finished. In 1578 *Emilia* was scheduled and prepared for performance during the Venetian carnival, but they opted for Groto's tragedy *Adriana* instead.[42] When Raimondo has the *teatro stabile* of Adria, probably in wood and built in 1579, he wishes for *Emilia* to be the inaugural spectacle.[43] The letter preceding *Emilia*'s text describes a passionate response to the piece: since some actors, Groto states, took the play to their own cities and adapted it while reciting, he felt the need to fix the text through print.

Though articulating the dread that a work would be stolen or manipulated was an early modern *topos* to brag about texts being in vogue, Di Maria does not hesitate to state that *Emilia* was popular in the *Serenissima*, since it talked about Venice's

> heroic stand against the Turks during the battle for Cyprus in 1570-1. The mere mention of Bragadin's tenacious defence of Famagusta and his harrowing death must have stirred strong feelings of pride and woe in the hearts of the Venetians.[44]

However, the curious thing about *Emilia* is that the characters on stage are all Ottomans or Persians – with Greek and Christian names –, and not Venetians.

The prologue plays with the *verisimile* and warns us that the play is all fiction. The comedy itself is largely modelled on a Plautine plot, *Epidicus*, in which all the characters are Athenians. It takes place when Famagusta is still under siege, because the young nobleman Neofilo dares to utter that "se starà pertinace, risolvendosi / il signor di voler la città, il povero / huom vi potria lasciar la pelle",[45] clearly referring himself to Marcantonio Bragadin.

In Istanbul ("Costantinopoli"), the old Ottoman Polidoro is yearning for news about his son, Polipo, who went to fight at the city of Nicosia in Cyprus, and about his daughter, Emilia, who was almost certainly enslaved. The *servo* Chrisoforo now sees his chance to do what he had promised to his young master Polipo: buy the girl he loves, Flavia, from a *ruffiano* called Arpago.

In trying to convince Arpago to sell Flavia to him, Chrisoforo tells the story of his old master: years ago he met a Persian widow in Cyprus, Lucida, who

42 Marina Calore, "Le commedie di Luigi Groto," in *Luigi Groto e il suo tempo. Atti del convegno di studi (Adria, 27-29 aprile 1984)*, vol. 1 (Rovigo: Associazione Culturale Minelliana, 1987), 296.

43 Gallo, "Groto, Luigi," 23.

44 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*," 85.

45 Groto, *Emilia*, II.4, 28r.

remained pregnant with their daughter, Emilia. Since Polidoro couldn't remain there, and Lucida didn't want to move to Istanbul, Polidoro had never laid eyes on his daughter but had sent Chrisoforo regularly to Cyprus to bring her gifts.

To avoid Polipo's love from being in vain, Chrisoforo plans to buy Flavia and tell Polidoro that she is his daughter. In this way he can obtain money and buy Flavia's freedom, while Polipo can be with her unsuspected in their house by pretending that she is his sister Emilia. Flavia, prepared by Chrisoforo for the identity switch, succeeds in convincing Polidoro that she is his daughter.

In the meantime, Polipo has arrived in Istanbul, is hiding out at Neofilo's house, his friend and neighbour, and has fallen in love with another girl in Cyprus who will shortly arrive in Istanbul. He orders Chrisoforo to buy this second girl and make Flavia leave his father's house. The *servo* gathers all his *arti* and astuteness to meet his young master's wishes and play off the various characters against one another.

In the end the Persian widow Lucida arrives at Istanbul in search of her daughter. She reunites with Polidoro and reveals that Flavia is not Emilia. When 'girl two' arrives, Chrisoforo, flabbergasted, recognises her to be the real Emilia, and Polipo, whose love for her suddenly has become only fraternal, realises he wants Flavia back. Flavia is discovered to be the daughter of *messer* Fronesio, friend and neighbour of Polidoro, and is now promised to Polipo, while Neofilo, who had come to love the second girl, is matched with the real Emilia. Polidoro and Lucida are reunited as well, and Chrisoforo is rewarded by his master, who gives him Lucida's young *serva* for a wife.

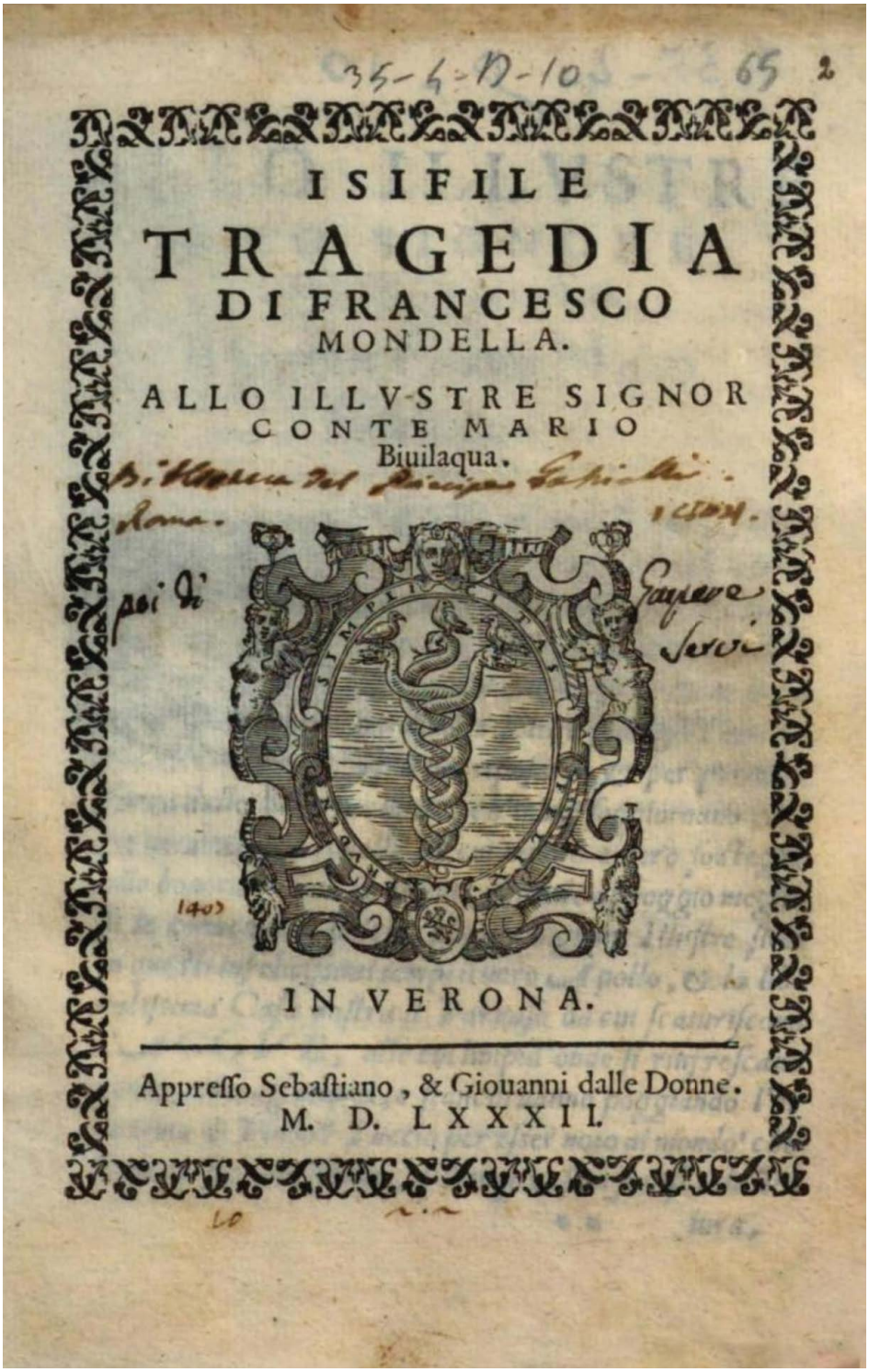
8 FRANCESCO MONDELLA, *ISIFILE*, 1582 (TRAGEDY)

I found no biographical information on Francesco Mondella in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*. Mondella's author page on the database *Edit16* only tells us that he is a poet and literary man from sixteenth-century Verona.[46] He was a member of the Accademia dei Filarmonici of Verona, which was renowned for its musical pursuits.[47] For more information, then, we should turn to his publications.

According to the Italian *Edit16* and *Universal Short Title Catalogue* databases, he had four works printed: a *Canzone al clarissimo signor, il signor Ottavian Valeri, dognissimo podestà di Verona* (1574); *Canzone nella venuta del clarissimo signor Lazaro Mocenigo, dignissimo podestà di Verona* (1577); *Nisa* (1578); and *Isifile*.

46 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Mondella, Francesco," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 20, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA007478.

47 Barbara Torelli Benedetti, *Partenia, a Pastoral Play. A Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans. Lisa Sampson and Barbara Burgess-Van Aken (Toronto: Iter, 2013), 58, note 13.



ISIFILE
TRAGEDIA
DI FRANCESCO
MONDELLA.

ALLO ILLV-STRE SIGNOR
CONTE MARIO
Biuilaqua.

IN VERONA.

Appresso Sebastiano, & Giouanni dalle Donne.
M. D. LXXXII.

Isifile was published in 1582 in Verona by Sebastiano and Giovanni dalle Donne. I found no digitalised editions of his two *canzoni*, but, like his *Irene*, Giusti's *Nisa* is dedicated to the Veronese nobleman Alberto Lavezola. Mondella signs his dedicatory letter with "compare et servitor affetionatissimo". His *Isifile* is dedicated to the "illustre signor conte Mario Bivilaqua", a great Veronese patron who was one of the great collectors of his time and greatly invested in literature.[48]

The dedicatory letter to Bevilacqua is only interesting because Mondella mentions that he is writing another play connected to the Ottoman, which, however, seems to have been lost: "Prego adunque Vostra Signoria illustre a far[e *Isifile*] degna della gratia et favor suo; il che facendo, come io spero, la *Mustafà* sua sorella, la quale ancora se ne sta involta ne' suoi primi panni, si affretterà con miglior animo di vestirsi i nuovi, ch'io le vado preparando".[49] No other mentions are made to the Ottoman or *Isifile*'s mise-en-scène.

In the final pages of the book, some dedicatory poems by Muzio Piacentini (a notary from Udine),[50] Giovanni Fratta (a Veronese poet),[51] Francesco India (a doctor, philosopher and writer from Verona),[52] Alberto Lavezola, Francesco Recalchi, Niccolò Chiocco Calvo (a Veronese poet),[53] Valerio Palermi (a Veronese literary man),[54] and Federico Ceruti (another doctor and literary man from Verona)[55] which praise Bevilacqua, Mondella, and his *Isifile*, are included. Some of these poems briefly mention how the world suffers because of the cruel Ottomans, an argument which Lavezola and Recalchi explore somewhat deeply.

> IMAGE 20 – Title page of Francesco Mondella's *Isifile* (Verona: Sebastiano and Giovanni dalle Donne, 1582) – © Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II' di Roma, title page

48 On Mario Bevilacqua, see the recent Laura Moretti, *In the House of the Muses. Collection, Display and Performance in the Veronese Palace of Mario Bevilacqua (1536-93)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

49 Francesco Mondella, *Isifile, tragedia di Francesco Mondella* (Verona: Sebastiano, et Giovanni dalle Donne, 1582), **v.

50 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Piacentini, Muzio," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA016809.

51 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Fratta, Giovanni," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA005574.

52 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "India, Francesco," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA007273.

53 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Chiocco Calvo, Niccolò," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA003706.

54 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Palermi, Valerio," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA017392.

55 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Ceruti, Federico," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed December 26, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA002940.



Mondella's *argomento* does not explicitly link the contents of the play to the war of Cyprus, but this is clear from the tragedy's contents and from the names of the 'Turkish' characters.

In *Isifile*'s first act, the goddess Juno appears, who calls forward her infernal furies. She wishes to take revenge on Venus, the goddess of Cyprus, since Paris, prince of Troy, chose her as the most beautiful goddess instead of Juno herself. She knows that the Ottoman leader Mustafà will sign the peace with the Cypriot vice king, Datamo, who represents Bragadin. Juno exhorts her *furie infernali* to instil hatred in his heart so that he will break his promise and destroy Cyprus and its people, rather than sending them away to Crete as Mustafà promised. Also in the first act, the shade of Evagora, the ex-Cypriot king, appears. He was once the victim of a conspiracy by Datamo, and swears to be avenged by Mustafà. The Ottoman leader is moved by evil powers.

The army leaders from both sides negotiate the peace, while the Cypriots lament that they will be ruled by vile leaders and queen Isifile has premonitory dreams and little trust in a happy ending. The vice king Datamo orders his two sons, Aristobolo and Ricardo, to be taken to Mustafà as hostages until he brings the city keys to Mustafà. However, when the transaction must take place, Mustafà is insincere. He had made a pact with one of his captains: the man should tell him, in Datamo's presence, that many of Mustafà's men were killed during the truce. This enables Mustafà to break his word.

He becomes irate, and has the heads of the Cypriot leaders cut off. Datamo and his sons are tied up. The children are killed before their fathers' eyes, and Datamo is forced to enter the city while holding their heads in a basin. Within the city of Salamina, Datamo is stripped of his clothes and flayed alive, up to the point when he dies. As with the historical Bragadin, the fictional Datamo's body is filled with straw and displayed. The heads of the children and hands of Datamo are brought to Isifile. The queen tries to kill herself, but Mustafà appears and prevents her from doing so. He beheads her *nodrice* and takes Isifile away as a slave.

9 GIOVANNI BATTISTA CALDERARI, *LA MORA*, 1588 (COMEDY)

> IMAGE 21 – Calderari is portrayed as one of the statues above the flight of stairs of the Teatro Olimpico – © Didier Descouens via Wikimedia Commons

In Vicenza, as in Adria, a theatre was built, and, like Groto, Giovanni Battista Calderari (Bolzano Vicentino, 1540-Vicenza, 4 January 1590) was involved in the project. Calderari was especially engaged in politics and military service, coming from a family which had recently raised to nobility

but which had merchants and notaries at its roots.[56] We find proof of the public offices he held and the local prestige which he obtained in the *Rime rustiche* he wrote in Paduan dialect, as was in vogue.[57]

Moreover, the Calderari brothers[58] started an apparently unsuccessful campaign to elevate their family's prestige and gain access to the very highest echelons of society, which also meant participating in cultural activities. To accomplish such a project, they invested heavily in the realisation of the Teatro Olimpico, designed by Andrea Palladio and built between 1580 and 1585 on the commission of the Accademia Olimpica as part of a substantial urban expansion that was underwent by sixteenth-century Vicenza. Giovanni Battista even had his statue erected on the site of the Teatro.

Archival evidence attests that on 21 December 1569 and 3 December 1572 Calderari was appointed as *nuovo accademico* in Vicenza,[59] and he apparently divided his time between the Accademia Olimpica and Malta, where he became a member of its military-religious order on 18 May 1573, aged thirty-two.[60] To become a *cavaliere di Malta* was an honour reserved for aristocrats with a proven noble descent, and not an unusual or disreputable life choice for young noblemen not destined for marriage.[61]

Following a military career lasting fifteen years from 1573 to 1588 (the publication date of *La mora*), and after being afflicted by gout and having returned to Vicenza, Calderari says in his dedicatory letters that he wished to

56 Sergio Zamperetti, "L'erede dei Calderari. Venture e sventure di una famiglia aristocratica nel Veneto del '600," *Annali veneti* 2 (1985): 50-52.

57 Clara Stella, "'Dal prò fiorio d'amore'. Le *Rime rustiche* di Giovan Battista Calderari," in "*Parole assasonè, paie, slettrane*". *Omaggio a Marisa Milani*, ed. Ivano Paccagnella (Padua: Cleup, 2018), 340.

58 Zamperetti in "L'erede dei Calderari" only mentions Giovanni Battista and his brother Decio, the heir. However, I was able to establish that another Calderari brother was Cesare, a well-known preaching Canon Regular of the Lateran from Vicenza who died in 1588. Cesare's *Il trofeo della croce* was, interestingly, published posthumously by Giovanni Battista, as the printer's foreword makes clear. The same printer, Agostino dalla Noce, also printed Giovanni Battista's *La schiava* in 1589. Among the paratexts we find texts written by people with whom Giovanni Battista was also in contact. See Cesare Calderari, *Il trofeo della croce di nostro signore Giesù Christo, compost et esposto dal reverend don Cesare Calderari, vicentino, canonico regolare lateranense* (Vicenza: Agostino dalla Noce, 1588).

59 Antonio Ranzolin, *L'archivio storico dell'Accademia Olimpica conservato presso la Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana (sec. XVI-XIX)* (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1989), 97, 100.

60 Francesco Bonazzi, *Elenco Dei Cavalieri Del Sovrano Militare Ordine Di San Giovanni Di Gerusalemme Ricevuti Nella Veneranda Lingua d'Italia Dalla Fondazione Dell'Ordine Ai Nostri Giorni. Parte Prima. Dal 1136 al 1713* (Naples: Libreria Detken & Rocholl, 1897), 57.

61 The Hospitaller knights of the Order of St John of Malta were not bound to lead a secluded, cloistered life, but were forced to obey the rules of the church and take a vow of chastity and sustain considerable costs to uphold a suitable lifestyle – dressing according their status and maintaining horses and weaponry, for example. On the working of the Order of Malta and its values, see Emanuel Buttigieg, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity. The Hospitaller Knights of Malta, c.1580-c.1700* (London: Continuum, 2011); It was not uncommon in the Venetian Republic for only one son of aristocratic families to marry: see Anna Bellavitis, "Family and Society," in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 319-51.

dedicate himself to writing at age 47. In 1584 he had already been involved in the organisation of the inaugural spectacle of the Teatro Olimpico, *Edipo tiranno*: he was one of the academicians who guided the women to their seats, and participated in the commission "impiegat[a] per il reclutamento e l'addestramento degli attori e per dare consigli sulle musiche". In a council of the Accademia in 1585, he also replaced Angelo Caldogno.[62]

As a writer, Calderari actively promoted himself,[63] and as Braghin Caldiera di Forabusi da Bolzan, his pseudonym for the *Rime rustiche*, he must have been an acknowledged author. However, his dramatic production – *La mora*,[64] *La schiava*, and *Armida* – is also worthy of praise.[65]

The frontispieces of his three comedies consistently represent him as "[il] signor frate Giovanni Battista Calderari, cavalier di Malta" (*La mora*, 1588 and *La schiava*, 1589) and "[l']illustre signor Giovanni Battista Calderari, vicentino, cavalier ierosolimitano" (*Armida*, published posthumously in 1600). Both his military and literary feats are praised in the paratexts added to his comedies, and Giovanni Battista Tittonio even writes in his sonnet praising Calderari:

> Guerrier, che porti il trionfante segno
> che in terra e in ciel s'adora; e sempre invitto
> solo in arringo, e in general conflitto
> difendesti di Christo il santo regno;
>
> tratto in porto de l'alma, il fragil legno,
> ch'affidò Malta, e depredò l'Egitto,
> dimostri quel, che saggiamente ha scritto
> tra i perigli del mar, tuo raro ingegno.[66]

The citation vaguely alludes to Calderari defending "di Christo il santo regno". The Order was, indeed, historically involved in the war against the Ottomans. Before Calderari became a knight in 1573, the Order famously fought the Ottomans in

62 Stefano Mazzoni, *L'Olimpico di Vicenza. Un teatro e la sua "perpetua memoria"* (Firenze: Le lettere, 1998), 105.

63 See Verbaere, "'By Consultation of Elevated Minds.'"

64 I would like to point out that Calderari's *La mora* has been published integrally by the Italian and French professor Catharinus Dulcis. Nigel Smith connects Gerbrand Adriaenszoon Bredero with his *Moortje*, Calderari and Dulcis in Nigel Smith, "Slavery, Rape and Migration in European Transnational Drama, 1580-1642" (MLA Convention, January 7, 2021) (article forthcoming).

65 For the circulation and appraisals of Calderari's writings, I refer to Stella, "'Dal prò fiorio d'amore'" for his poetic production; and to my own "'By Consultation of Elevated Minds'" for his dramatic production. Evidence from the paratexts suggests that the plays were never performed, at least not by the Olimpici.

66 Giovanni Battista Calderari, *La mora comedia del signor frate Giovanni Battista Calderari cavalier di Malta* (Vicenza: Perin libraro, et Tommaso Brunelli compagni, 1588), A5v.

1565 as they laid the 'Great Siege' to Malta, and partook in the naval expedition to Lepanto in 1571.

I did not find information, however, to confirm that Calderari fought against the Ottomans as a knight of Malta, although Calderari himself refers to military training and dangerous expeditions in his dedicatory letters. The one preceding *La mora*, addressed to Giovanni Battista Ghellini, the *prencipe* of the Accademia Olimpica, reads:

> E che doveva io fare, dopo le fatiche di quindeci anni nella militia sostenute, dopo i tanti pericoli trascorsi corseggiando il mare per la mia religione di Malta, fattomi indispostissimo del corpo per la podagra, inclinato alle scene et ridotto con otio alla patria ove per questi studii è stato dirizzato un nobilissimo teatro, se non darmi al comporre alcuna comedia?[67]

In this letter he reminds his fellow knights of Malta, the commander Muzio Gonzaga and the captain Fulvio Pasi, the dedicatees of *La schiava*, of many "nostre conversationi occorse, mentre noi riposavamo dalle aspre fatiche dei corsi et dalle perigliose navigationi, nelle quali continuamente insieme gli anni passati ci essercitavamo", conversations of which they will be reminded in reading the comedy.

He also regrets his being "sforzato dar bando et con eccessivo mio dolore attaccar la spada all'oncino, alla qual peraventura giamai non feci vergogna", though his nature is "più tosto avezza alla militia che ad altro affare".[68] It is thus certain that he was exercised in combat for the Order, and, if he did not participate in major combat, it is probable that during the "corsi" and "perigliose navigationi" he encountered raiders of many geographic and confessional provenances, including Ottomans and renegades.

Calderari's *La mora* was only published in 1588 (Vicenza, Perin libraro et Tommaso Brunelli compagni) by its author. The dedicatory letter to Ghellini, the *principe* of the Academy, mentions that "dopo i tanti pericoli trascorsi corseggiando il mare per la mia religione di Malta", and, having gout, Calderari dedicated himself to writing theatre since the Teatro Olimpico was now built.

The letter very briefly reflects on some theoretical ideas regarding drama, but it does not mention the exotic 'other'. Neither does Calderari hint at a performance of the play. Among the paratexts, we also find poems that praise Calderari's work and military past written by Antonio Maria Angiolello, Gherardo Bellinzona,

67 Calderari, *La mora*, a2r.

68 Giovanni Battista Calderari, *La schiava, comedia del signor frate Giovanni Battista Calderari cavalier di Malta* (Vicenza: Agostino dalla Noce, 1589), A2v.

Angelo Ingegneri, Giovanni Battista Tittonio (or Titoni), all Olimpici, and by Marco Stecchini, a poet from Bassano near Vicenza, and Annibale Dalla Torre, a knight of Malta. It seems, however, that Calderari's plays were never performed.[69]

Though a *mora* strictly speaking is not an Ottoman, we can consider this character a 'Turk' in the sense that she originates from an Islamic country. The servant Turchetto, probably humorously, says that "costei viene fino del gran regno del Burnò, et è figlia d'un re di quel paese", and, when insulting her, the characters make fun of her Islamic beliefs. Moreover, the semantics of the term 'Moor' are very unclear.[70]

The play is basically a translation and reworking of Terence's *Eunuchus*. The protagonists are two well-to-do brothers, Cinthio and Laureno, who live in Naples. At the beginning of the play, Cinthio is on stage together with the courtesan Aurora, who is courted both by the young nobleman and by his rival, the captain Baloardo Smiriglioni. Aurora implores Cinthio to leave the city for a few days, so that she can ask Baloardo to give her an orphaned slave, Tiresia, as a gift. The girl had been abducted years ago by corsairs, and had been brought up like a sister to Aurora; the courtesan now wishes to get hold of the girl and return her to her biological family – not without any prospect of monetary profit. Reluctantly Cinthio agrees, but he assures Aurora that he will give her a Moorish slave woman, and that his domestic Turchetto will bring this Fatma to her – in Terence's *Eunuchus*, by contrast, the young Fedria gifts Taide with both an Ethiopian slave *and* a eunuch.

In the second storyline, Cinthio's brother Laureno sees Tiresia being brought to Aurora's house, and instantly falls in love with her. When Turchetto laughs that the beardless youth could easily pass for a woman, Laureno compels him to help him disguise himself as the *mora* in order to gain access to Tiresia's room. The scheme succeeds. Laureno seduces and rapes the girl, only to flee when Aurora's servant discovers him. Aurora now sees her opportunities to obtain the favour of Tiresia's family dwindled or even melted away, and tries to find the perpetrator. Cinthio confusedly does the same when he finds out what has happened.

At the end of the play, Cinthio and the captain agree that they can share Aurora between them, and Tiresia is recognised by her brother Nicandro and revealed to be of noble birth; now she and Laureno can marry. The Ottoman presence is mostly a background presence since the wars with the Ottomans are mentioned, and because again we have a servant named 'Turchetto', but the presence of the Moorish woman and of Laureno's dressing up as her ensures that *La mora* deserves its place in the corpus.

69 Again, see Verbaere, "'By Consultation of Elevated Minds.'"

70 See Lowe, "Visible Lives", especially 415-419.

98. M. 24.

LA SCHIAVA COMEDIA,

DEL SIG. F. GIO. BATTISTA CALDERARI

CAVALIER DI MALTA.

DI

ALLI M. ILL. ET M. REV. SIG.

IL SIG. COMMENDATOR F. MVTIO GONZAGA,

ET

IL SIG. CAPITAN F. FVLVIO PASI,

CAVALIERI GIEROSOLIMITANI.



IN VICENZA,

Appresso Agostino dalla Noce. M. D. LXXXIX.

Con Licenza della Santissima Inquisition.

10 GIOVANNI BATTISTA CALDERARI, *LA SCHIAVA*, 1589 (COMEDY)

As in the case of *La mora*, Calderari's *La schiava* only has one edition, published in 1589 (Vicenza, Agostino dalla Noce). It is the only play of my corpus that is concerned with slavery and conversion. The dedicatory letter, as I already stated, explains to Gonzaga and Pasi what Calderari's view was on drama. But nothing relevant is said with regard to a possible performance or to the 'Turk' on stage. Gonzaga and Pasi are also told that they will remember the years spent together in the Order, including the voyages at sea and years filled with war, while reading the play. It can thus be established that *La schiava* was a long time in the making and took form during the years as *cavaliere di Malta*.

The front matter further contains letters by Denores, Niccolò Rossi, and Antonio Maria Angiolello, two Olimpici. Denores, the esteemed theoretician of drama we already encountered, is the only person that seems to be external to Calderari's network. His tone is indeed more detached. He praises the comedy, judges whether Calderari followed the Aristotelian and Horatian theories, and makes some comments on the plotline. The letter by Denores is followed by a notice by the printer, stating that Calderari corrected the suggestions made by Denores in the actual printed version. Rossi and Angiolello are proud that a fellow Vicenzan delivered such a splendid work. Angiolello, moreover, tells Calderari that he will make some minor suggestions for improvement when they will see each other, since he is presently indisposed. He regrets that the Accademici seek the plays for their programme when they have such valuable authors and pieces at home. This again induces me to suspect that *La schiava* was never performed.

The scene is set in the Sicilian town of Syracuse, and the play begins with the old courtesan Caterinicca, who complains to the *ruffiana* Giovanna that she wants to set sail to Naples, where her beloved *signor* Mario Albertini lives. The only trouble is that she has to sell her slave girl, Teresa, born of an Ottoman slave woman with a twin brother. Their master had brought her years ago as a gift to Caterinicca. Now the courtesan needs money, but there is no-one willing to pay the price she asks for Teresa: the ones still in the running are captain Mandracchio, who is too tight-fisted to cough up, Filermo, and Giannello, the son of doctor Saltalà, both of whom are too poor to pay. Caterinicca decides that she will sell the girl to Mandracchio.

> IMAGE 22 – Title page to Calderari's *La schiava* (Vicenza: Agostino dalla Noce, 1589) - © Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 38.M.24 ALT PRUNK, title page

Already in the second scene of the first act, however, the same captain Mandracchio tells his servant Damiano that during his raids on sea as a military man he captured an Ottoman woman, who he then passed on to a Neapolitan. At this point the

reader already knows that the great love he feels for Teresa must be fatherly love and nothing more. In the meantime, we find out that Teresa and Giannello love each other, and Filermo asks his servant Romanesco for help, who immediately thinks of Mandracchio's servant Zarut, an Ottoman slave who would do anything to get off Sicily and be free. He promises Zarut that, if he steals the money necessary to buy Teresa, Filermo will help him escape. Zarut agrees and declares that he wishes to become Christian again, telling his story.

He had been baptised when he had been born, grew up in Naples, and while at sea on business he was captured by corsairs and persuaded by them to 'return Turk' since he was born of an Ottoman mother. He started raiding as well, but was again captured and sold to Mandracchio. The reader can imagine that his master is actually his father, and Teresa his sister – this was not an unusual plotline in comedy.

Filermo agrees to the plan, and Teresa concocts one of her own: rather than resign to her horrible fate, she encourages Filermo because she imagines that it will be easier for her to be with Giannello if Filermo buys her instead of the captain. Caterinicca promises Teresa both to Mandracchio and Filermo, and waits for the first buyer to arrive with the money. Filermo secures Teresa and sends Romanesco to bring her to him, but the servant is outsmarted by Giannello, who makes off with his beloved.

Meanwhile, Zarut had risked the hangman's noose by stealing the money, and he arrives on scene at the beginning of act five on his way to the magistrates, tied up and accused of stealing. The lover of Caterinicca, Mario, arrives, together with Ahyssa, the mother of Teresa and Zarut who has converted to Christendom and lived in Naples for years without word of her children. In search of her daughter, she finds her son. The identity of Zarut is revealed. His father accepts him as his son and arranges for Teresa to be wed properly to Giannello. The captain rewards the poor Filermo by making him captain of one of his ships.

11 VALERIO FULIGNI, *BRAGADINO*, 1589 (TRAGEDY)

The frontispiece of *Bragadino*, a tragedy that appears not to have been very successful since I only count one edition from 1589 (Pesaro, Girolamo Concordia), tells us that Fuligni is a "vicentino, canonico regulare lateranense". Being incredulous that tragic authors commit themselves to ancient matter in order to tell the story of Bragadin, but never tackled the real facts of the "non meno spaventevole che compassionevol caso, accaduto ai dì nostri nell'infelice isola di Cipro",[71] Fuligni tells us in his dedicatory letter that he decided to write this truthful tragedy. He

71 Valerio Fuligni, *Bragadino, tragedia di don Valerio Fuligni vicentino, canonico regulare lateranense* (Pesaro: Girolamo Concordia, 1589), A3r.

started working on it in Venice, and promised his friends there to print it in the *Serenissima*. However, he was removed by his superiors to Gubbio in Umbria where he took charge of a monastery.

There he decided to dedicate his work "al serenissimo et virtuosissimo prencipe, il signor Francesco Maria II Feltrio dalla Rovere, duca d'Urbino VI"[72] because he is lord of Gubbio, is benefactor to the monastery, and as a devoted ruler incarnates all Christian values. The duke, moreover, fought and overcame the barbarous Ottomans at Lepanto, avenging the martyrs that are the protagonists of his book. Before becoming duke of Urbino in 1574, he had indeed participated in the battle of Lepanto on the ship of the duke of Savoy.[73]

Fuligni's dedicatory letter thus quite extensively reflects on the 'Turk' and on the cruel events of the war of Cyprus, but he does not contemplate the Ottoman on stage or any actual staging of *Bragadino*.

The tragedy describes real historical events prior to the 1571 naval battle. In Famagusta, the Venetian army leader and governor Marcantonio Bragadin has only just surrendered the city to the Ottomans, and he is preparing to hand over the keys to the city gates to the Ottoman commander after a horrible siege.

The drama opens with a premonitory dream by Bragadin, that will reveal itself to come true, and that continuously questions the sincerity and constancy of the Ottoman enemy. The *choro* of *cittadini famagostani* is informed little by little of the events as the play goes along by army leaders and messengers.

At first, everyone is heartened by the news brought by Astor Baglione, the general captain of the Venetians, that Mustafà, the Ottoman army leader of *bassà*, received the Venetians well and seemed sincere. However, the *castellano* Andrea Bragadin is not reassured; he noticed that the Ottomans had all been upset by a letter that had arrived from the *bassà*. Baglione, at first reassured by Mustafa's beautiful speech, now does not know what to believe anymore. A Venetian soldier who knows the Turkish language, however, overheard the enemy soldiers being warned that they should pay attention to when they will hear a signal, and that they should then disarm all Christians. This happens, and the Christian captains are captured but decide not to oppose them, as Bragadin suggests that they could harm the greater good in doing so and should respect God's plan for them.

In the meantime, Mustafà's lieutenant and Mustafà himself try to convince the inhabitants of Famagusta that the Ottomans mean no harm, although their speeches imply that this is not the case. Two characters tell the rest of the tale: unsuspected, all Christian leaders had entered the tent of Mustafà, and Bragadin had handed over

72 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, A2r.

73 Gino Benzoni, "Francesco Maria II Della Rovere, Duca Di Urbino," in *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 50 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1998), 55.

BRAGADINO 115

TRAGEDIA DI DON VALERIO

Fuligni Vicentino,

CANONICO REGVLARE

Lateranenſe.

Al Sereniſſimo Duca d'Vrbino.

FACOLTÀ DI LETTERE E FILOSOFIA
BIBLIOTECA
TORINO



Inpeſaro, Apreſſo Girolamo Concordia,
Con licentia de'Superiori, 1589.

the keys of the city. However, seemingly provoked by Bragadino's speech, the *bassà* had suddenly turned into a raging monster and had all Christian *capi* murdered.

All die except for Lorenzo Tiepolo, the captain of Baffo, and Bragadin, who instead gets mutilated. Though his inferiors try to dissuade him, and though Tiepolo tries to reason with him, he remains cruel and is convinced that Bragadin must die. The torture of Bragadin, who is flayed alive, is described next: the *bassà* is furious again and his soldiers are hesitant to initiate the stripping off of his skin. Then we receive the news from Greek messengers that both Tiepolo and Bragadin are dead, and the inhabitants take a gloomy view of Famagusta's future under the Ottoman rule. The only survivor among the Christian leaders that remains at liberty and survives by hiding in a Greek house, is count Nestor Martinengo. The historical figure of Martinengo is also the one who will write down and print all that has passed at Famagusta.

12 GIOVANNI FRANCESCO LOREDANO, *LA TURCA*, 1597 (COMEDY)

The chronologically last play of the corpus, the comedy *La turca* by Giovanni Francesco Loredano, appeared in 1597 (Venice, Libreria della Speranza). It was edited by his son, Sebastiano, as the dedicatory letter makes clear. Loredano was a Venetian playwright who died in 1590,[74] and he is not to be confused with his more famous namesake, Giovan Francesco Loredan (1606-1661), who founded the Accademia degli Incogniti in 1630.

I checked the paratexts of Loredano's published works, all comedies – *La malandrina* (1587), *Li vani amori* (1587 and 1588), *La turca* (1597) and *Lo incendio* (1597) –, but did not find any relevant information regarding his biography. The plays printed in the 1580s are preceded by a dedicatory letter authored by Giovanni Francesco himself; the dedicatory letters from the 1590s are by his son, Sebastiano. From *La malandrina* it becomes clear that a certain Girolamo Colonna was his son-in-law and as much of an *amante* of drama[75] as Giovanni Francesco himself was. *Li vani amori* is dedicated to Giorgio Gradenico, whose father was Andrea, as Giovanni Francesco recalls.

> IMAGE 23 – Title page to Fuligni's *Bragadino* (Pesaro: Girolamo Concordia, 1589) – © Turin, Università degli Studi di Torino, Biblioteca Storica di Ateneo Arturo Graf, T 115, title page

74 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane, "Loredano, Giovanni Francesco," Edit16. Edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, accessed June 19, 2023, edit16.iccu.sbn.it/autore/CNCA009625.

75 Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *La malandrina, comedia del signor Giovanni Francesco Loredano, novamente posta in luce* (Venice: All'Insegna della Speranza a San Giuliano, 1587), 4-5.

0.L.31.

LA TVRCA

COMEDIA

DEL S. GIO. FRANCESCO LOREDANO,

Di nuouo posta in luce.

CON PRIVILEGIO.



IN VINEGIA,
M D XCVII.
Alla Libraria della Speranza.

The Gradenicos were a family of patricians. Giorgio was active in the Venetian cultural scene. He was in touch with many great authors of his time, took part in the Accademia veneziana della Fama, and both wrote his own works and promoted others'. He was also involved, for example, in the staging of some of Lodovico Dolce's tragedies.[76] In both the dedicatory letter to *La turca* and the one to *Lo incendio*, Sebastiano informs us that his father left him many of his writings, and that he tried to publish a few of them. No mention is made of the exotic 'other' in the play or to *La turca*'s performance.

Besides staging a typical comic cross-dressing plot, the play stages female renegades and mixed marriages. The action again takes place on Sicily: two brothers, Aiace and Tutio, are from Cyprus and have seen their homeland destroyed, their future wives abducted, and their friends killed. Their possessions were sent to Venice before the Ottomans arrived, but they consider them lost since they have no news. They themselves were captured and served as galley slaves. They arrive in Messina as free men. To rebuild their lives, Aiace and Tutio plan to steal the money of an Ottoman who stays in the same inn as them. This Imerale lost his Famelica during Lepanto: she was taken and sold in Messina, and Imerale now wants to buy her back. After stealing the money, Aiace and Tutio decide to dress up as women to not get caught and wait it out until they can book their voyage to Venice.

At the same time, Gesualdo, the son of Masutio, had planned to marry his Porfiria; however, her father Dionigi does not want his daughter to enter his household since Masutio has fallen in love with Flaminia, and Porfiria cannot be bossed around by an Ottoman slave. When Gesualdo discovers that his wedding is impeded, he plans to take Porfiria out of her house so that they can be together and her father will have no choice but to sanction their union.

Then, Aiace and Tutio's wives, the sisters Briseide and Hersilia, arrive on the island as well. They have also been galley slaves, and are dressed as men to protect their honour and obtain secure passage to Venice, where their belongings are. The two couples use each other's male/female names and go to live as servants in the two houses of Masutio and Dionigi, while Imerale asks the innkeeper Forcasso to help him recover Famelica. As the Ottoman discovers that the two brothers stole his money, he starts a crusade to bring the perpetrators to justice but is ridiculed.

> IMAGE 24 – Title page to Giovanni Francesco Loredano's *La turca* (Venezia: Libreria della Speranza, 1597) – © Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 40.L.31 ALT PRUNK, title page

In the meantime, Briseida and Hersilia identify Famelica as Dionigi's sister, and Zegno and Ugo, who ensured that Aiace, Tutio, Briseida and Hersilia's

76 Anna Siekiera, "Gradenigo, Giorgio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 58 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002).

property made it to the Venetian island of Corfu, have arrived to find their masters. They find that Briseida and Hersilia, still dressed as men, are locked away by the servant Scartozzo and the pedant Agrimonio's doing, who accused the 'men' of stealing Imerale's money.

The husbands decide that they will play a trick on the two to liberate their wives and avoid prosecution by the law, and all characters are in on Aiace and Tutio's plan. Still dressed as women, they accept the marriage proposals by Scartozzo and Agrimonio and rush to the wedding night, only to shock the servant and pedant at the sight and touch of their not so feminine parts. Everything is explained, everyone is reconciled, and four marriages take place: Gesualdo and Porfiria's, without having to elope; Masutio and Famelica's, who is Dionigi's sister and now a worthy spouse, and those of the four young siblings.

13 NETWORKS

Aretino stemmed from humble origins, but was very much engaged in the circles of the academies, as were Barbaro, Calderari, Dolce, Fuligni, Giusti, Groto, and Mondella, while Calmo entered into a Venetian confraternity and occupied several positions there. Most of these authors – Barbaro, Dolce, Groto, and Calderari – were nobles, though not all of them were very wealthy. Calmo and Giusti were from the higher middle class, and Barbaro and Fuligni were clerics of a certain standing. Calderari, Giusti, Groto, Mondella worked within the academic context, where plays were often staged, and Calmo was very much a performer. Many authors were in touch with each other, and their works were circulated among them. Based on their biographies alone, we can conclude that Lodovico Dolce and Pietro Aretino, for example, were close friends, and Aretino also exchanged letters with Andrea Calmo. Dolce was possibly part of the Infiammati – to which Daniele Barbaro was also connected – and he wrote letters to Luigi Groto, as well among many others.[77] Someone like Groto was also connected to Magagnò, who was the co-author of a collected volume of *rime* in which four poems by Giovanni Battista Calderari were published.[78] Calderari and Giusti were both in contact with Muzio Manfredi and Angelo Ingegneri, and Aretino, Calderari and Dolce with Giason Denores, who also certainly read Giusti's plays. All of these authors, however they were personally or professionally concerned with either the 'Turkish question' or the writing and staging of drama, thought it necessary to a certain degree to bring

77 For this information, see Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, 15.

78 Agostino Rava, Giovanni Battista Maganza, and Marco Thiene, *La Quarta Parte Delle Rime Alla Rustica Di Menon, Magagnò e Begotto* (Venice: Giorgio Angelieri, 1583).

'drama' and the 'Turk' together. The following chapters shall flesh out how these two strands intersected.

14 TYPECASTING EARLY MODERN DRAMATIC CHARACTERS: A PREAMBLE TO CHAPTERS 4 AND 5

Early modern drama was centred around the presentation of some fixed roles with very specific characteristics. To adequately evaluate the role of the Ottoman, and to see whether he was innovative in regard to these specifics, we must analyse what the typical roles and their traits were in comedy and tragedy. I will therefore give an overview of the roles that are pertinent to my analysis. They originated from classic comedy and tragedy, and were picked up again in the Early Modern Period. With the *commedia dell'arte* some of these roles would become actual *maschere*.

In comedy, the older roles are occupied by the *magnifico* and by the *dottore*. The *magnifico* is usually a Venetian noble and wealthy merchant. He is intent on wedding and/or bedding a much-too-young noble *innamorata* or courtesan, and on protecting his purse. He is an avaricious and angry father who opposes his son's being a spendthrift. He loves to deliver an eloquent speech, almost as much as his colleague, the *dottore*. This *vecchio* poses as an academic who often divulges 'knowledge' in Bolognese dialect or in Latin in colourful language with many wordplays.

The children of the *magnifico* were the comic lovers. The young *innamorati* were more serious: they felt heartache and ardent passion for each other, feelings which they often expressed by reciting highbrow literature, such as Petrarchan love poetry. Thirdly, the comic *servi* of the patrician families drive the comical plot and seek to overturn the status quo. They help the young *innamorati* to gain advantage over their old parents, and be with their beloveds though the match is initially opposed by their family. The lesser servant or *secondo zanni*, who, together with the female servant-*innamorata* Franceschina, gained ground especially with *commedia dell'arte*, often opposes the plans of the first servant. The *secondo zanni* is generally characterised as lazy, hungry, and foolishly naïve.

The rather ridiculous *magnifico*, *dottore*, *capitano* and servants opposed the more serious *innamorati* – though this divide was not absolute. The captain, for example, was a *ridicolo* with some graveness. The *capitano* boasts about his valour in battle while actually being a coward. Besides being a soldier, he is also a lover who desires women from various social backgrounds.

While the captain often speaks a kind of Spanish, the *comico* Francesco Andreini's rendition of this figure made him speak Tuscan, which was the more 'standard' Italian based on Petrarch's, Dante's, and Boccaccio's writings. The



innamorati spoke Tuscan as well, but the other characters were well-versed in specific dialects. The *magnifico* was a Venetian *pur sang*, the *dottore* spoke Bolognese and Latin, and the *zanni* the *bergamasco* dialect. Historically, many servants in Venice had arrived there from the border area of the Republic of Bergamo, and so comedy represented the opposition between the Venetian master and the 'foreign' *servo*. The use of specific dialects and languages was a pivotal part of comedy; it made characters ridiculous and entertained the audience.[79]

Another recurring character is the courtesan. The classic Greek *hetaira* and Roman *meretrix* are criticised by comic characters for being selfish, money-oriented and disloyal – in short, wicked. She is conscious that she must secure the stability of her own income, so she deceives, enchants, and seduces. This figure can be subdivided into a good and bad courtesan. The bad courtesan is a masterful scheming strategist and dissimulator. She loves none of her admirers, and deceives everyone for money. The good one is a girl who looks like a *ruffiana*, but turns out to be free and of noble birth, honest, and honourable. She can marry the young lover, whom she truly loves, though she, too, at times has to simulate devotion to less attractive habitués to obtain presents or money.[80]

> IMAGE 25 – Detail from a French painting which is assumed to represent the *commedia dell'arte* troupe *I Gelosi* and actress Isabella Andreini. The *comici* were known for specialising in specific dramatic roles. We see the *innamorata* and father ('Pantalone') – Anonymous (French School), *Troupe de comédiens italiens*, ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 95 x 147 cm – © Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Histoire de Paris, P628

The classical role of the king or tyrant witnessed a revival in the Early Modern Period. When the king was declined as a tyrant, he was subject to Fortune, who was in turn guided by divine providence. As such, the tyrant was destined to lose power. In this period, he is increasingly portrayed as a diabolical, bestial character who incarnates the worst deadly sins: pride, greed, anger, and often also lust.[81] One of his subjects is the *messo*. The messenger from ancient drama may be a soldier, but could also be a shepherd or a peasant. Although he often – but not always – is an anonymous character, he is not objective. Rather, he is capable of expressing his own opinions and emotions regarding the events of the tragedy.[82]

79 For the following, see Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15-30.

80 Anne Duncan, "Infamous Performers. Comic Actors and Female Prostitutes in Rome," in *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 137-38.

81 Gianni Guastella, "*Ira*, *superbia*, *fortuna*. Evoluzione del tiranno senecano," *Dionysus Ex Machina* 10 (2019): 444-45.

82 Irene J.F. de Jong, *Narrative in Drama. The Art of the Euripidean Messenger-Speech* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 65-72.

These characters can be identified in Venetian sixteenth-century 'Turkish theatre':

OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE (CONDITION) • TYPE OF OTTOMAN	WORK
CAPTAIN		
Agha of the janisarries	Captain • Real Ottoman	Fuligni, *Bragadino*
Fracassa, Ottoman captain	Captain • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Imerale, Ottoman	Captain (*anziano*) • Real Ottoman	Loredano, *La turca*
Lieutenant of Mustafà	Captain • Real Ottoman	Fuligni, *Bragadino*
Mustafà, leader of the Ottoman army	Captain (tyrant, general) • Real Ottoman	Mondella, *Isifile*
Mustafà, pasha general of the Ottoman army	Captain (tyrant, general) • Real Ottoman	Fuligni, *Bragadino*
COURTESAN		
Erifila, Ottoman courtesan	Courtesan • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Famelica, slave of Masutio Beltrame	Courtesan (slave, convert) • Real Ottoman	Loredano, *La turca*
Teresa, slave of the courtesan Caterinicca	Courtesan (slave, convert) • Real Ottoman	Calderari, *La schiava*
FATHER		
Fronesio, Ottoman old man	Father (*anziano*) • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Polidoro, Ottoman old man	Father (*anziano*, merchant) • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
INNAMORATI		
Fabritio, dresses up as an Ottoman woman	*Innamorato* • Fake Ottoman (disguise)	Dolce, *Fabritia*
Flavia, Ottoman slave woman	*Innamorata* (slave) • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Laureno, Capecci brother	*Innamorato* • Fake Ottoman (disguise)	Calderari, *La mora*
Lucilla, painted and dressed as a male Saracen	*Innamorata* (slave) • Fake Ottoman (disguise)	Aretino, *Talanta*
Neofilo, Ottoman young man	*Innamorato* • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*

OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE (CONDITION) • TYPE OF OTTOMAN	WORK
Polipo, Ottoman young man	*Innamorato* • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
KING/TYRANT		
Selim, Ottoman prince	King/Tyrant (sultan) • Real Ottoman	Mondella, *Isifile*
Selim, Ottoman sultan	King/Tyrant (tyrant, sultan) • Real Ottoman	Fuligni, *Bragadino*
Solimano, lord of Asia	King/Tyrant (sultan) • Real Ottoman	Barbaro, *Tragedia*
Zalamosso, king of Armenia	King/Tyrant (tyrant) • Ancient character that represents Ottoman	Giusti, *Irene*
MERCHANT		
Barbaro, Ottoman merchant	Merchant • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
MESSENGER		
Armenian soldiers	Messenger (soldier) • Ancient character that represents Ottoman	Giusti, *Irene*
Messenger of Mustafà	Messenger (soldier) • Real Ottoman	Mondella, *Isifile*
Ottoman messenger	Messenger (soldier) • Real Ottoman	Barbaro, *Tragedia*
MOTHER		
Ahyssa, mother of Teresa and Zarut	Mother (*anziana*, convert) • Real Ottoman	Calderari, *La schiava*
PIMP		
Arpago, Ottoman pimp	Pimp • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
SERVANT/SLAVE		
Arpago, runaway servant of *messer* Proculo, dressed as an Ottoman	Servant/slave • Fake Ottoman (disguise)	Calmo, *Il Travaglia*
Chrisoforo, Ottoman servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Converso, servant	Servant/slave • Name recalls converts	Loredano, *La turca*
Crapulo, Ottoman cook	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Fatma, Moorish slave woman	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman (Islamic woman)	Calderari, *La mora*
Maddalena, Saracen servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Calmo, *Rodiana*
Moro, servant who dresses up as a Syrian merchant	Servant/slave • Name recalls Ottoman • Fake Ottoman (disguise)	Dolce, *Fabritia*

OTTOMAN CHARACTER	ROLE (CONDITION) • TYPE OF OTTOMAN	WORK
Rambuc, Ottoman servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Loredano, *La turca*
Rigo, Ottoman porter	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Rustica, Ottoman maidservant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Tropio, Ottoman servant	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Turchetto, page	Servant/slave • Name recalls Ottoman	Dolce, *Fabritia*
Turchetto, servant to the Capecci	Servant/slave • Name recalls Ottoman	Calderari, *La mora*
Vespa, Ottoman page	Servant/slave • Real Ottoman	Groto, *Emilia*
Zarut (Alfonso), slave of the captain	Servant/slave (convert) • Real Ottoman	Calderari, *La schiava*

FIGURE 3 – Ottoman characters in the selected corpus, organised by role

Without doubt, the character types of the Ottoman that appear in Venetian drama (see FIGURE 2) reflect the various Ottomans that Venetians could encounter in real life: merchants, male and female Ottoman slaves and servants, converts, soldiers, military leaders, and sultans. But they also reflect the dramatic convention of using stock characters. Chapters four and five will zoom in on the dramatic characters, and investigate the shapes of the 'Turk' and the 'self' in Venetian sixteenth-century drama.

This chapter has explored the eight comedies and four tragedies under discussion by combining primary and secondary research. All the plays contain Italian characters disguised as 'Turks' or real Ottomans, published by Venetian authors between 1542 and 1589. While Aretino's *Talanta* (1542), Dolce's *Fabritia* (1549), and Calmo's *Rodiana* (1553) and *Il Travaglia* (1556) hardly stage Ottoman figures, some of these authors display quite an interest in the 'Turk'. Barbaro's *Tragedia* (1541-1548) is the first play to put the 'Turk' centre stage. The Ottoman presence is even more striking in Giusti's *Irene* (1579), Groto's *Emilia* (1579), Mondella's *Isifile* (1582), Calderari's *La mora* (1588) and *La schiava* (1589), Fuligni's *Bragadino* (1589), and Loredano's *La turca* (1597). In some of these plays, 'Turkish' characters evidently play an important role. Significant themes such as diplomacy and warfare, slavery and conversion, lust and martyrdom are discussed.

Although the information that can be deduced from the authors' biographies and from the early modern prints regarding the actual performances is unfortunately limited, I was able to establish that the authors do not reflect on how to stage the Ottoman. Although some authors do not even consider them in their paratextual materials, others are more thoughtful about the 'Turk'.

Groto, for example, does not reflect explicitly on the central role of the Ottomans in the dedicatory letter to his *Emilia*, but he does strongly play with the ambiguities inherent to his play in his prologue. Calderari's dedicatory letters describe his perilous military life at sea defending Christian Europe. Giusti and Fuligni both bring the horrible loss of Cyprus to our attention in their paratexts, and Fuligni even gives a great deal of thought to the barbarity of the 'Turks'. We can thus conclude that the paratextual material displays a rather stereotypical image of the Ottomans.

This chapter has also inquired into the typical comic and tragic roles from early modern theatre and their traits and has offered an overview of the Ottoman characters which adhere to these roles. We find 'Turkish' captains, courtesans, fathers, *innamorati*, kings and tyrants, merchants, messengers, mothers, pimps, and servants and slaves. These not only reflect the real Ottomans that the Venetians could encounter, but are also dramatic stock characters. In the following two chapters, I will flesh out how the Ottoman characters related to the classic dramatic roles and to the Venetian 'self'.

In these chapters I will not only discuss what meaning is given to the character of the Ottoman, and how this reflects on the Venetian, but will also analyse how Ottoman characters relate to the stock characters or *tipi fissi* of early modern drama. In this way, I can examine whether the 'Turk' was an innovative character compared to 'regular' roles, such as the lovers, fathers or courtesans in comedy, or tyrants in tragedy. I will do this by thematically focusing on the types of Ottomans that appear in Venetian drama.

In so doing, I can assess how the Ottoman is characterised before or after Lepanto, and how the Ottoman resonates with the Venetians. This involves considering the 'mirror game' taking place between Venice and the Ottoman Empire: what does the Venetian plausibly see in the Ottoman, and how, as Wilson says, does this make the Venetian reflect on him- or herself?[83]

My analysis in the following two chapters revolves around four major angles and thus poses four questions. First, what stereotypes regarding the Ottoman's appearance and disposition, as seen in chapters one and two, can be found in the plays of my corpus? Second, what are the traits of the characters from ancient and early modern drama, and especially comedy, and how are these represented in the Venetian 'Turkish plays'? Third, what performative elements are mentioned in the textual material? And, finally, how do the Ottoman characters reflect on the Venetians: can a certain 'Venetian' identity be detected in the plays?

83 To improve the legibility, I will write the characters' names in full, even when this is not the case in the sources. I use square brackets in the case of omissions '[…]' and when adapting the text (but not when adding, for example, a capital letter to start a new sentence in my text).



CHAPTER FOUR

THE OTTOMAN AS A COMIC "FRIEND"…

Having inquired into the Ottoman as a presence in Venetian society, spectacle, and drama, I will now analyse how Ottomans are represented as on-stage characters. This includes analysing the Ottoman in connection with recurrent roles from comedy and tragedy and in light of the voicing of stereotypes or 'proto-racist' portrayals. Since this chapter examines the typical comic roles, like the father or the young lover, it is subdivided according to the types of Ottoman characters. I first discuss characters who appear to be Ottomans, and then characters that actually are Ottomans.

1 APPEARING LIKE THE OTTOMAN IN COMEDY

1.1 MASQUERADING AS THE OTTOMAN: DRESS UP AND PAINT IT BLACK

In *Fabritia*, the *vecchio* Atanagio turns into the great impaler Macometto in a comical moment of madness: "Ingenocchiati, profano, e adorami, perché io sono quel gran Macometto che non è né qui né altrove. […] Ah, vermo vile nasciuto di corruttione di sterco! Tu di' matto al principe d'i principi, al re d'i re, all'imperador de gl'imperadori? Aspettami, ch'io voglio impalarti!".[1] However, similar 'transformations' are rare: as a rule, Catholic characters often dress as 'Turks'. These disguises are chosen either to ensure safe travel or to obtain access to their beloveds and seduce them. Based on the texts, we can deduce that these disguises typically consisted of cross-dressing and/or using blackface make-up.

> IMAGE 26 – Jan Luyken, *Mannier hoe de gevangene kristen slaven tot Algiers verkofft worden*, 1684, from: Pieter Dan, *Historie van Barbaryen, en des zelfs zee-roovers*, trans. G. van Broekhuizen (Amsterdam: Jan Claesz ten Hoorn, 1684) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1896-A-19368-452

1 Dolce, *Fabritia*, IV.22, 302-303.

Arpago, the runaway servant of *messer* Proculo from Calmo's *Il Travaglia*, and Aretino's Lucilla and Antino change clothes to guarantee their own safety. Arpago arrives in Venice and presents himself as a Christian dressed as an Ottoman and speaking Turkish and Italian. Vescovo interprets his monologue as a critique on the disadvantageous peace of 1540 following the Venetian defeat at Preveza together with the Holy League.[2] In Aretino's *Talanta*, the siblings disguise themselves for their own safety, but at the same time these disguises allow them to be with their beloveds. Antino impersonates a slave girl, and his sister Lucilla is "tinta e vestita da saracino".[3]

Though they represent 'others', they are described as beautiful. Pizio, Orfinio's servant, goes wild when he sees the 'girl' Antino: "Oh che bella vitetta, che boccuccia ridente, che occhi accesi! Forse che le sui trecce son bionde per artifizio? So che le misure non han che fare con i colori che gli fiameggiano nel viso";[4] and Lucilla is a "moretto divino", a "galante saracinuzzo".[5]

In *Fabritia*, *Talanta*, and *La mora*, the men disguise as women to gain access to their beloveds. In *Talanta*, the *innamorato* Armileo dresses up in a livery of the house where he should enter, whereas Fabritio from Dolce's *Fabritia* and Laureno from Calderari's *La mora* dress up as respectively an Ottoman girl and a Moorish girl. Like Antino and Lucilla, Fabritio and Laureno become irresistible. In the following passage, Moro highlights Fabritio's beauty as the *turchetta*; he would make any man or woman do foolish things. Moro, who later impersonates a Syrian merchant to convince the girl's owner to let his 'slave girl' stay with her for the night, is convinced that she will fall in love with the disguised Fabritio:

> MORO Per certo, Fabritio, non è alcuno che vedendovi non credesse fermamente che foste una donna. Io per me, quando non vi conoscessi, m'innamorerei di voi sì forte che farei le pazzie.
>
> FABRITIO Così se ne innamori colei le cui bellezze hanno fatto innamorar me sì fieramente che io non credo che altro amore si possa comparare al mio.
>
> MORO E chi non se ne innamorarrebbe? Ella vorrebbe essere ben gran duchessa! Senza che si dee credere che quella misera fanciulla abbia più desiderio d'uscir di penosa servitù che voi di averla tra le braccia.[6]

2 Vescovo, "Nota al testo," 27.

3 Pietro Aretino, "Talanta," in *Pietro Aretino. Edizione nazionale delle opere. Volume V. Teatro. Tomo II.* Il marescalco, Lo ippocrito, Talanta, ed. Enrico Garavelli (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2010), 362.

4 Aretino, "Talanta," 2010, IV.2, 394.

5 Aretino, "Talanta," 2010, II.7, 397.

6 Dolce, *Fabritia*, IV.4, 621-262.

The same goes for Laureno. While the real Moorish slave woman, Fatma, is described as a "viso di scimia",[7] Laureno becomes a "bella mora […] molto leggiadra".[8] The contrast between disguised Catholics who are extremely beautiful when disguising as 'others' is very sharp when compared to the disrespect with which Fatma is compared to a monkey. We can infer that the real Moorish woman is seen as extremely ugly.

In *Talanta* and *La mora* it is made explicit that Lucilla and Laureno use blackface to disguise themselves.[9] Transformations through cross-dressing and blackface imbue the comedies with greater complexity and introduce questions of gender, sexuality and race. Not only do the genders of the characters change, but the fact that Lucilla, Fabritio and Laureno cross-dress as Ottomans and Moors brings blackface into play, and exploits sexual connotations about the 'other'.

First, by posing as women, Antino's relationship with Marmilia, the captain's daughter, and Fabritio's and Laureno's dishonouring of the slave girls acquire the suggestion of a lesbian love. It is a *turchetta* or *mora* who initiates the seduction scene, which is recounted but takes place off-stage. Second, being at the same time white males and black females, Antino, Fabritio and Laureno lose their sexual identity, but also become sexually more vigorous. We have already seen that Ottoman women were seen as sensual. The 'Moorish race' was also seen as lustful, as Giovanni Ingegneri states in his *Fisionomia naturale* (1606):

> Coloro, che hanno 'l naso simo, sono molto lussuriosi. Perché gli huomini molto caldi sono altrettanto libidinosi; e così fatta figura di naso, è segno di soprabondanza di caldo […]. Et è tale conditione commune per la maggior parte a quegli, c'hanno la testa molto riccia, a quali, per loro soverchio calore, s'increspano i capelli. Il che principalissimamente si verifica nei Mori d'Ethiopia […].[10]

Thus, when Lucilla, Fabritio and Laureno become Moors and Ottomans, their characters acquire further colouring; they are sexually better endowed and attractive. This is even more the case with Fabritio and Laureno, who rape the slave girls, contrary to what happens in *Talanta*.

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7 Calderari, *La mora*, II.3, 17v.

8 Calderari, *La mora*, III.4, 30v.

9 I am only aware of two other comedies featuring characters of African descent: Giovanni Battista Della Porta, *Il moro* (Viterbo: Girolamo Discepolo, 1607); and Giovanni Battista Petrucci, *Il moro* (Genoa: Giuseppe Pavoni, 1609). See Gurney, "Slavery, Subalternity, Empire. Performing the Multicultural Mediterranean in Italian Comedy," 87-106.

10 Giovanni Ingegneri, *Fisionomia naturale nella quale con ragioni tolte dalla filosofia, dalla medicina, e dall'anatomia, si dimostra, come dalle parti del corpo humano, per la sua naturale complessione, si possa agevolmente conietturare, quali sieno l'inclinationi, e gli affetti dell'animo altrui* (Naples: Giovanni Iacomo Carlino, 1606), 69-70.


Turca di mediocre conditione .

In *Fabritia* we find no mention of the use of blackface, but Aretino's *Talanta* touches upon this practice. Blando describes how he tried to paint the faces of his children and his own face black to deceive the Ottoman enemies who assailed his city:

> Consigliato da la speranza e spronato da la fretta, con *una acqua che faceva de le carni bianche nere*, tinsi me e una de le mie figliuole da moro, credendomi che il parer di tal nazione ci scampasse la libertà o la vita. E mentre volevo tinger gli altri due, il grido de i vincitori e de i vinti mi tolse in maniera a me stesso che non sentí cinvermi da le catene […].[11]

Blando uses a water which makes white skins black. To make them white again, a certain "polvere stemperata con l'acqua" is used.[12] In V.14, the servant Fora exclaims that "un miracolo mi è paruto, poi che la polvere mescolato con l'acqua in due lavatine ha fatto rimaner di neve il moro."[13]

The frontispiece to Andreini's *Lo schiavetto* (IMAGE 9) gives an idea of how racial cross-dressing may have looked on stage. In this seventeenth-century comedy, the *innamorata* Florinda disguises herself as a sub-Saharan male slave. The frontispiece shows us a male slave with clear African traits: a dark skin and tight black curls. He wears an ornamented tunic and slave collar. Attached to the slave collar is a bell which, as Emily Wilbourne points out, was meant to show that one was a slave but also make clear where escaped slaves were to their persecutors, thus limiting their freedom both sonically and visually.[14] I will return to the figure and outward appearance of the Ottoman woman later in a dedicated section.

> IMAGE 27 – Christoph Krieger, *Turca di mediocre conditione*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-373

Calderari's *La mora* offers more insight into gender, cross-dressing, and the use of blackface. This comedy quite literally reworks Terence's *Eunuchus*, but Calderari intervenes in a crucial point of the *Eunuchus*' story. The young lover Cinthio gives his beloved Aurora a Moorish slave woman, Fatma (in the original *Eunuchus*, the gift consisted of two slaves: a black woman and a eunuch). His brother Laureno dresses up as the *mora* in order to reach his beloved (in the *Eunuchus*, he disguises as the

11 Pietro Aretino, *Talanta, comedia di messer Pietro Aretino. Composta a petitione dei magnanimi signori Sempiterni e recitata da le lor proprie magnificentie, con mirabile superbia di apparato.* (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1542), V.1, 456.

12 Aretino, *Talanta*, 1542, V.12, 468.

13 Aretino, *Talanta*, 1542, V.14, 470.

14 Emily Wilbourne, "*Lo Schiavetto* (1612). Travestied Sound, Ethnic Performance, and the Eloquence of the Body," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 1 (2010): 21.

eunuch).[15] In this way, Calderari makes staging and dissimulation central to his play. This becomes clear when the servant Turchetto explains how Laureno will obtain access to the girl's chamber without being discovered:

> Se voi pigliaste la veste di quella mora, ch'io hor hora voglio menar alla signora, e ve ne vestiste, et *facendovi nera la faccia, le mani, e 'l collo, co 'l carbone*, fingendovi proprio, come se fuste d'essa: non metto dubio: basta. […] Voi sete senza barba, e facilmente vi tramutarete sì, che *non vi sarà differenza da voi alla mora*, et facilmente si darà ad intendere, che *voi siate l'istessa*.[16]

The servant proposes to use coal to have Laureno blacken his face, hands, and neck. As we saw in chapter 2, black make-up was indeed one of the ways in which the actor or actress could present themselves as 'other' and impersonate, for example, a 'Turk' or Moor. Turchetto knows that his young master can 'become' the *mora*, and Calderari underlines this possibility by inserting the anaphora "e(t) facilmente". His comedy seems to deepen the tensions that existed in the Early Modern Period between 'being' and 'seeming' or 'appearing'. At certain points Laureno seems to become the slave woman Fatma, so much so that other characters start to question his identity and gender and get confused.

This not the case in Dolce's *Fabritia*, in which the question of Fabritio's male or female identity is easily resolved. In V.3 Invola exclaims "*O egli o altri, o femina o maschio*, noi siamo uccellati e non saremo creduti!"[17] In his confusion, Invola mixes terms referring to both the male and female genders. However, in V.9, when the issue is next raised, the duped characters are sure of the identity of the *turchetta* and the Syrian merchant:

> LUPO […] Questo ingannatore m'ha condotto in casa un giovane in abito di femina, il quale – per quel ch'io mi posso avedere – era innamorato di vostra figliuola; e dicendo che colui era una sua schiava, e io uomo di buona fede credendolo, m'indusse a riceverlo in casa, predandomi ch'io la serbassi per alcuni giorni. La notte poi ambedoi si sono fuggiti. […]
>
> MELINO […] La trama è discoperta. Costui che ha questa bella robba lunga indosso […] è il moro servitor di messer Atanagio; e la schiava non può

15 It would seem that Calderari is a predecessor to the famous Dutch play *Moortje* (1617) by Gerbrand Adriaenszoon Bredero, who explicitly declared that he wished to make the eunuch a Moorish woman since eunuchs were strange figures to his audience. There is also clearly a possible connection with Catharinus Dulcis, an academic from the Savoye. Nigel Smith connects these dots in "Slavery, Rape and Migration in European Transnational Drama, 1580-1642" (article forthcoming).

16 Calderari, *La mora*, II.3, 18r-v.

17 Dolce, *Fabritia*, V.3, 308.

> esser altro giovane che Fabritio suo figliuolo, che pur dianzi arrabbiava per l'amore ch'ei portava alla fanciulla.[18]

While Fabritio from *Fabritia* is easily uncovered, his counterpart Laureno in *La mora* has a more convincing disguise. The most striking illustration of this is when Laureno encounters his friend Fabritio, who is searching for him so that they can hold a dinner party. In the *Eunuchus*, Antifone, the friend, immediately recognises the disguised Cherea when he leaves Thais' house after having raped the slave girl: "È lui o no? Sì, sì, è lui. Ma che gli è successo? Come si è combinato?"[19] He then immediately addresses his friend: "Cherea, come mai gesticoli così? Che significa quest'abito?"[20] In *La mora*, Fabritio mistakes Laureno for a Moorish woman: "*O bella mora*, che esce di casa della signora Aurora, per mia fé che *è molto leggiadra*",[21] he says. "Mi vo pur accostare: par che *costei* habbia voglia di manifestare, questa sua allegrezza?"[22] It is only when Laureno tells Fabritio who he is that his friend can perceive it:

> LAURENO O signor Fabritio mio; non mi conoscete? *Non conoscete il vostro Laureno Capecci*?
>
> FABRITIO O che veggio io? Signor Laureno sete voi? Che vuol dir quest'habito, questa tinta, et questa tanta allegrezza?

Calderari not only renders Laureno unrecognisable, but he also insists, more than Terence in *Eunuchus*, Aretino in *Talanta* or Dolce in *Fabritia*, on Laureno's disguise: his "habito" and "tinta". He emphasises that the *mora* is difficult to recognise from the viewpoints of gender and whiteness and blackness. Laureno's ambiguous and successful disguise is interwoven with the question of the perpetrator's identity.

We see this, for example, in VI.3, when the courtesan Aurora's servants, Pippa and Lena, discover the slave girl Tiresia, who is traumatised by the violent rape by Laureno. Lena is confused and both speak about "la mora" and "quello sciagurato".[23] When Laureno's brother Cinthio arrives to find three upset women, he too is disoriented: "Lascia, ch'io vo a vedere, e *s'io il trovo tristo lui*? […] Quetatevi, e fatemi chiaro ciò, che ha fatto di male *costei*? […] Vi farò hor hora a sapere se *costei, o costui* sarà entrato in casa mia: aspettate".[24] Both characters,

18 Dolce, *Fabritia*, V.9, 324.

19 Publio Terenzio Afro, "Eunuco," in *Terenzio. Le commedie. Con testo a fronte*, ed. Ferruccio Bertini and Vico Faggi, vol. 1 (Milan: Garzanti, 1989), III.4, 315.

20 Terenzio Afro, "Eunuco," III.5, 317.

21 Calderari, *La mora*, III.4, 30v.

22 Calderari, *La mora*, III.5, 31v.

23 Calderari, *La mora*, IV.3, 37v.

24 Calderari, *La mora*, IV.3, 37v-38r.

like the servant Invola in *Fabritia*, use and mix up male and female referents. The doubt persists in the first two scenes of the fifth act, while in Terence's *Eunuchus* and in Dolce's *Fabritia* it is already fairly clear who the culprit is.

However, when Laureno is finally discovered, Aurora recognises him even though he still tries to enact Fatma. Suddenly, Laureno's disguise is no longer sufficient, and the dialogue between him and his brother's lover makes this painfully clear:

> AURORA Sarà bene, che in questo mezo ce n'andiamo ad aspettar[e il fratello di Tiresia] in casa.
>
> LAURENO Anzi è meglio; perché anch'io *mi laverò questa bruttura dal viso*, e mi spoglierò questa vesta. […] Entriamo dentro; perché io non voglio, che egli mi veggia con questa vesta, e così tinto nella via.[25]

Now that Laureno has been discovered, Calderari for the first time underlines how the materiality of the carbon makes the face dirty. We can imagine, as it has been suggested by Richard Blunt, that carbon can easily be washed off when necessary, or fade away during the performance. In this way, from a physical point of view, the carbon suddenly becomes a "bruttura". But the ugliness also has a potentially derogatory undertone. Just like Fatma, the real *mora*, Laureno has become repulsive. When Catholics are painted black to become Ottomans, they are remarkably beautiful. Fatma, on the other hand, is ugly and is said to look like a monkey.

Though, as we will see, it is quite usual for women and servants in general in comedy to be treated badly and to be called names, there is clearly a 'racist' undertone and stereotyping taking place here. This is evident in the description of both the physical ugliness of the disguised actor and that of the Moorish slave woman, as well as in the way in which Fatma is described. I will return in more detail to this point when discussing the Ottoman woman in Venetian 'Turkish theatre'.

In general, we can say that when the early modern lovers dress up as 'others', they closely mimic ancient comedy, notably Terence's *Eunuchus*, in which Cherea dresses up as a eunuch slave in order to seduce and rape his beloved. However, Aretino, Dolce, and Calderari may have had various reasons to have their characters disguise themselves as Ottoman and Moorish women. They may have wanted to portray 'racist' notions and/or wished to provide a comic effect with the comments on the ugliness of the 'other' and with the identity confusions and cross-dressing. They may have chosen to use Moorish and Ottoman characters who were present in the Venetian society as slaves and servants, and who were

25 Calderari, *La mora*, V.1, 49r-49v.

recognisable to their audience.[26] But they may also have done so to reinforce the eros of their protagonists, especially of Fabritio and Laureno, who rape women. All comedies contain multiple layers that complicate the plays and the representation of the 'other', but Calderari's *La mora* is the only play that deepens the performative aspect and extensively highlights how Laureno successfully becomes the *mora* up to the point that he is unrecognisable.

These comedies also mirror the Venetian reality in more than one way. They show the public its own society, where coloured Ottoman and African slaves and servants appeared in the street, and travellers changed their garb to safely travel abroad. These were familiar sights. But they were also disconcerting: the Inquisition was troubled because it was hard to assess the religious identities of persons changing attire and religious habits. In the same way, these comedies represent racial cross-dressers who are difficult to recognise by the other characters.

The comedies also confirm the idea that the 'other' is a sexual predator. By turning the rapists Fabritio and Laureno into an Ottoman and a Moorish woman respectively, the blame for similar abhorring actions can be placed outside of one's own society. The comedies soothe the Venetians' moral compass since, by turning 'white' again, the characters turn back to normal and are wed to their beloveds like decent Venetian citizens.

From this viewpoint, the supposedly female 'other' – I will return later to the 'real' Ottoman woman – assumes troubling connotations. (S)he is a sexual perpetrator who transgresses several boundaries because (s)he engages in same-sex relationships and rapes slave girls. At the same time, (s)he is viewed positively as a beauty, so long as the female 'other' is impersonated by a Venetian or Italian. Laureno is the most striking example: he is excessively beautiful and accomplished, and his disguise is never discovered up to the end of the play, when he becomes as ugly as the real Fatma. Such descriptions of ugliness may hint at a 'racist' way of portraying the 'other'.

1.2 THE 'TURK' (RE)TURNING CATHOLIC: SUSPICIOUS MEN AND SINCERE WOMEN

Preoccupations regarding converts and their genuineness left traces in sixteenth-century drama. While conversion in English drama has been more thoroughly studied,[27] literature on Italian drama is lacking. Studying *commedia dell'arte*, Jaffe-

26 Black Africans were quite familiar figures and appeared in Venice as servants or even gondeliers. On the presence of black Africans in early modern Christian Europe and Italy, see for example Earle and Lowe, *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*; or Kaplan, "Black Turks"; or Lowe, "Visible Lives."

27 See for example Jane Hwang Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Lieke Stelling, *Religious Conversion in Early*

Berg has argued that *innamorati* and *innamorate* convert while travelling by sea.[28] The only discussion of conversion in Italian regular 'Turkish theatre' is a doctoral dissertation by Tessa Gurney. Gurney's main contention is that the characters in Italian comedies freely convert not out of socioeconomic gain, but because they realise the error of their ways. The characters also emphasise that their past conversion to Islam had been forced. As Gurney explicates, in Della Porta's *La turca* the convert Dergut seems insincere and opportunistic; however, she underlines that most conversion scenes in Italian comedy are passionate visual portrayals of Christian devotion. These scenes are designed to move the spectators and revitalise their belief.[29] Though Gurney underlines key elements, I wish to examine whether Venetian 'Turkish comedy' considered the possibility of insincere conversions.[30] The characters who convert in my corpus are courtesans, mothers or slaves.

In Dolce's *Fabritia* and Calmo's *Il Travaglia*, the spectator/reader is assured that the Muslim is a Catholic, even though he looks like an Ottoman. When Moro and Fabritio try to convince the *ruffiano* to take the young man in so that he can be with his lover, Moro assures the *ruffiano* that the 'girl' Fabritio was baptised:

> Non è cosa da rifiutare. E benché la vedete in questo abito, non crediate però che ella tenga ancora la fede maladetta di Macometto. Percioché io l'ho battezata con le mie mani e crede quel che crediam noi.[31]

Similarly, Calmo's Arpago declares that "voi vi ingannate credendomi turco, per esser io cristiano", and replies to the question in *bergamasco* as to what he is wearing ("Che vestit è mo quest, icsí straformad?") as follows: "L'abito mio è turchesco per esser stato in quelle parti alla catena".[32] Arpago tells his interlocutor that he is searching for his former master, because eighteen years ago he abducted his son and he now wishes to obtain forgiveness:

Modern English Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); or Vitkus, *Turning Turk*.

28 On conversion in *commedia dell'arte*, see Jaffe-Berg, "After the Laughter Dies Down"; and Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia Dell'Arte and the Mediterranean*, especially chapter two on the conversion of the male *innamorato* and chapter three on female conversion.

29 See chapter six, "'Et io pur Cristiano far mi voglio'. Conversion and Reconciliation in Comedies of Conflict", in Gurney, "Slavery, Subalternity, Empire. Performing the Multicultural Mediterranean in Italian Comedy."

30 On this point I refer to my own "'Nacqui Sotto Riti Barbari: Ma Di Barbaro Cuore Però Non Fui.' Conversion from Islam to Catholicism in Early Modern Italian Comedy," *Rivista Di Storia E Letteratura Religiosa* 58, no. 2 (2022), which also investigates Della Porta's *La turca*, and Andreini's *La turca* and *La sultana*. These comedies do not belong to my corpus since their authors are not Venetians.

31 Dolce, *Fabritia*, IV.5, 265.

32 Respectively "Vi sbagliate pensando che io sia turco, io sono cristiano", "Allora che abito è questo, così fuori dell'usanza?", and "Io vesto alla turca perché sono stato prigioniero da quelle parti". Calmo, *Il Travaglia. A cura di Piermario Vescovo*, V.10, 258-259.

> Perché spesse fiate li peccati conducono gl'uomini alla penitenzia, volse la sorte ch'io divenni schiavo d' i turchi, dove io son stato finora in servitú, ma avendomi mostrato la bona fortuna il modo di fuggire, io mi son deliberato ricercare di questo messer Proculo e chiedergli perdono, poi affatticarmi tanto ch'io trovi il figliuolo.[33]

In Loredano's *La turca*, the Ottoman Imerale has arrived in enemy Catholic lands to ransom the slave Famelica, whom he considers to be his wife. She, however, remembers the situation differently: as a ten-year-old she was abducted by the Ottomans. She wishes to return to Catholicism and to her noble family ("hor che son di libertà […] intendo vivere et morire nella fede che nacqui").[34] Throughout the play she repeats that in this way she can marry her beloved, Masutio. Religion-switching for practical reasons was not infrequent in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean. We may infer that she wishes to convert out of 'opportunism', to be able to become Masutio's wife and be part of her aristocratic family.

In Calderari's *La schiava*,[35] the slave Zarut's quest for liberty, who seems to be less interested in conversion than in freedom, is one of the driving forces of the plot. The *innamorato* Filermo's servant Romanesco defines him as someone who "molte volte meco si ha lasciato intendere, che si metterebbe ad ogni periglio per fuggire fuor di qua".[36] Zarut himself tellingly affirms that he would rather kill himself or die trying to flee in order to be free from "questa intollerabile servitù".[37] It is only when Romanesco explains his plan, which depends on Zarut stealing his master's money so that Filermo can buy his beloved Teresa's freedom, that Zarut expresses a desire to become Catholic:

> ZARUT Io son pronto a far ogni male, se sarà così come tu di' [...].
> ROMANESCO Giurami per la tua fede.
> ZARUT Non per la mia: ma per la tua voglio giurare, nella quale voglio di novo entrare subito ch'io sia posto in libertà.

33 "Poiché i peccati conducono molto spesso gli uomini alla penitenza, la sorte volle che fossi fatto schiavo dai turchi, ove io sono stato in servitú finora, ma poiché la buona sorte mi ha dato modo di fuggirne, ho deciso di cercare questo messer Proculo e di chiedergli perdono e poi di darmi da fare finché ritrovi il figlio." Calmo, *Il Travaglia. A cura di Piermario Vescovo*, V.10, 260-261.

34 Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *La turca, comedia del signor Giovanni Francesco Loredano, di nuovo posta in luce* (Venice: Libreria della Speranza, 1597), II.6, 16v.

35 To my knowledge, the only other Italian 'Turkish comedies' to discuss conversion between Islam and Catholicism, are Giovanni Battista Della Porta's *La turca* (1606), and Giovanni Battista Andreini's *La turca* (1611) and *La sultana* (1622). See Verbaere, "Nacqui Sotto Riti Barbari: Ma Di Barbaro Cuore Però Non Fui"; and Gurney, "Slavery, Subalternity, Empire. Performing the Multicultural Mediterranean in Italian Comedy".

36 Calderari, *La schiava*, II.2, 52.

37 Calderari, *La schiava*, II.3, 52.

ROMANESCO Adunque se' stato christiano.
ZARUT Sono stato.[38]

The slave explains that he was baptised as an infant and raised in Naples, but that two years ago he went to Salerno on business and was taken by corsairs:

> Incapai ne' corsali di Barbaria, e rimasi schiavo, là dove sono stato alquanti mesi, così per debolezza di spirito, persuaso da quelli, essend'io già nato di madre turca, ritornai turco, et insieme con coloro, poi mi diedi al corso, ma poco dopo fui di novo preso da christiani; quali poi mi vendettero a questo mio padrone.[39]

Though these passages imply that Zarut's return to the Catholic faith would be a choice taken based on his own volition, in III.9 Zarut has a small soliloquy in which he declares his intentions. He only emphasises the regaining of his freedom and not, as he had done in front of Romanesco, the re-acquiring of his faith. He will try to steal from his master when he is alone in the house, risking the noose:

> Vo prendere ogni cosa, perché tanto per il poco, quanto per l'assai mi appiccheranno: fatto il fatto, succedendomi in bene, vado di lungo a Venetia, et poi a mio commodo ritorno a Napoli, dove ritroverò mia madre, e quivi con quella vivrò allegramente seco il tempo, che m'avanzerà di vita: *se perirò nell'opra, almeno saprassi, che altro pensiero non m'indusse a robbare, che per acquistarmi la libertà, la quale fino a gli animali brutti è sopra tutte le cose del mondo bramata*.[40]

Talking to himself, Zarut is only focused on being freed from his shackles; he would rather die stealing than live in slavery. This is confirmed by his master when he is caught stealing: "Egli confessa haver dati i denari a Filermo, *perché in contracambio gli ha promesso la libertà, facendolo fuggire fuor di quest'isola*: traditore".[41] His master confirms that his motivation is solely to be free.

In V.7 Zarut is brought on stage with his hands tied. When he confesses his crimes, he underscores that he wished to become Catholic again, and puts the blame of his conversion to Islam on anything but himself. Zarut claims that his intentions were sincere: "Romanesco mi persuase a pigliar[e i denari]: e 'l signor

38 Calderari, *La schiava*, II.3, 55.
39 Calderari, *La schiava*, II.3, 55-56.
40 Calderari, *La schiava*, III.9, 90.
41 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.1, 144.

Filermo all'incontro mi promisse la libertà: et liberandomi, io haveva deliberato ritornar christiano, come era prima".[42]

The times when he had converted in the past, he explains, were very different. Upon his birth, "subito con la sorella, e madre insieme fummo batteggiati, et fatti christiani".[43] The passage suggests that his mother, his sister, and he himself were converted because Ahyssa faced death during childbirth. This would mean that Ahyssa wished to die when belonging to the correct faith to reach salvation, and that she wished for her children to become Catholic, too.

Zarut was convinced to convert a second time, he maintains, because he was afraid and felt helpless: "Incapai [...] ne' corsali di Barberia, e fui preso, e condotto a Tunis, et quivi privo di speranza di riscattarmi per essere povero, et debile di senno, persuaso da coloro mi feci turco, e dopoi mi diedi al corso, insieme con quelli".[44] Zarut's conversion story calls to mind the insincere conversion stories of historical actors who tried to convince the Inquisition that, in their heart, they had always remained Catholics. He exempts himself from blame for converting to Islam; his will was too weak to oppose the corsairs' convincing speeches. Zarut wants to provoke compassion, and obtain forgiveness for 'turning Turk'.

Whereas Zarut finds himself in a subordinate position, his mother seems to have 'made it' since her conversion. She is called *madonna* and she asks a Neapolitan gentleman for advice on how to retrieve her daughter Teresa. These are indications of the fact that she is a respectable citizen. Though the fact that her name, Ahyssa, has not been Christianised, and that Zarut affirms that he was born of an Ottoman mother, may be some cause for concern regarding her religious identity, both she and Teresa are integrated into Catholic society. Ahyssa no longer identifies with the Ottomans, since she deplores how her "povero figliuolo […] mi fu preso da' turchi".[45]

On the other hand, Zarut seems to be less sincere. When he is asked why he did not reveal himself as a renegade, he strikingly answers that he was afraid to lose his life; one would expect him to be welcomed back to the Catholic flock. Indeed, Zarut's owner, the captain Mandracchio, who, it turns out, is his father, is immediately convinced that his son sincerely turns Catholic again:

> E tu Alfonso havendo spregiata la vita per la libertà tua abhorrendo la servitù, cosa più dura, che l'huom faccia in questo mondo, *inditio manifesto, che tu se' nato di gentil'huomo d'honore, vieni che t'abbraccio, e per figliuolo unico ti accetto*.[46]

42 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.7, 163.
43 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.7, 164.
44 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.7, 165.
45 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.6, 163.
46 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.7, 168.


Seruo Turco.

Zarut is immediately called by his original baptismal name, Alfonso, and welcomed back into Catholic society as a true *gentiluomo*. From his own perspective, however, throughout the play Zarut seems to consider his conversion to be a collateral advantage to regaining his freedom. If not inwardly, Zarut transforms outwardly into Alfonso. To claim that Calderari condemns slavery by calling it more than once a "miseria sopra tutte l'altre intolerabile",[47] is perhaps risky and oversimplistic, but he clearly poses the problem of insincere conversion.

The Ottoman women seem sincere. Teresa has been integrated in Syracuse, and Ahyssa probably honestly wished to convert to Catholicism at the point of dying during childbirth. But the male Zarut easily switches religion when convenient. However, Zarut's fellow Catholic characters do not pose any questions. By describing Zarut's instant integration, Calderari may wish to promote positive Catholic values in relation to their fellow human beings, but he possibly also cautions against acting as an uncritical, welcoming society. *La schiava* warns the spectator to critically question the sincerity of converts: do they only convert for religious motives?

To conclude this section, the Ottoman and his/her religious identity are a theme of 'Turkish theatre'. Mistaken identities and cross-dressing characters were inherent to comedy. These plot elements are justified by introducing Ottomans who abduct people, convert them, enslave them, or who could serve as a disguise.

For the comedies to have happy endings, the abducted must be reunited with their family. In some comedies they are converted. In Dolce's *Fabritia* and Calmo's *Il Travaglia*, the characters take care to reassure each other that Arpago and Fabritio are Catholics at heart, although they dress like Ottomans. In Loredano's *La turca* and Calderari's *La schiava*, a more critical stance is taken. Ahyssa probably converted sincerely when facing death in childbed. She and her daughter Teresa now live as Catholics. Famelica and Zarut's reasons for converting are more complex. In *La turca*, Loredano does not make conversion a central theme, but his Famelica is no different from many men and women of the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, who changed religion as they saw fit. She does so to marry her Masutio and be part of her family and society again.

> IMAGE 28 – Christoph Krieger, *Servo turco*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-384

More than Loredano, Calderari holds up a mirror to his fellow Venetians. His slave Zarut puts his freedom before anything else, even before his own life. By having not only Zarut, but also other characters in *La schiava*, repeat how Zarut yearns for liberty, and by showing how easily he is integrated into society, we can infer that Calderari possibly

47 Calderari, *La schiava*, II.3, 53.


Fauorita del Turco.

takes two opposite standpoints. On the one hand, Calderari – a religious knight – perhaps preaches forgiveness to neophytes; Catholic society should welcome them and forgive them once they see the error of their ways. On the other hand, he may be cautioning his audience and readers to not view conversion as sincere per se, but to take a critical standpoint and attentively listen to the motives for converting.[48]

2 BEING THE OTTOMAN IN COMEDY

2.1 THE OTTOMAN WOMAN: BEAUTY AND VIRTUE?

Ottoman women were perceived by Christian Europeans as lustful, beautifully blonde and pale-skinned, because the Ottomans were believed to like foreign women better, and as meaningful political figures in the case of the female elite. In literature, they were enterprising regal princesses in love. Their religion hardly mattered to early modern authors. In early modern drama, as we saw in chapter 2, women were often represented as sensual, fair-haired, and pallid. They dressed in Ottoman clothing and wore accessories such as jewels, face masks, or feathers.

Some images used in this thesis which relate to early modern dramatic performance corroborate these findings. The frontispiece to Andreini's seventeenth-century comedy *La turca* (IMAGE 11) and an illustration of Bonarelli's tragedy *Il Solimano* (IMAGE 38) give an idea of how a *turca* may have looked on stage. *La turca*'s frontispiece shows a woman with wavy locks on which rests a turban topped-off with a crescent and adorned with a plume (and precious stone?) at the side. She wears an embellished dress with what appear to be puffy sleeves, as well as a string of beads.[49] At the right bottom corner of the detail of the image from *Il Solimano*, we see that a turban adorned with feathers is placed on the female character Despina's head. She is depicted in full. Despina, too, has wavy hair, and a patterned dress or tunic with wide sleeves and a belt around her waist. The image is not so detailed as to show any jewellery.

> IMAGE 29 – Christoph Krieger, *Favorita del turco*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-371

How does this literary and performative imagery translate to Venetian drama? Is religion

48 My conclusions regarding Calderari's *La schiava* have been slightly altered in this subchapter, compared to the article I previously published: Verbaere, "Nacqui Sotto Riti Barbari: Ma Di Barbaro Cuore Però Non Fui."

49 The stage directions describe the actors' dress and props to be used in Andreini's 'Turkish plays' in detail. I have cited pertinent examples in chapter 2.

a distinguishing marker for the authors in my corpus? Is sensuality? I will first examine whether the Ottoman women were more beautiful or sexualized, or whether religion played a role in defining them. I will then try and discern whether she has any specific features compared to early modern dramatic character types.

Loredano's consideration of 'Turks' and their women in *La turca* (I.4) certainly leads us to believe that the Ottoman woman is potentially sexualized. The servant Scartozzo is looking for two women to create havoc in his master's house so that Masutio will throw out Famelica and Scartozzo's young master Gesualdo can marry his betrothed, Porfiria. The *innamorato* Tutio discusses the case of the Ottoman women whom Scartozzo found with the servant:

> SCARTOZZO Come sono capitate qui?
> TUTIO Per beneficio della giornata, che erano schiave de' turchi.
> SCARTOZZO Schiave de' turchi? Martiri possono essere, ma non vergini.
> TUTIO Sei precipitoso in far giudicio, credi tu tra turchi non si ritrovino huomini da bene?[50]

Scartozzo then wonders whether, if they were used to 'serve' only Ottomans, they will be able to serve Italians. The ensuing discussion leaves little to the imagination:

> TUTIO Essendo la maniera dell'italiano di più dolce sangue che quella del turco, una che sia di buona natura con poca fatica può dargli satisfattione.
> SCARTOZZO Bisogna anco havere buone mani et buona bocca.
> TUTIO Delle mani non dubitare, perché sono nate di persone da bene, quanto alla bocca, le troverai tanto modeste che ad ogni pasto si contenteranno havere più tosto due ova dell'italiano, che quanti castrati sono in Turchia, la esperienza te ne farà certo.[51]

From the first citation we can deduce that Tutio does not believe that all Ottomans are evil, although he has suffered at the Ottomans' hands as a galley slave. The second passage suggests that the exotic woman is seen as a sensual creature. Fantasies of the *seraglio* and Ottoman lust and seductiveness were never far away, though Madar, as we saw, contends that in the Early Modern Period harem-images hardly existed; more typically, portraits depicted women with status.

50 Loredano, *La turca*, I.4, 12r.

51 Loredano, *La turca*, I.4, 12r.

Let us next examine whether the stereotype of the sensual Ottoman woman holds true for early modern Venetian theatre. Some less elaborate Ottoman female characters seem to have been included purely to create a comic effect.

In Calmo's *Rodiana*, for example, the Ottoman servant-with-a-Catholic-name Maddalena hardly appears in the play, except from being insulted by her master or, at the end of the play, crying out that the house is on fire.[52] Calderari's *mora* Fatma serves as an attractive disguise for Laureno – triggering multiple semantic layers, as we saw –, but, like Maddalena, she is bullied. In the only scene in which the real Fatma is on stage, she is abused by Cinthio, Pippa and Lena, who believe she is the perpetrator:

> CINTHIO Eccola. Vien qua, cagnaccia mastina! Anchora non vieni, scroffa?
> FATMA MORA Oimè, oimè, perché mi battete, signore?
> CINTHIO Guardate come questa boiaccia si ha torta la bocca e stralunati gli occhi!
> PIPPA È qui il cane assassino.
> LENA Oimene. Mi vien voglia di saltargli a dosso con quest'ugna.
> CINTHIO Dimmi? Perché sei ritornata in questa casa? Che vuol dire questa mutatione di vesti? Di', su! Non parli? Certamente costei se ne voleva fuggire! Vedi com'era apparecchiata. Parla, ribalda!
> FATMA MORA Oimene meschina.
> CINTHIO Rispondimi, sacco di carbone.[53]

Fatma explains what has transpired: Laureno took her clothes and painted his face and hands black "come io".[54] Fatma is then threatened to be forced to confess with the "bastone".[55] Vulgar swear words are used: Fatma is a bitch, sow, bastard, killer dog, rascal, or a sack of coal.

It is interesting to note that derogatory terms such as dog or barbarian are also used towards non-Ottoman characters.[56] In Calderari's *La schiava*, for example, the Greek *meretrice* Caterinicca is defined by Giannello and Teresa, whose romance she is thwarting, as pertaining to "gente barbara, povera e nimica della ragione".[57] Similarly, the young Filermo complains that women, "cosa mobil per natura", are a "nimica dell'humana natura, barbara razza de' cani".[58] Clearly, words such as

52 She appears in Calmo, *Rodiana*, IV.7, IV.9 and V.10.
53 Calderari, *La mora*, IV.4, 38v-39r.
54 Calderari, *La mora*, IV.4, 40r-40v.
55 Calderari, *La mora*, IV.4, 41r.
56 This is very clear throughout Calmo's *Il Travaglia. A cura di Piermario Vescovo*; and *Rodiana*.
57 Calderari, *La schiava*, I.4, 36.
58 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.4, 155.

'dog' ("cane"), typically associated with the Ottomans, are not used exclusively for 'Turks' in early modern Italian comedy.

However, the portrayal of Fatma is far from innocent: it contains 'racist' hints and explicitly mocks the figure of the servant, who also happens to be a Moorish 'other'. Locked away as a raging killer animal, she is insulted in every possible way in a scene which, from this standpoint, is quite exceptional in *La mora*.

The description of Fatma, a real Moorish Islamic slave woman and secondary character, hardly makes us believe in the beauty of the female 'other'. Are Ottoman female protagonists prettier and sexually more attractive?

In *Emilia*, reference to the sultan's harem is made when the young Neofilo asks the servant Chrisoforo how he will throw Flavia out of his master Polidoro's house. "Io farò", he says, "che un bascià (con cui ho pratica / per mezo d'un suo servo) mandi a chiederla / a messer Polidor da parte proprio / del Gran Signor, che ha inteso ch'egli ha compero / de la gran preda una schiava bellissima. […] El Gran Signore dirà che è prima genita, / e che nel suo serraglio la vuol chiudere."[59] Here, the audience is reminded of the warning from the prologue, which said that the sultan hunts down beautiful young women for his harem.[60]

That the Ottomans wanted to import attractive women from Christian Europe was an established stereotype, but what about the Ottoman women themselves? Famelica, from Loredano's *La turca*, and Teresa, from Calderari's *La schiava*, are certainly beautiful women. Famelica is a "gratiosa donna"[61], and the friend of Teresa's owner Caterinicca affirms to the courtesan that Teresa "è bella e gratiosa".[62]

In Groto's *Emilia* we hear the pimp Arpago say to the servant Chrisoforo, who is intent on buying Flavia, that he has "in casa quasi una mandra di femine".[63] The image of a harem comes to mind because of the many women whom Arpago owns. This idea is reinforced by I.8, in which Arpago complains to Chrisoforo about Flavia's beauty ritual and mentions that many women are helping her:

> Da poi che mi parlasti, io feci subito
> che cominciò a vestirsi col servitio
> di quanti ho in casa, che son tutti in opera
> intorno a lei. E quantunque l'aiutino,
> anchor non ha finito, e non imagino
> che anchor sia per finir sì tosto. […]

59 Groto, *Emilia*, III.3, 42r.

60 "Voi altre femine / stareste fresche. Il prencipe grandissimo / de' turchi fa cercar con diligentia, / e per terra e per mar, tutte le giovani / belle." Groto, *Emilia*, prologue, 1v-2v.

61 Loredano, *La turca*, III.4, 32r.

62 Calderari, *La schiava*, IV.12, 137.

63 Groto, *Emilia*, I.3, 5v.

> Son stato un pezzo a riguardarla. A l'ultimo
> non ho potuto haver piu patientia:
> ho commesso a le fanti che mi chiamino
> dentro e di sopra quando ella sia in ordine.[64]

Arpago and Chrisoforo continue to discuss the female toilet – which was costly for the merchant of women – in which "queste femine / massimamente poi quelle di Italia / mettono […] tanto studio".[65] They dye their hair blond, paint their face, scrub their teeth, and arrange their lavish dresses.[66]

In II.6, Chrisoforo, when telling his master how the enslaved people of Cyprus are entering the city, gives us a (surely exaggerated) glimpse of Polipo's love interest whom he spotted among the crowds. Flavia arrived at the port "in habito / d'imperatrice", like Venus herself, dressed "a la foggia d'Italia" and surrounded – again, a possible hint at the harem? – by her *serve*.[67]

As the hint at the Italian style of Flavia's dress suggests, these 'Turkish' women are described as Italian beauties. The female dressing ritual described corresponds to Italian practice, and the Ottoman women also meet the requirements of Italian ideal beauty in line with the contemporary idea of the *turche*. They were perceived as beautiful, pale-skinned, and blonde-haired also because allegedly the 'Turks' preferred foreign women. The image that is suggested is the classical canon of beauty in vogue in early modern Italy.[68]

Groto may be playing with various elements of the contemporary imagination. He may, first of all, be drawing on harem-imagery of the 'East' while at the same time alluding to the idea of Ottoman women being Western in their looks and dress. According to Di Maria, Groto criticises the Venetian fashion- and entertainment-driven mercantile society, and the high costs and expectations which came with it. He underlines how *Venetian* this fashion interlude is.[69]

The beauty of women may also refer to the rise of the actress in *commedia dell'arte*. Professional actresses, who are described as canonical beauties, marketed themselves not only by their physical appearance, as Fabrizio Fiaschini has argued, but also by their graceful speech, singing and actions – in short, their professionalism

64 Groto, *Emilia*, I.8, 17r.

65 Groto, *Emilia*, I.8, 17r.

66 Groto, *Emilia*, I.8, 17r-18v.

67 Luigi Groto, *La Emilia, comedia nova di Luigi Groto cieco di Adria. Recitata in Adria, il dì primo di marzo 1579, la domenica di carnesciale, sotto il reggimento del clarissimo signor Lorenzo Raimondo* (Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1579), II.6, 35r-v.

68 On the literary beauty ideal and its connection to Italian Renaissance theatre and actresses, see Fabrizio Fiaschini, "Il canone vivo. La bellezza delle attrici tra Cinque e Seicento," in *L'impero dei sensi. Da Euripide a Ōshima*, ed. Roberto Alonge (Bari: Edizioni di Pagina, 2009), 83-98.

69 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*," 99-100.

in performing.[70] Thus, similar scenes may allude to an Orientalising atmosphere, to Venetian high fashion, or to the professional actress. They possibly even play with the fact that, ironically, we are really dealing with male actors impersonating women.[71]

But if we simply consider the description to be about Ottoman women, the text does not differentiate them from Catholic women. Polidoro's first wife, was "la più bella, la più affabile, / la più savia che fosse in tutta l'Asia", says Chrisoforo.[72] Only Erifila, the prostitute, describes herself as ugly: "Io ho […] specchio in camera. […] Le bruttezze mie qual huomo sforzano?",[73] to which Chrisoforo admits that her ugliness makes other women stand out. This is quite strange because the courtesan is usually beautiful. In general, the Ottoman woman in these plays is just as beautiful as the 'standard' Italian *innamorata* or *meretrice*.

Apart from Erifila, there is no distinction between the beauty of Persian or Ottoman women. In the popular imagination, the Persians, regular allies of Venice, were all portrayed as 'good Muslims'.[74] But *Emilia* does not distinguish between Ottoman or Christian characters, at least in looks. Polidoro's Persian *vedova* from Cyprus is described by Fronesio as "bella",[75] though Chrisoforo defines her to the *roffiano* Arpago as a "vedova / di mezzana beltà".[76] The discrepancy may be dictated by the comic dimension of the dialogue between Chrisoforo and Arpago, a servant and a pimp, though in the same conversation the *servo* calls Emilia "bella come un angelo."[77] Polipo drools over his new Cypriot love interest, who will turn out to be his sister. She is "Venere / di Cipri uscita per le guerre":

> O Chrisofor, diss'io, ch'era bellissima?
> Ve' che capelli, che visetto, che occhioli-
> ni, che bocca, che par che dica "baciami".
> Su quelle labra dev'essere il zucchero
> alto due dita. Ve' che petto candido,
> sì come un fior di spin. Guarda quegli homeri
> larghi, e come si stringe approssimando sì
> a la cintura. O Dio, che guancie, proprio

70 Fiaschini, "Il canone vivo. La bellezza delle attrici tra Cinque e Seicento."

71 "Verranno in habito / di donne alcuni ghiottoncelli giovani, / al peso vi so dir sì, che trabboccano. / Avvertisco voi donne a non fidarvene. / Che qualche volta non si veniss'animo / di condurli per serve, che dormissero / con voi per compagnia la notte in camera." Groto, *Emilia*, prologo, 1v.

72 Groto, *Emilia*, III.4, 44v.

73 Groto, *Emilia*, III.4, 43v.

74 See for example Giampiero Bellingeri, *Motivi persiani, e azerì. Persia, Safavidi e Ottomani nell'intreccio politico e narrativo di Venezia (secoli XV-XVIII)* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente C.A. Nallino, 2015).

75 Groto, *Emilia*, II.6, 33v.

76 Groto, *Emilia*, I.3, 6v.

77 Groto, *Emilia*, I.3, 7v.

> un latte e un vino. Che man, senza dubbio
> nevicate dal cielo.[78]

Emilia, a Cypriot girl, is no different from the beautiful Ottoman women described earlier, or the traditionally attractive *innamorate* and *meretrici*. The Persian mother Lucida and her daughter Emilia are also beautiful.

From these scenes we can conclude that the Ottoman women's beauty, and thus their sensuality, is not a uniquely characterizing factor. Rather, if we search for a connection with the stereotyped ideas of the Ottoman in early modern Italy that were enunciated earlier, this ties in with the stereotype that the Ottomans were more partial to beautiful foreign women – which may imply that the Italians conceived of real Ottoman women as less desirable and put forward the perfection of their own women and fashion.

If we momentarily disregard the classical model of the *innamorate* and *meretrici*, it appears that the Venetian plays propose the Christian European and specifically Venetian woman as *the* beauty ideal, discarding the potential elegance of the Ottoman woman, although, as we saw, they were generally perceived as very seductive women. We can view this sexualising and degrading way of seeing the *turca* as an expression of exhibiting Venice's own prestige.

Were Ottoman women distinguished by their social situation and character? Are their characteristics different from the traditional women from early modern drama, if they are their equals in beauty and sensuality? Women's traits were congruent with their dramatic roles. The slave girl, for example, has many skills, as the antique *topos* demanded. In this respect, the Ottoman slave girl is not exceptional. When impersonating Fatma, Laureno's strong points are mentioned by Turchetto:

> Questa è tanto virtuosa che forse non ha pari in tutto Napoli di cantare e di danzare alla *moresca*, non dico di cucire, di tessere, di cucinare e di tutte le cose che si ricercano a sapere ad una par sua e che facciano di bisogno in una casa. Veramente costei non ha paragone in tutte queste cose.[79]

In *Fabritia*, our Fabritio in disguise is also a prodigy:

> Maestro, fate voi. Meno di dugento scudi la farebbe vostra. E se sapeste come ella sa leggere, cucire, raccamare e far mille altre belle virtù, non la lasciareste per

78 Groto, *Emilia*, V.2, 66v-67r.

79 Calderari, *La mora*, III.2, 24v-25r.

> oro né per argento; e guardate che ella parli la lingua turca o che tenga accenti mariuoli. Mai appunto! Favella meglio e più speditamente che un napoletano.[80]

The comic servant, too, remains close to the archetype. In I.7, Rustica, the servant of the *roffiano* Arpago, is courted by Chrisoforo. He lustfully flirts with her. But the Ottoman Rustica does not respond to his advances. She is focused on her domestic tasks and sends him packing:

> CHRISOFORO Vorrei dal cielo una gratia. RUSTICA Che gratia?
> CHRISOFORO Di poter diventar cotesto mestolo
> che tu freghi hora. RUSTICA Perché? CHRISOFORO Per-
> ché 'l manico
> hor mi terresti in mano. RUSTICA Et io desidero
> che ciò ch'io tocco diventasse crostoli.[81]

Chrisoforo's explicit language is typical for comic servants, as is Rustica's uninterested reaction. These male and female servants do not represent the lustful Ottomans or the sensualities of the Ottoman woman. They conform to the behaviour of Christian servants.

Another comic female is the courtesan, who is intent on gaining monetary and personal profit from situations, and will deceive and seduce when necessary. Teresa from Calderari's *La schiava* is associated with the prostitute: "costei è bella e gratiosa: la bellezza e la gratia è il trionfo della cortigiana".[82] She is certainly not to be trifled with. She vulgarly insults the captain when talking to Caterinicca (II.4, II.10, III.10), and she devises a plan to escape the captain's grasp. According to this, Teresa pretends to love Filermo, who will buy her from Caterinicca, so that she can more easily be with her beloved Giannello (III.2-4):

> TERESA La fortuna mi fece nascere schiava. Perciò questo corpo convien essere di chi essa vuole, l'anima, nella qual non ha ella imperio alcuno, serà sempre ad arbitrio mio. Sì che se 'l corpo mancherà d'esser vostro, l'anima continuamente serà rivolta a voi, come suo vero obietto, perché volontariamente amore ve n'ha fatto libero dono.
>
> GIANNELLO Io non vi amo, cuor mio, se non con animo di pigliarvi per isposa, che sempre ciò ho desiderato di fare, ma la mia povera fortuna non ha arriso a così giusti et honesti desiderii.

80 Dolce, *Fabritia*, IV.5, 265.

81 Groto, *Emilia*, I.7, 16r.

82 Calderari, *La schiava*, IV.12, 137.

TERESA Vorrei la morte, poi che cosa alcuna di buono non posso havere, meschina me, ch'io son nata per esser sempre piena di passione. […] Io spero che se 'l signor Filermo mi piglia, che dopo l'haver contato tanti denari, rimarrà molto asciutto della borsa, et così volendo lui vivere converrà lasciarmi con qualche libertà con la quale potrò vedervi, favellarvi, et etiandio arreccarvi que' piaceri che ambedui più desideriamo, e di cotal cose se ne vede ogni giorno in molt'altre donne che si vanno provecchiando alcuna cosa fuor che dai loro amanti, li quali pur serrano gli occhi per non poter supplire al molto bisogno loro.[83]

As the passage shows, Teresa is a free-spirited woman who 'makes it happen', even if this means that she will not marry Giannello but live the wretched life of a slave and be his lover rather than his wife. Caterinicca and her friend Giovanna even go as far as to educate her on the art of seduction and the life of a courtesan (III.10, IV.9).

Teresa is here the repentant *meretrix*. She is beautiful and accomplished, has a ready tongue, and is independent and cunning. She is despised by those who see through her opportunism. She risks her reputation and virtue when she elopes with Giannello, but is redeemed when the captain realises that she is really his daughter. Upon discovering that she is not in the hands of Filermo, but with Giannello, with whom he seems to have less of a problem, the new-found father decides that Giannello and Teresa will wed, making an honest woman out of his daughter (V.8).

Her mother Ahyssa is a slave. Ahyssa has come to Syracuse to make sure that Teresa does not go astray and to marry her off. She is on respectful terms with the Neapolitan nobleman Mario. Ahyssa wants to keep her daughter on the right path, as determined by the Catholic God, and is perfectly at home in Naples:

AHYSSA Leverò mia figlia dal pensiero forse del mal fare: io la riscatterò et poi la compagnerò, *sì che vivrà a Dio et all'honor del mondo*.

MARIO Farete bene, e da savia donna, che beata si può chiamare quella madre che non vede sue figliuole puttane.

AHYSSA Non altro che l'amor filiale mi havrebbe fatto uscir fuor di Napoli mio: Napoli veramente fior del mondo.[84]

She intends to console herself in old age with Teresa, since her son was "preso da' turchi"[85] and has, presumably, died. She then finds him to be very much alive, and

83 Calderari, *La schiava*, III.4, 80-81.

84 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.6, 162.

85 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.6, 163.

recognises her son and former lover, the captain Mandracchio. Together with the captain, they will be a family:

> AHYSSA Concedimele anchora [le mani] a me figliuolo, che non meno le ho io a bacciare, che tu, le quali mi sono da esser care quanto la vita. Et tu, figliuol mio, baccia tua madre, che tanto ti ha pianto e desiderato.
> CAPITANO Tutti insieme abbracciamoci, e l'uno e l'altro vi terrò sempre cari come l'istessa mia vita.[86]

Ahyssa is clearly part of Catholic society, and Teresa, following a crash course in prostitution and after running off with Giannello, is reinstated to an honourable status. They are of Ottoman descent, but have become respectable Catholic women.

Another Ottoman slave is Flavia from Groto's *Emilia*, an *innamorata*. To obtain from his master the money needed to buy the slave girl Flavia, adored by his young master Polipo, Chrisoforo concocts a story about finding Polipo's sister Emilia on the slave market. He tricks his master Polidoro into thinking that she is his daughter, so that he sends Chrisoforo to buy the girl:

> Ricercando andai s'io vedea Lucida
> o Emilia dove le prede si vendono.
> Et una vidi star fra schiave horrevoli
> che di dure cathene havea le tenere
> mani legate, e spargea vive lagrime.[87]

Flavia exhorts her "sorelle", the women owned by the pimp Arpago, not to cry, for, like Teresa from *La schiava,* she will try to escape "cotesta servitù durissima."[88] As her body will be free, she pledges her soul to her lover, Polipo. To be with him she participates in a scheme, like Teresa. But unlike Teresa, she does not invent the plan herself. She will be trained for an interview by Chrisoforo, will wear an "abito cipriotto" and will have "un'altra lingua in bocca".[89]

Chrisoforo will then make Polidoro believe that she is his daughter: "mi suol credere, / come noi turchi a l'Alcorano."[90] Flavia now invents a lamentable story about her enslavement, and successfully replies to Polidoro's tricky questions. She has traits of the cunning prostitute, but she suffers for Polipo:

86 Calderari, *La schiava*, V.7, 168.
87 Groto, *Emilia*, I.5, 12v.
88 Groto, *Emilia*, II.1, 19v.
89 Groto, *Emilia*, I.3, 9r.
90 Groto, *Emilia*, I.3, 8r.

> I' credea per haver mutato l'habito,
> lo stato, e il nome, che la sorte dedita
> a perseguirmi, non riconoscendomi
> più, non dovesse più darmi molestia;
> ma ella non è cieca (come dicono).
> Ha gli occhi di linceo: pur mo' Chrisoforo
> entrando in casa, e pian paiano accostandomi-
> si a l'orecchio, mi ha detto come Polipo
> è tornato, et è in casa di Neofilo
> ascoso, e più non mi ama, anzi commessogli
> ha che mi scacci fuor di casa subito,
> come le infeste e ree cose si scacciano,
> come scacciato ei m'ha fuor del suo animo.[91]

In her soliloquy, she laments like a typical *innamorata* about her love's inconstancy ("Ah huomini, / che sete gli infedeli, i rei, gli istabili. / De' vostri vitii accusate noi femine / pur troppo ferme").[92] If she finds her father again, from whom she was separated during the sack of her homeland, Polipo would surely want her as a spouse: "Polipo, so, vedendo la mia horrevole / dote, intendendo la mia schiatta nobile, / e udendo ch'io non son schiava ma libera / e gentildonna, e di te amante e vergine, / che non mi sdegnaresti in matrimonio."[93]

When Flavia next appears in IV.6, Polidoro introduces her to her 'mother'. Since Flavia is not Emilia, Lucida of course, exposes the girl. Flavia denies that she is at fault: "Questa non è mia colpa. Ho recitato la / mia lettion come buona discepola. / Fu mio maestro del tutto Chrisoforo."[94] She cleverly points out that it was only natural that she should call 'father' one who calls her daughter, and that she would equally call Lucida 'mother', if only she would call her 'daughter'. Though she agreed to the plot, she hardly repents participating in it. She tries to avoid punishment and asks to be allowed in Polidoro's house.

Flavia does not appear on stage again, but she turns out to be old Fronesio's daughter and can therefore marry Polipo. Di Maria affirms that in Plautus' *Epidicus*, Groto's main source, the girl on whom Flavia is modelled simply appears on stage to be exposed as a charlatan. The girl from *Epidicus* is not redeemed by marriage, as Groto's Flavia is. As an *innamorata*, Flavia has a much bigger role in *Emilia*.[95]

91 Groto, *Emilia*, III.1, 38v.

92 Groto, *Emilia*, III.1, 38v.

93 Groto, *Emilia*, III.1, 39v-40r.

94 Groto, *Emilia*, IV.6, 63r.

95 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*," 91-92.

From this we can conclude that the Ottoman woman seems to be not extraordinary in looks or in character; they are classic *innamorate* or *meretrici*. This is even more clear in the case of Famelica from Loredano's *La turca*, another courtesan-like figure whom everyone looks down upon and who appears to live in shame with her Masutio. Famelica caused the cancellation of Gesualdo and Porfiria's wedding, as the servant Scartozzo explains: "Dopo la promissione, havendo messer Dionigi presentito vostro padre havere dato alla turca il dominio di patroneggiare la casa, ha mutato proposito, né vuole che sua figliuola habbia ad obbedire a schiave." Perhaps, Scartozzo feels, Dionigi can be persuaded to let them marry if the newlyweds will live with him, "non havendo la figliuola a contendere con turchi."[96] Porfiria's father lets Masutio know that it is not respectable that a "figliuola libera obbedisca ad una schiava." Worse still, she is a concubine and not Masutio's wife by marriage.[97]

The problem, it seems, is not that she is an Ottoman woman but rather the social status which she inhabits: Dionigi's servant Converso confirms that "pazzia è stata lo sposare una schiava".[98] The community condemns Masutio and Famelica's relationship because she is of a socially inferior status, but Masutio is in love and wishes to retrace the lineage of Famelica (III.4). It is, ultimately, the discovery of her noble parentage that will solve the problem and ensure they can be wed; Famelica's faith is not a central issue in the play. Moreover, Famelica is portrayed quite positively. She is only vile towards Imerale, the play's laughing-stock (II.6). She saved Briseide and Hersilia's honour while they were her slaves during the war of Cyprus (I.6), and takes care of Tutio and Aiace when they are dressed as women (I.11). Her *cattiveria* is instrumental to the comic mechanism of the play. Famelica's actions and words allow us to deride her old husband Imerale.

The character arcs of these four women, Teresa, Ahyssa, Flavia, and Famelica, all stand in line with those of the *innamorata* or penitent courtesan. They are converted and established as virtuous women. They are hardly extraordinary compared to classical and early modern comedy.

The Ottoman Erifila is a real prostitute, and she also fits into the classical scheme. In *Emilia*, Erifila is part of another of Chrisoforo's schemes after the young *innamorato* Polipo decides that he does not want Flavia anymore. The *servo* was now charged with two tasks: finding the money to pay the second girl with whom Polipo fell in love – Emilia –, and evicting Flavia out of their house. Chrisoforo resolves that he will sell Flavia to captain Fracassa, who was besotted with her as well. He advises the father Polidoro to buy the girl and pretend that he wishes to

96 Loredano, *La turca*, I.3, 10v.

97 Loredano, *La turca*, I.8, 15r-15v.

98 Loredano, *La turca*, I.9, 16r.

marry him herself to avoid that Polipo marries her. To reimburse Polidoro, the *servo* will sell 'Flavia' to captain Fracassa.

Chrisoforo decides that he will find a *cortigiana* to play the part of Polipo's beloved. He tricks the courtesan Erifila into believing that she will marry the old Polidoro. Polidoro loves her and is rich, Chrisoforo says, and he will satisfy her every whim. She agrees to the plan, even though she detests the old Ottoman, but when she is led to Fracassa, veiled so that he wouldn't recognise her, she suddenly speaks out because she does not understand the situation. In V.4, Fracassa realises Erifila's worth, and he asks that she be his. He agrees that she continues to see a certain *marchese* who will surely not be put off. Like the courtesan Thais from *Eunuchus*, Erifila ends up with two men who will financially support her.

How do these Ottoman women compare to the Persian women from *Emilia*? Lucida and Emilia's enslavement is a central theme in this work. Fronesio imagines the sad fate of Polidoro's ex-lover Lucida, Emilia's mother, who had lived chastely after he had left, but who happened "per queste guerre in man d'huomini barbari". This description marks a critique of the real Ottomans who conquered Cyprus. Lucida is "fatta schiava, svergognata, e misera".[99] In IV.5, Lucilla recounts how soldiers entered her house and took all her belongings and jewellery. They took her daughter from her arms, taking her to unknown lands. The theme of slavery merges with the theme of war and the feeling of hopelessness, perhaps not an unfamiliar feeling to the Venetians.

Rather than by conniving, the half-Persian Emilia now tries to escape her fate by repeatedly trying to drown herself, which she judges better than being raped and sold. When Neofilo asks his friend if he touched her during the journey to Istanbul, Polipo replies:

> Audacia
> non havrei mai havuto di richiederla
> benché venuti siamo insieme, havendomi
> tolto l'ardir le sue maniere nobili,
> e la sua intera in vitta pudicitia.
> Anzi, son certo anchor che consentitolo
> non havria il mercatante, fin che 'l pretio
> non havesse riscosso, né la giovane,
> che tentò due o tre volte di sommergersi.[100]

99 Groto, *Emilia*, II.6, 33v.

100 Groto, *Emilia*, II.4, 30r.

Emilia never appears on stage, but we can deduct from this story that she is a morally positive character. Her mother Lucida is also virtuous. She is a chaste widow who, after Polidoro, has not been with anyone else. Fronesio adds: "Se le haveste fatto intendere / di volere sposarla, son certissimo, / che ci saria venuta."[101] Any relationship that she and Polidoro would have had would have been cleansed of its sinfulness, had they married and recognised the child.

It is significant that Groto deliberately made Emilia and Lucida two *Persian* women, rather than Ottoman or Cypriot women, Cyprus being the place where Lucida and Polidoro met. But can we infer that the two Persian women in *Emilia*, who pertain to a people of 'good Muslims', are more virtuous than the Ottoman ones?

It is, perhaps, more reasonable to say that the Ottoman women are not all purely immoral. Erifila collaborates with a scheme to obtain wealth, and shrewdly tries to benefit from her new acquaintance and be maintained by the captain. However, Rustica is hardly a sensual seductress. Flavia is a miserable slave girl who suffers for love, just like the Persian Emilia is enslaved and tries to kill herself for it, and, just like her mother Lucida, she has suffered for love. When Flavia plays the part of Polidoro's daughter, she does this to be with her love. While Rustica is hardly worth mentioning and Erifila is an opportunist *meretrix*, Flavia is redeemed, in the end, as a virtuous woman by marrying her love. Teresa and Ahyssa from *La schiava* and Famelica from *La turca* are absolved too.

The courtesans are consistent with the prototype of Mary Magdalen, and a *topos* existed in which women were either seen as sinful courtesans and revealed to be faithful, like the 'good courtesan', or in which they converted after realising their sins.[102] It is true that Emilia and Lucida are pure, chaste women without fault. The fault rather lies with the immoral Ottoman men who abandoned Lucida and Flavia. Polidoro even impregnated the honourable Persian woman Lucida before walking away.[103]

As this section has shown, however, all characters, male and female, do not display behaviour that is foreign to comedy. *Emilia*'s Ottoman characters are not extraordinary, and to the eyes and minds of the Venetian public they could easily represent Venetian characters – or any comic characters –, as Di Maria has argued.

101 Groto, *Emilia*, II.6, 33v.

102 The figure of Mary Magdalen was the example of the penitent courtesan and actress, who is eventually redeemed for her erring ways. This image is strongly used by Giovanni Battista Andreini in order to redeem the profession of the professional actress, on which see Fabrizio Fiaschini, *L'"Incessabil agitazione". Giovan Battista Andreini tra professione teatrale, cultura letteraria e religione* (Pisa: Giardini editori e stampatori, 2007); Fabrizio Fiaschini, "The Paradox of the Saint Actress. Church and Commedia Dell'Arte during the Counter-Reformation," in *Performing the Sacred. Christian Representation and the Arts*, ed. Carla M. Bino and Corinna Ricasoli (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 173-95.

103 I would like to thank Edoardo Simonato, who is preparing the critical edition of Groto's comedies *Emilia*, *Il tesoro* and *Alteria*, for his insights regarding *Emilia* and the 'Turkish question', especially the distinction between the Ottomans and the Persians, which he kindly shared with me.

I can corroborate this through an analysis of the characteristics of the comic stock characters: the Ottoman women are normal comic female characters and the Persian women are a virtuous comic mother and *innamorata*. *Emilia* may play its part as a mirror for virtuous men and, especially, for women, both through the figures of the stainless Lucida and Emilia and through Groto's defence of comedy, which was judged to be lewd. These words are ironically put into Erifila's mouth when she first appears on stage:

> I giovani
> non voglion recitar più non andandovi
> le innamorate lor. Che pazzi, e simile-
> mente coloro, che non ve le lasciano
> andar. Se le fanciulle lor conoscano
> il mal, non han più che imparar. Se semplici
> son, non intenderan quel, che essi dicono,
> massimamente poi se la comedia
> è fatta da persona di giudicio
> che ricopra le cose in senso doppio.
> Ma in fé di Dio, se le fanciulle leggono
> l'Ariosto, il Boiardo, Tristano, Amadis
> di Gaula e Palmerin d'Oliva, imagino
> che intendan tutto quel che si può intendere.
> Mentre le madri e i padri sciochi credono
> di liberarsi da Cariddi, cadono
> in Scilla. Vengon essi a le comedie,
> e lascian sole in casa le lor giovane
> perché stian più sicure. Et elle parlano
> con gli amanti in quel tempo, e per disgratia
> fan peggio.[104]

2.2 MERCHANTS AND RAIDERS: THE *ANZIANO* RETURNS IN A DIFFERENT FORM

Though the Venetians traded extensively with the Ottomans, merchants and raiders are marginal figures in drama. They ensure that the comic plot contains mistaken identities. In *Fabritia*, trade relations between Christian and Muslim lands are only briefly mentioned when Moro, dressed up as a Syrian slaver, declares that

104 Groto, *Emilia*, III.4, 42v-43r.

the 'girl' Fabritio had been sold to him by a "turco mio amico".[105] The servant had witnessed such exchanges in the past with his master Fabritio's father: "Vorrei che questo tale abito fosse di qualità che pareste appunto una di quelle turchette che più volte ho veduto vendere a Ragusi a tempo che con vostro padre me vi trovai."[106]

The fact that the 'Turk' justifies family members being sold into slavery, creating confusion about mistaken identities and allowing for *innamorati* to cross-dress, does not exclude true emotion. In *Talanta*, the *innamorato* Armileo declares that he cannot bear to hear the *anziano* Blando's emotional story about the abduction of the triplets by the Ottomans (V.1).

The comic fathers are more substantial figures in other Venetian 'Turkish comedies'. They are *anziani* and wealthy merchants, who lust for young *innamorate* or courtesans but are unwilling to pay up to conquer them because of their avariciousness. *Emilia*'s *anziano* Polidoro is a tradesman. Perhaps the old Fronesio is as well, but I noted no textual proof of his profession. In the case of Polidoro, who must make sure that he gets his money, store it somewhere safe, and keep his books, his trade is explicit:

POLIDORO Mai non bisogna disperarsi. Avvengono
cose insperate ove è tempo d'attenderle.
Colui, che dovea darmi (già son dodici
anni) dugento scuti, e che invisibile
andava, come havesse l'elitropio
a dosso o in bocca l'anello d'Angelica
(come quel ch'era fallito), trovandomi
hor me ne ha dato cento, e poi soggiuntomi
ha: "Messer Polidor, tra diece o quindici
giorni, vi darò il resto."
[…]
Che, in ver, non gli aspettava. E non pensandoci,
gli ho hauti. CHRISOFORO E non pensandoci, hai a spendergli.
POLIDORO Prima ch'io vada a corte, vo a riponerli.
CHRISOFORO Messer no! Questi non s'hanno a riponere.
POLIDORO E a dar di penna, e a notare il ricevere.
CHRISOFORO Al libro potrai dar di penna, e simile-
mente di penna ai soldi. Ma ricordati
mettergli al libro de la spesa. POLIDORO Furono
tante vacche, che all'hor vendei, mancandomi

105 Dolce, *Fabritia*, IV.5, 264.

106 Dolce, *Fabritia*, III.17, 244.

in tutta la contrada il fieno e i pascoli.
CHRISOFORO L'huom che è di terra, in terra ha da risolversi.
Così cotesti denari, che vengono
di vacche, in vacche bisogna che tornino.[107]

Polidoro sells cows – a word that Groto often also uses for 'women' and which was common in Italian literary tradition,[108] so Groto may be intending a double meaning, insinuating that Polidoro is a trafficker in women. Whatever his trade, the Venetian public will have recognised itself in this avid salesman and merchant figure.

Polidoro has committed some moral errors in the past: after impregnating Lucida in Cyprus, he abandoned her and returned to Istanbul, where he married and had a son. He explains to his friend Fronesio that he had not wished to bring Lucida to the Ottoman Empire as his mistress together with Emilia, since he had not wished to offend his first wife or son Polipo, and because "più secura stava in quel dominio / dal turcho, dal sofi."[109]

Upon his wife's death, he decided not to call for her to avoid disturbing his son's peace. Fronesio reprimands him that she surely would have come "se le haveste fatto intendere / di volere sposarla".[110] Since his wedding with Lucida is announced at the end of the play, and since Emilia is immediately accepted as his daughter, we can perhaps redeem Polidoro and call these minor offenses in retrospect, but he is by no means as innocent as his old flame is.

Compared to the stock character of the father, however, Polidoro is redeemable. He has money, as the long passage cited above shows, although he perhaps does not roll in it. He also does not seem to be the overly tight-fisted *anziano* that is found in other plays from the corpus. When Erifila asks Chrisoforo whether his master "è ordinariamente avaro, o prodigo?", he declares that Polidoro "si tien nel mezzo." Chrisoforo is confident that Erifila will obtain some economic profit, though we should allow that he is trying to convince the courtesan to come with him to the old Ottoman's house: "Su quella pratica / tengo ferma speranza, che grand'utile / ne traren voi, et io lasciando vogliervi, / e governarvi a me."[111]

107 Groto, *Emilia*, I.5, 10v-11r. If one wore both the Heliotrope herb and stone, they were believed to confer invisibility, as was the magic ring belonging to the character Angelica, known from Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, when put in one's mouth. As Di Maria further notes, the frequent use by Groto of the term 'vacche' for 'women' in the play is typical of the Italian literary tradition and can be found in authors like Dante, Ludovico Ariosto, Pietro Aretino, Benvenuto Cellini and Giovanni Battista: Della Porta. "Groto's *Emilia*," 94.

108 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*," 94.

109 Groto, *Emilia*, I.3, 8v.

110 Groto, *Emilia*, II.6, 33v.

111 Groto, *Emilia*, III.4, 44v.


Turco di grado in casa.

Another trait of the father is his being besotted by the young *innamorata*. He endeavours to possess her or marry her, and is ridiculed because of his impotence and his ingenuous belief that she is interested in him. The girl often turns out to be his daughter and is recognised and married off.

This, again, is not the case with Polidoro. He is only ridiculed on account of Chrisoforo's attempt to trick Erifila into believing that the *vecchio* is in love with her. When Polidoro arrives on stage, Chrisoforo announces: "Ecco il vecchio." Erifila comments: "Anzi decrepito, / è tutto bianco. […] Non ha pur denti." "Non vi potrà mordere", Chrisoforo jests.[112] But Polidoro is not explicitly described as impotent. Moreover, his love is not the foolish love for a prostitute or for a young girl who turns out to be his daughter. Polidoro still loves his Lucida, his equal in age and status:

> POLIPO Io simile-
> mente son Polidor, che vi amò, et amavi,
> Dio vi salvi di novo. LUCIDA Basta chiederli
> che salvi voi. Da cui sol veggio pendere
> la mia salute. POLIPO O Lucida, toccatemi
> la mano. LUCIDA Hor voi potete dir di stringere
> la mano a la più mesta, a la più misera
> donna del mondo. POLIPO E voi potete credere
> d'haver giunta la mano al più amorevole
> huom che possiate haver tra tutti gli huomini.[113]

Polidoro is thus, contrary to many other *vecchi*, not ridiculed or left behind alone. Groto grants him his happy ending with Lucida. Does this make him a typical Ottoman if we look at the stereotypes? He is not cruel, false, drunk or lustful. He is not a monstrous barbarian who abuses slaves.

> IMAGE 30 – Christoph Krieger, *Turco di grado in casa*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-362

He is a wealthy Ottoman and honest tradesman, like the real-life stereotype dictates, but he is not avaricious like other comic fathers are. Rather than being lustful, he condemns his son's being besotted with unworthy women. Though he impregnated Lucida and abandoned her, he still loves her. He is not interested in young women. His impotence or sexual prowess is never an issue. He seems to be neither a classic Ottoman nor a classic father stock character, but somewhere in between.

112 Groto, *Emilia*, III.4, 45v.

113 Groto, *Emilia*, IV.5, 61r-61v.

In conclusion, the major comic roles are the male and female *innamorati*, the courtesans, mothers, slaves, and fathers. The *innamorati* who disguise as the Ottoman or Moorish 'other' are transformed into lustful predators; Ottoman mothers, courtesans and slaves convert and are welcomed into Catholic society, although we are warned regarding their sincerity; Ottoman mothers, courtesans and female slaves are beautiful and sensual; and Ottoman fathers are rich merchants but not lustful.

Though these traits coincide with the stereotypical image that people had of the Ottomans, they are also in line with 'standard' comic characters. The *innamorati* are based on the classical lover who rapes his beloved in disguise, with Terence's *Eunuchus* being the prime example of this motif. Women in drama are usually beautiful, and courtesans are cunning. Comic fathers are rich merchants who lust after young girls. If anything, if Polidoro is not lustful or avaricious it is an inversion of the comic role, and not of the stereotypical idea of the Ottoman. Zarut's status as a convert is a particular trait of his role as a slave. As an Ottoman slave, he longs for freedom, and is willing to convert to be free.

There is, then, some depth to be found in how these comedies represent the Ottoman. The cross-dressed, racialised lover assumes the connotations of same-sex love and unbridled sexuality. He confirms the stereotypical image of the 'other', and becomes good when turning 'white' again. The female convert mother and courtesan are sincere converts, and have all integrated into society except for the slave Famelica, who, together with the male slave Zarut, converts for personal gain rather than for sincere religiosity. In particular, Calderari potentially urges the Venetian to reflect upon his own leniency in welcoming neophytes into the Catholic flock. The presentation of Ottoman female beauty seems to be a mirror image of the Venetian woman or the professional actress, rather than a representation of the beauty and sensuality of Ottoman women. Her character traits, too, seem intended to make women reflect on their virtue and moral life choices.

Polidoro is the character that is most removed from the classic traits of the father figure. Like other *anziani*, he has fathered children he has never met, but he is not an impotent womanizer, nor is he avaricious. Groto may be the author who most frequently alludes to Ottoman stereotypes, and possibly turns their presumed exuberant sex drive or wealth upside-down, but he rather seems to play with the figure of the father. Polidoro's being 'Turk' (or really a Venetian, in *Emilia*'s case) is just an added aspect of his character. Thus, the 'other' seems to stand for critical thinking on the 'self' in all of these comedies.

At the same time, some comments on the treatment of the 'other' as 'other' should be made. In *La mora*, Fatma is indisputably treated badly. She is insulted, described as ugly, and compared to beasts. The Moorish slave woman is mocked by other characters and put away as a monkey-faced rabid animal, a bag of coal.

Ottoman women, too, are occasionally racialised. The plays' appropriation of the *turca* as a predominantly Italian or Venetian woman is consistent with the reigning idea that the Ottomans preferred foreign women. However, this allows us to read the condemnation beneath the surface of the otherwise sexualised Ottoman woman: as the Italian beauty ideal is moulded onto her, the Venetian female figure and fashionable dress are put at the forefront.



CHAPTER FIVE

…OR AS AN "INFERNAL MONSTER" IN WAR?

In line with the previous chapter, in which I focused on Ottomans on the comic stage, this chapter focuses on the depiction of Ottomans in tragedy. The characters who appear in these tragic works, as well as one from a comedy, are all connected to the events of war. Loredano's comedy *La turca* from 1597 continuously mentions the war of Cyprus, which caused its protagonists to be reduced to poverty. The tragedies *Irene* (1579) by Giusti, *Isifile* (1585) by Mondella, and *Bragadino* (1589) by Fuligni, and the comedy *Emilia* (1579) by Groto truly thematise this war. These three tragedies, together with Barbaro's *Tragedia* (ca. 1541-1548), tackle contemporary events such as the sieges of Buda, Nicosia and Famagusta, while tragedy often narrates mythological or historical events.

In tragedy, the Ottoman is usually portrayed as impious, severe, cruel, rebellious or unreliable. He is often denoted with negative terms such as wild beast, tyrant, monster, inhuman or arrogant. However, as we saw in chapter three, this terminology is not unusual when describing tyrants.

1 THE EVENTS AT BUDA AND FAMAGUSTA

The first author to write a historical tragedy and put Ottomans on stage *tout court* is Barbaro, who describes the conquest of Buda in 1541. Historically, the Hungarians had already been vanquished by the Ottomans in 1526 in the battle of Mohács. In this battle the young Hungarian king was killed. Since he had no issue, his brother-in-law, the Habsburg Ferdinand of Austria, and John Zápolya, the most powerful local lord, both claimed the throne. Bohemia and Hungary were elective monarchies. Ferdinand was elected as king of Bohemia, but in Hungary the candidates were separately elected to the Hungarian throne. John was defeated by Ferdinand, fled the

> IMAGE 31 – Jan Luyken, *Belegering van Nicosia door de Turken*, 1699, from: Gregorio Leti, *Het leven van Filips de II koning van Spanien*, trans. Nicolaas Jarichides Wieringa (Den Haag: Engelbreght Boucquet, 1699) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-2017-7246

country, and asked Suleiman the Magnificent for help. In return, he made Hungary an Ottoman vassal state.

The Ottomans invaded Austria and famously laid siege to Vienna in 1529. In 1533 a peace ensued, and Suleiman yielded Western Hungary to Ferdinand. Since he was childless, John named Ferdinand as his successor, but in 1539 he took Isabella Jagiellon to his wife, daughter of the Polish king Sigismund I and Bona Sforza. She soon gave him a son, John Sigismund. John I died shortly after his son's birth, but he had made sure that the child would succeed him and acquired Ottoman support in this matter, thus breaking his word to Ferdinand. The latter took his troops to Buda to enforce the treaty between him and John I, and Isabella called on Suleiman to help her push back the Habsburg forces. Suleiman saw his chance to extend his territories.

The Ottomans won the day at Buda, putting the city under Suleiman's direct jurisdiction and taking possession of Central Hungary. Ferdinand remained king of Western Hungary. Suleiman sent John Sigismund and his mother to Transylvania. His mother was agreed to act as his regent until his death in 1559, and John II would reign until his death in 1571. The sultan stipulated that he should pay 10,000 florins a year and provide provisions to the Ottomans when need be. Though John could only decide on foreign affairs with the consent of the Ottomans, he was free to rule his lands as he pleased.

The Ottoman is a minor figure in the *Tragedia*, but is more central to the plays that portray the war of Cyprus. In 1570 the Ottomans had conquered Nicosia, the capital of Venetian Cyprus. They subsequently went after Famagusta. Its governor Bragadin was able to hold the city for about a year, but the last Venetian stronghold eventually surrendered. Though the Ottomans had ensured the Catholics that they would be free, Famagusta's defenders were slaughtered. This traumatic defeat had been in the making for over a hundred years of alternating frictions and treatises, and did not come unexpectedly.[1] The historical events unfolded as follows.[2]

Already in 1569, when he had been elected *capitan del regno di Cipro*, Bragadin had begun to prepare Famagusta, where he was stationed, as best he could. The Venetians had reinforced the city walls, stored resources, fabricated cannons and gunpowder, and trained the inexperienced troops. Immediately after the 9th of September, Bragadin received a letter from the Ottoman commander Lala Mustafa

1 See Kelly DeVries, "A Tale of Venetian Skin. The Flaying of Marcantonio Bragadin," in *Flaying in the Pre-Modern World. Practice and Representation*, ed. Larissa Tracy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017), 52-60.

2 Five eye-witness accounts of the events have survived. I rely on DeVries, "A Tale of Venetian Skin," 61-67; and Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vol. 4, *The Sixteenth Century from Julius III to Pius V* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1984), 1027-40. Also see Niccolò Capponi, *Victory of the West. The Great Christian–Muslim Clash at the Battle of Lepanto* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2006) for the military history.

Pasha suggesting that Famagusta give way. To make sure the message passed, the head of the lieutenant of Nicosia was delivered shortly after. Bragadin refused and declared he would make the pasha regret the siege.

On the 19th of May 1570 the first cannons sounded, and after some days of heavy bombardments, to which the Venetians forcefully replied, on the 25th of May Mustafa had a janissary bring two letters to the Famagusta walls to offer the terms for surrender to Bragadin, and to Lorenzo Tiepolo, the captain of Paphos. Astorre Baglione, the governor of Famagusta together with Bragadin, dismissed the messenger. At the outset of the siege, the cry of "Viva San Marco!" resounded as the defenders sent the janissary off with offensive gestures. Famagosta's defenders – men, women, children – had been freshly supplied, believing in divine providence, and they hoped that Venetian troops would relieve them, but these hopes gradually dwindled as men, munition, and food became scarce.

Around the 20th of July, the situation grew dire, and distinguished *famagostani* petitioned Bragadin to capitulate; however, the captain replied that help would arrive. He sent a frigate to Candia (Crete) to tell the administration there of their predicament, as he was bid. On the 23rd of July Mustafa wrote another letter to Astorre Baglione. He promised to spare everyone: they would be sent to Catholic lands with their possessions untouched. The defenders were divided between believing that Venetian help would come and believing the city to be utterly lost. After long discussions, at the end of July it was eventually decided by all that they would surrender. Upon receiving the news, Mustafa informed Baglione that he wished to receive two hostages, and that he himself would send two as well, so that the terms could be discussed.

The exchange took place on the 2nd of August, the city was opened, and Baglione was delegated to negotiate. He requested that the defenders live and that their possessions remain untouched. The Venetians should be escorted safely to Candia while the Greeks retained their houses and property and the freedom to live as Catholics. Mustafa agreed, refusing only the demand that five pieces of artillery would be taken by the Venetians since this was not the Ottoman custom and he feared that this would cause a riot.

On the 5th of August, Bragadin told Mustafa by letter that he would deliver the keys that day, and he asked him not to distress the city's inhabitants in any way. Though the Ottomans had been courteous, they also had started looting and claiming food, drinks, women, and children. Mustafa sent word that he would welcome him, and promised that no-one would be molested.

On the evening of that same day, Bragadin, Baglione and other gentleman went to Mustafa's pavilion accompanied by soldiers and trumpeters and bringing gifts. The pasha was in a good mood when Bragadin arrived to hand over the keys of the city; however, his spirits were quickly turned upside-down.



At a certain point during the ceremony, he became enraged. The eyewitness accounts do not univocally establish the reason why. According to Kenneth Setton, a discussion arose between Bragadin and Mustafa: the Ottoman accused him of having killed some of his men who were on the Venetian galleys, including a friend of his. However, Bragadin assured him that they all were still alive. As Bragadin and Baglione protested and demanded the pasha kept his word, Mustafa thought that the Catholics deceived him and became enraged. Kelly DeVries ponders the possibility that his rage was caused by the Venetian pomp with which Mustafa was confronted: would he have expected Bragadin to be more humble? She deems this to be unlikely since the Ottomans had decorated the pavilion. Or, perhaps, DeVries says, Mustafa became furious when Bragadin refused to hand him over a Venetian hostage until all agreements had been fulfilled.

Whatever his reasons, Mustafa clapped his hands, rose, and ordered that all Greeks and Venetians in the surrender delegation be tied up. Again, he clapped his hands, giving the command to kill all Catholics in the camp, soldiers, citizens, Famagustans and Venetians alike. This change of heart happened so quickly that neither the Catholics nor the Ottomans knew how to respond. Some Ottomans started to run through nearby enemies, while others captured the Catholics trying to leave, and still others helped them to survive by hiding them. Astorre Baglione was beheaded, and two other Venetian leaders were cut to pieces.

Though they had been ordered to avoid Famagusta being pillaged, when the janissaries heard that Mustafa withdrew the peace, they let the Ottomans plunder and kill. Even though Mustafa had sent the janissaries' agha to stop the Ottomans that were headed to Famagusta to slaughter the townspeople, many who opposed the looters lost their lives. The pasha also sent his lieutenant to Famagosta to make sure that everyone surrendered any hidden weapons, on the pain of death. All the Italian soldiers in the harbour, who were waiting to be transported, were put in chains and enslaved.

Back at the tent, Bragadin, though allegedly unimpeded, had not moved from his seat while all these bloody events unfolded. He appears to have been yelling, swearing, and praying. He voluntarily offered his neck to two executioners. However, on Mustafa's explicit instructions, they simply cut off Bragadin's ears, and according to some sources his nose as well. The *capitano* was taken to Famagusta and imprisoned for twelve days. During this period the looting of the city ended and the debris was cleared. Bragadin's injuries remained untreated and became infected. According to some scholars the Ottomans offered that he be spared if he converted, which he declined.

> IMAGE 32 – Tomb of Marcantonio Bragadin, with a depiction of his torture (Venice, Basilica dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo, also called "San Zanipolo") – © Didier Descouens via Wikimedia Commons

Mustafa now decided that he would dispose of the Venetian. Setton believes that he feared an attack from the Holy League's fleet, which he heard was gathering. DeVries maintains that he knew that Bragadin would die anyway from infection, and that he had imagined making a spectacle out of him. The captain, who looked as good as dead according to an eyewitness, was first obliged to carry around a sack of earth across the city, while the Ottomans sneered at him, intimidated him, and tried to convert him, to which Bragadin fiercely replied that he was a Christian. In the harbour he was hoisted up the mast of an Ottoman galley and put on display.

He was finally dragged to the pillory in the city centre, stripped to the waist, hung upside down, and skinned alive.[3] Ottoman butchers started peeling off the skin from his face and head, working down to his torso and arms. The captain died in the process, possibly because the butchers were not very skilled. When they reached his navel, Bragadin, an eyewitness claims, called out commending his soul to God in Latin. The onlookers judged that the martyr Bragadin deserved a place among the saints.

The flayers lowered the corpse and completed peeling off its skin, and the body was quartered. Both were exhibited to the people, which was forced to pay homage to Mustafa. Each of the four pieces was taken to one of Famagusta's four strongholds, and the skin was stuffed with straw, sewn together, and carried around Famagusta seated on an ox while the spectators jeered and applauded. Captain Lorenzo Tiepolo was hanged sometime later, and after a few days Mustafa took Bragadin's skin to Istanbul, where he offered it to sultan Selim II.

In 1580, during a Veneto-Ottoman peace, a certain Girolamo Polidori stole the relic in Istanbul and returned it to Venice,[4] where Bragadin had been proclaimed a heroic martyr and publicly mourned immediately after the events of 1571. The captain was bewailed, and masses were held in his honour. The Venetian doge and officials were even accused of being treacherous cowards for not helping Famagusta's defendants. They made up for this by winning the day at Lepanto, and the outcome of this naval battle was seen by many as an appropriate retaliation for the martyrdom of Bragadin and the loss of Cyprus, though they would never recover the territory.

3 DeVries underlines that flayings were not common anywhere in the Cinquecento: DeVries, "A Tale of Venetian Skin," 66.

4 The skin was first brought to the church of San Gregorio, and then interred with honours in the Basilica dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo ("San Zanipolo"), where it can still be found today.

2 OTTOMAN MESSENGERS AS GO-BETWEENS IN TRAGEDY

Classic messengers are often anonymous, but at times they give a subjective opinion and express their emotions regarding the tragic events which are unfolding. They may appear in different shapes, but in the plays of this corpus they are soldiers. In *Irene* and *Isifile*, the messenger is a cold figure.

In *Irene*, the Armenian soldiers arrive to take the queen's child. When she lies about his identity in the fourteenth scene, they threaten to kill the infant in order to discover the truth, just like Palamedes tricked the cunning Odysseus. Ignoring Irene's lament, they assure her that Zalamosso's will is unbending, and that what will not be obtained with reason will be obtained by force. In the twenty-second act, the soldiers give Irene a *vaso* containing the head of her husband and the hands of her son. After opening the gift in her stead and serenely stating the gift's contents, the soldiers disappear, leaving room for Irene's lament and the choir's comment.

The envoy in *Isifile* plays a more prominent role. In the fourth, fifth, and sixth scenes of the second act, an Ottoman messenger arrives to deliver the peace and terms, during which he praises his own commander and sultan. The leaders of Salamina seem confident, but the choir of women expresses its concerns: "Deh, per pietà, signore, / di queste afflitte donne / fate quel che vi dice il signor nostro; / e adoperate in ciò l'ingegno vostro, / accioché queste gonne / non sieno lacerate / da l'altrui voglie crude e scelerate."[5] The messenger assures them that they will not be raped, and that his *bassà* is trustworthy and will not break his oath:

> Non dubitate che vi rompa fede
> il mio signor giamai, che sovra ogni altra
> cosa del mondo, quella innalza e stima.
> Fate, fate buon cor, ch'in lui vedrete
> ad ogni vostro ben l'animo acceso,
> che di sua bocca udito ho mille volte,
> ch'altra cosa non è più indegna e vile,
> né più, che biasmo arecchi a noi mortali,
> ch'esser bugiardo e mancator di fede.[6]

I have found no trace of the Ottoman messenger knowing or not knowing the final outcome. He is, however, quite cruel when he delivers his gifts to Isifile on behalf of Mustafà, in the first two scenes of the final act. As he hands over the severed

5 Mondella, *Isifile*, II.[5], 33.

6 Mondella, *Isifile*, II.[5], 33-34.



body parts of her husband and children, besides a vial of poison, he speaks, almost ironically:

> MESSO DI MUSTAFÀ [Mustafà] vi prega, che 'l godiate allegramente.
> E se come conviene al valor vostro
> degno egli non sarà, questo vi dona
> medesmamente d'or superbo vaso
> in cui rinchiuso sta sacro liquore,
> che subito fa l'huom preso che l'have
> di dolor scarco, e d'ogni affanno privo.
> ISIFILE Essendo il tuo signor per sua natura
> cortese, e liberal, di sangue illustre,
> altro non potea far, che un simil dono.
> […]
> Ma dimmi, il mio consorte, e i miei figlioli,
> son giunti a la città col mio signore?
> MESSO DI MUSTAFÀ I vostri amati figli havrete tosto
> innanzi a gli occhi; e Datamo, ancor lui,
> poch'è lontan, di cui darovvi nova
> tosto, c'havrete questo don veduto.[7]

Isifile has a presentiment of disaster, and when she finally opens the gift she is desperate. The *messo* remains unmoved, stating that his master has not broken his word: "Non si rompe la fede a uccider quelli / di cui si temon, seben son fanciulli."[8] The messenger informs her that Mustafà has decided that her husband and all Italians should die. She should drink the poison so that her family is extinct. Hereafter, however, he does seem to feel some compassion. He tries to convince Isifile to plead with his lord for mercy:

> Io dunque andrò. Ma non sarebbe meglio
> che di placar cercaste il mio signore,
> perché voi non andaste a l'altra vita,
> che forse vi potrebbe usar pietade?[9]

> IMAGE 33 – Christoph Krieger, *Beglierbei della Natolia et huomini d'arme*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-375

7 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[2], 68.
8 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[2], 69.
9 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[2], 70].

Isifile declines, convinced that she should be with her husband and children and therefore die, but the *messo* reproaches her that this would have been true if her children had still lived, and that she should not needlessly add another death to the list. The messenger then sends Isifile off with her women to bury the dead, urges them to help their mistress, and leaves the stage.

Contrary to these rather unfeeling figures, in Barbaro's *Tragedia* both Suleiman and especially his *messo* counter the general feeling of distrust: they do not come across as evil characters since no cruel murders take place. In the fifth and ninth scenes, the *noncio turchesco* joyfully conveys the news of the Ottoman victory. In the sixteenth scene, he returns to take queen Isabella and her son to the sultan. At first, she fruitlessly tries to avoid going to his camp by sending her fealty to the sultan through the *messo*, and attempts to negotiate so that Solimano comes to her court. The scene continuously contrasts the messenger's reassuring words with the fears of the Hungarian characters:

REINA O regno infortunato,
o popoli infelici,
o misero figliuolo,
o me meschina madre!
Ben veggio omai ch'io sono
dat'in preda a' nimici,
data nei fieri lacci.
Ah, miserabil sorte,
più malvaggia che morte!
[…]
MESSO Non ti doler, Reina,
né ti mova sospetto
del tuo diletto figlio,
di te, della tua gente,
ch'il mio Signor benigno
ama quello di core,
te riverisce e osserva,
e tuoi sudditi apprezza.[10]

While the women express their inner fears, the *secretario*, who had earlier exhorted the queen not to "aspettar adunque altra richiesta, / ché questa tua dimora / a quel Signor potrebbe esser sospetta, / e forse anche molesta",[11] does his utmost to try

10 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 16, 70-72, vv. 2047-55 and 2084-91.

11 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 13, 61, vv. 1733-36.

and convince the *messo* that she does not bear the Ottomans ill will: "Perdona lei: ché, madre, / ogni cosa ha sospetta."[12] In his penultimate scene, the *messo* seems to intimidate Isabella: "Pon fine alle querele / e non mover a sdegno / chi t'ama e chi t'onora",[13] but only because he is afraid that to doubt any longer would mean her and his own ruin. He expresses the fear that his sultan will not thank him for it.

In *Irene* and *Isifile*, the messengers are simply the bringers of bad news, and are not compassionate with the fate that befalls the queen, her family and her people. In the *Tragedia*, on the other hand, the messenger continuously reassures queen Isabella that she or her son will not be killed, and he is right.

3 SULTANS AND MILITARY LEADERS IN COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

3.1 MONSTROUSLY TYRANNICAL SULTANS AND MILITARY LEADERS

In a significant discussion, Valeria Cimmieri has analysed all four tragedies as a sketch of Ottoman-Christian diplomacy and their misunderstandings, besides being a mirror for diplomats.[14] Barbaro's *Tragedia* in this context is an atypical tragedy: no-one dies, and no-one is brutally murdered, much like in Aeschylus' *Persians*. Lucas also analyses the implications of Venetian politics in the play.[15] In particular, she points out how Buda is a mirror image of Venice, and how Barbaro warns his fellow Venetians to be aware of making the wrong political decisions and suffer Buda's own fate. Barbaro's pro-Habsburg standpoint fell in line with the Venetian strategy, Lucas says; the *Serenissima* supported the Habsburg Ferdinand throughout most of the 1540s, afraid that the Ottomans would enter Friuli again even though they were at peace.

Lucas also fleshes out how the image of the Ottoman varies according to the perspectives of the characters, who are both not explicitly named by Barbaro to avoid political trouble. Two *consiglieri*, who are described negatively as opportunistic characters, are pro-Ottoman because they see possibilities for their own advancement. To them the Ottoman is human and a potential saviour. Diametrically opposed to the *consiglieri* are the *cortigiano*, the *barone*, and the

12 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 16, 72, vv. 2092-93.

13 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 16, 72, vv. 2104-6.

14 Cimmieri, "The Performative Power of Diplomatic Discourse in the Italian Tragedies Inspired by the Wars Against the Turks."

15 She very briefly discusses this in "Tragédie des hommes de paille", but extensively in "Jeux de miroirs entre Bude et Venise dans la *Tragedia* de Daniele Barbaro."


Wahre Conterfactur des Turcken Obersten Aly Bassa genandt, hie abgemalt, Dem sein Kopff ist abgeschlagen worden.
IN des Vertaw Bassa Turckischen Obersten Gallea, sollen in 22000 Sultanini in Gold, vnnd in des Caracoggia Gallea in 40000. Zechini, vnd sonst in den Schiffen vnd andern Galleen, grosses gut gefunden worden sein.
Der Herr Joann de Austria, Soll den Turckischen General Bassa, als er gefangen vnnd hart verwundet, den Kopff abschlagen, vnd den selben furter in seiner Gallea, auff ein lange stangen oder Spiess stecken lassen.
SO nun der Allmechtig Gott, ohne zweyffel, auff das Hertzlich vnd ernstlich anrüffen, sovil Tausent armer gefangener Christen, diesem grewlichen Feind widerstandt gethon hatt, vnd in den rüstifften meth den anrüffen den zu hilff kommen ist, So soll auch menschlich hierab ein Exempel nemen, Alle seine zuversicht, vnnd hoffnung auff den Herrn Christum zu stellen, vnd in gedult des Herrn zuerwarten, welcher du wie zu jhme von hertzen rüffen werden, also allen nöten wol erretten kan. Amen.
1575

secretario and his *amico*, who view the Ottomans as animals or even demons. Barbaro even includes an appeal to a Christian crusade against the 'Turks'.

Lucas interprets the fact that the sultan Solimano is described as not uttering a word, like his peers, as a sign of their arrogance, although Cimmieri notes that this is a historical diplomatic practice. Both Lucas and Lohse underline that the tragedy is filled with negative clichés: the Ottoman is immoral, cruel, bestial, and duplicitous. Though Lucas says that he is admired for his organisation and strength, Lohse stresses that the Ottoman is mostly opposed to the positive Catholic Austrian enemy.[16]

How is the sultan portrayed, even though he never appears on stage? From the beginning of the tragedy, opinions are divided, and the ideas expressed by the characters are determined by their interlocutors. Whereas a *consigliere* finds that Solimano "a noi s'è mostrò per diversi segni / sempre benigno e umano; / ché più sincere affetto / né più provata fede / si trova in alcun petto della sua",[17] the *secretario* defines Solimano as a "velenoso serpe",[18] "lupo", "perfido tiran, scytico cane".[19]

> IMAGE 34 – Ali pasha, the commander of the Ottoman navy, was captured and beheaded after the battle of Lepanto. He is depicted here wearing decorated clothing, a turban topped with feathers. Ominously, behind Ali pasha we already see his head on a spike – Anonymous, *True Likeness of the Beheaded Turkish Officer Ali Bassa*, ca. 1571, woodcut, 33 x 42,6 cm. The woodcut was published in a German broadsheet and coloured manually – © London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.912-2003

Queen Isabella, too, when summoned to appear with her son before Solimano, tells her "innocente agnelletto" that "tra fieri lupi andrai".[20] Though the *secretario* does not believe that the Ottomans are trustworthy ("Quanto meglio sarebbe / aver l'assedio intorno / de' nimici palesi / che le false lusinghe / di non fidati amici"),[21] he tries to console the *reina* that Solimano has no reason to betray her confidence:

> Ragion non vuole ch'ei ti rompa fede,
> se non per te, almen per l'altre genti,
> che, mantener vedendo i sacramenti

16 Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento," 208-10; Lucas, "Jeux de miroirs entre Bude et Venise dans la *Tragedia* de Daniele Barbaro," 63-64, 67-71, especially for the analysis of the portrayal of the Ottomans. On Cimmieri's analysis of diplomatic practices, see Cimmieri, "The Performative Power of Diplomatic Discourse in the Italian Tragedies Inspired by the Wars Against the Turks," 106-9.

17 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 2, 11, vv. 88-92. The *Tragedia* is not subdivided in acts or scenes, therefore I cite the scenes, page numbers, and verses as provided by the critical edition by Lucas.

18 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 4, 14, v. 166.

19 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 4, 17, vv. 268-72.

20 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 13, 60, vv. 1700-1701.

21 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 13, 49, vv. 1320-24.

e servar le promesse e la parola,
gli fideran le terre e i beni suoi;
ché s'egli, in sul fiorir, di fe' mancasse,
porrebbe in cor d'altrui disio di morte
più presto che credenza o confidanza.[22]

Throughout the entire play, the queen, her courtiers and the *coro* lament the fate that will befall Isabella and her son. When the *barone* in scene 11 tells of his meeting with the sultan, he describes the "Signor dell'Asia" as

vittorioso […]
in vista altero e grave.
Indi dall'alto seggio
severamente il ciglio
lento piegava, e intorno
i bassà suoi drizzati
stavano attenti con la bocca aperta
a' suoi commandamenti.[23]

When he tells the sultan that his countrymen will come to honour him and express their joy, he receives no answer and remains astonished:

Odi cosa inumana:
un cenno pure, non ch'una parola,
i' non potei rittrare
da quella bocca dura;
parvemi alor vedere
e legger nel su' aspetto
l'imperiosa voce
commandar il trionfo
delle vittorie sue
nella nostra cittate.[24]

Later he is brought to a nearby pavilion and contemplates his fears about the situation. The *barone* is interrupted by two servants of Solimano who happily

22 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 13, 59, vv. 1627-34.

23 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 11, 38, vv. 964 and 966-73.

24 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 11, 39, vv. 992-1001.

announce that the sultan wants peace, and that the queen needs to send her son to him:

> Questi per altra voce
> mi fanno dir come il lor Signore
> lietamente ha raccolto
> l'allegrezza e la fede
> della Reina e vuole
> eterna pace et amicitia seco;
> e perché ei sommamente
> ama il fanciullo e cerca
> di stabilirgli il regno,
> con affetto disia
> vederlo e accarezzarlo:
> per tanto prega la Reina
> che voglia a sé mandarlo.[25]

The *barone*, troubled by this "dimanda sospettosa",[26] tries to persuade the Ottomans that the young prince and his wet-nurses will be terrified in the enemy camp, but it is to no avail. He is told that future rulers should be hardened at a tender age. Though the sultan's message is soothing, the Hungarian noble is sceptical. The entire episode breathes distrust. However, the Hungarians' suspicions prove unfounded as Isabella's tragedy is to lose her "regno antico, o sacri tempi, o torri / alte, o palazzi ornati / o mia nobilitade."[27] Sultan Solimano is never on stage, but the spectator or reader feels uneasy because he seems so threatening throughout. Even the Ottoman messenger urges the queen to leave for the enemy camp, for both their goods: he is afraid that to wait any longer would mean Isabella and his own ruin. He knows that his lord, the sultan, is not to be trifled with:

> Venite, a ciò non sia
> così lunga dimora
> vostra ruina e mia.
> Già sono intorno tante schiere armate:
> che ciò che confidenza,
> amor, promesse e fede
> non vi mette nel core,

25 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 11, 40, vv. 1021-33.

26 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 11, 40, v. 1036.

27 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 17, 76, vv. 2238-40.

forz' il potrebbe fare
con più giusto dolore.[28]

Barbaro's characters call for a Christian crusade against the Ottomans, and call them tyrants, dogs or infernal monsters, but at the same time, as Lucas says, they warn the Venetians for such a terrible faith of losing sovereignty. However, the tragedy hardly seems to be one for lack of blood. The sultan is not even truly menacing or a tyrant.

The sultan and his general are monstrous, however, in Mondella's *Isifile*, Giusti's *Irene*, and Fuligni's *Bragadino*. The central event in these tragedies is the lost war of Cyprus.[29] The battle of Lepanto is also constantly put forward as the moment in which the Venetians will have their vengeance on the Ottomans. This is exactly how the naval battle has entered our collective memory: it was the moment in which the 'Turk' was finally crushed. This was not the case, but until today this characterization of events seems to have been effective.

The plays, too, promote the role of Venetian identity and ultimate victory at Lepanto. *Irene*'s choir of women of Salamina, for example, warns us at the end of the play that the horror that has been done will rebound on the enemy. They predict Lepanto:

[L'alme pure de' miei signori] mirando
nel chiaro specchio de la mente eterna,
scorgeran de' lor stratii aspra vendetta:
però ch'armata di mortal saetta
contra le frodi de l'humano errore,
sta ferma in campo ogni hor l'ira superna:
e, qual'hor tarda a mover l'arme, a l'hora
l'horror raddoppia col tardar de l'hore;
et con forza maggior gli erranti accora.[30]

28 Barbaro, "Tragedia," 16, 73, vv. 2130-38.

29 Although we know that there were Cypriot nobles and commoners who supported the Ottoman invasion to throw off the Venetian yoke, the tragedies by Fuligni (*Bragadino*), Giusti (*Irene*) and Mondella (*Isifile*) tell a different story. They all underline that the Republic of Venice had the legitimate *signoria* of Cyprus, and that the Ottomans falsely usurped the island. Fuligni also explicitly states this in his dedicatory letter to *Bragadino*. The Cypriots in all these plays are represented as unhappy and afraid with how the war turned out. In Mondella's *Isifile* (II.[2]), the captain Lisimaco even prays that the Cypriots will keep a rebellious spirit.

30 Giusti, *Irene*, [24], 42v.

But what makes the three tragedies truly fascinating is that Mustafa's motivations for breaking his word differ in each work. The three versions influence our perception of Mustafa, and potentially also the 'self'-image of the Venetians.

Mondella's *Isifile* contains the most clement characterization of the tyrannical sultan or general. In the first scene, the goddess Giunone (Juno) arrives, who hates Venus, the goddess of Cyprus, for the episode involving the apple of discord. She wants vengeance and has arrived "arditamente" "in mezzo / al gran romor de le superbe, e invitte, / e sanguinose, crude, e horribil arme" of "Selim othoman principe". She has come

> sol per far, che s'ei tenesse punto
> d'amor nel petto, o ver nel cor havesse
> dato ricetto a spirto di pietade
> verso de le miserie di coloro,
> che 'l fren tengono in man di Salamina,
> in tutto via si parta, e in cambio loro,
> che sdegno, crudeltà, furore, e solo
> disio di sangue; e di gran morte v'entri.[31]

To ensure that the "spietato duce" Mustafà's heart is filled with "rabbia" and "velen",[32] and to kill the righteous and eradicate the Cypriots who oppose her, Giunone summons her *furie infernali* and sends them to the encampment. Giunone defines Mustafà as ruthless ("spietato"), but he acts like a good military leader; he has made peace with his enemy. The goddess gathers that he will only break his oath and kill all leaders and inhabitants from Salamina when forced by Giunone's furies from hell:

> per adempir il mio volere,
> fate che Mustafà sotto la fede,
> fatto pergiuro, a Datamo dia morte.
> […]
> E muoian seco i suoi figlioli, e Argilio,
> valoroso guerriero e capitano,
> e tutti gli altri suoi fidi soldati,
> e poi ne la cittade Isifil moglie
> del viceré sia presa, e v'entri il campo
> mettendo a ferro e a foco Salamina.[33]

31 Mondella, *Isifile*, I.[1], 8.

32 Mondella, *Isifile*, I.[1], 9.

33 Mondella, *Isifile*, I.[1], 11.

Now enters the *ombra* of Evagora, king of Cyprus. The ghost laments that he had not been sent to ensure that Datamo dies, since the *vicere* had obtained the crown by conspiring against him and killing him. If the furies, "come cred'io fin'a quest'hora",[34] did not yet make Mustafà's heart flare up with anger, he will do it. He will ensure that everyone dies a terrible death. These two supernatural appearances – whom we will never again encounter in the play –, together with a third scene in which the choir invokes Venere (Venus), make up the first act, which exculpates the general Mustafà from the bloodbath.

Isifile has nightmares and many doubts about Mustafà breaking his oath. As she tells her *nodrice* Armonia, "Chi non sa, che gli othomani spesso / […] ne han traditi molti? / E Mustafà di quei seguendo l'orme, / perché 'l simil con noi far non potrebbe? / Essendo ch'egli è perfido e crudele".[35] Later, in IV.[1], horrifying news reaches the women from Salamina. The *nuntio* tells how Mustafà received the Cypriots in his pavilion:

> Cominciò *il traditor*, guardandol [Datamo] fiso,
> da gli occhi lagrimar per la dolcezza,
> e sì benigno si mostrò nel viso,
> che detto havrebbe ogni un ch'egli all'hor fosse
> il più amorevol huom di tutto 'l mondo,
> dandone inditio ancor quella pietade
> che dimostrava nel *mentito aspetto*.
> Ahi, re del ciel, come soffrer potesti
> ch'allhor la terra non s'aprisse tutta,
> e inghiotirsen costui sì crudo et empio?
> Havendo nel pensier dianzi proposto
> di far morire horribilmente tutti
> quelli che custodivan Salamina,
> e far che il viceregе fosse quello
> che facesse, morendo, a gli altri strada?[36]

Weeping, the messenger tells his dreadful story. The betrayal is premeditated, probably because it was suggested by infernal powers:

> Un capitan di Mustafà, rivolto
> al suo signor, arditamente disse,

34 Mondella, *Isifile*, I.[2], 14.

35 Mondella, *Isifile*, III.[2], 47.

36 Mondella, *Isifile*, IV.[1], 54-55.

perché così fra loro era l'accordo,
che dovesse avertir che nei dì primi
de la tregua fra lor chiusa sì stretta,
dai cipriotti fur sotto la fede
dato la morte a molti suoi soldati.[37]

Upon learning from his captain the false news that the Cypriots killed his soldiers, Mustafà becomes enraged and takes on a monstrous appearance:

Ecco l'ira montar, ecco 'l furore
accender le lor forze, e del lor sangue
far col dente e con l'unghia aspra vendetta.
Così questo inhuman da le parole
di quel suo capitan s'accese a sdegno;
e colmi di velen gl'occhi volgendo
verso del viceré disse parole
da far tremar il ciel, l'acqua, e l'inferno.[38]

The *vicere* Datamo is apprehended, and Argilio rises to defend his lord, unsheathing his sword and moving to behead Mustafà; however, he is stopped by the enemy soldiers, who block what would have been a fatal blow. Datamo's commanders and sons are then slaughtered. All soldiers, even the dogs, are stupefied and start to cry, but Mustafà is unmoved:

Tanto horribil cosa
fu il veder questi casi acerbi e strani,
che 'l campo lagrimò per la pietade.
Et que' soldati, ch'erano presenti,
ammutirno la lingua, e nei lor petti
s'agghiacciorno le vene, e stavan fermi
come cose insensate; e in lor non era
occhio, ch'asciutto fosse per dolore.
E in fin que' cani, per l'indegno pasto,
come havessero d'huom la mente hauta,
pareano sospirar', e fuor dagli occhi,
questi, lagrime uscir gli vider vere.

37 Mondella, *Isifile*, IV.[1], 57.

38 Mondella, *Isifile*, IV.[1], 57.

Ei solo el traditor stava costante
per farsi a l'opra indegna ognihor più crudo.[39]

Mustafà next orders the city to be destroyed. During the sack, "gli occhi havea / di velen pieni, e 'l cor di sdegno acceso".[40] Mustafà appears again when Isifile attempts to kill herself. He is a "giovin fiero / che pien di gioie havea un turbante in capo / da le cui spalle un gran manto pendeva / col qual, movendo il piè, radea la terra."[41] With his bejewelled turban and long cloak, his clothing appears less that of a warrior than of the stereotypical Ottoman.

Some images from Bonarelli's tragedy *Il Solimano* can guide us in imagining what Mustafà looks and moves like (see the frontispiece of this thesis, IMAGE 1, IMAGE 6 and IMAGE 10). In these illustrations accompanying the 1620 edition of this play, the protagonists on the foreground wear turbans with feathers, decorated long tunics with printed fabrics, what appear to be high boots, and weapons such as scimitars and spears. In the battle scene (IMAGE 6), the soldiers also sport round shields and Turkish bows and arrows. The portrait of Solimano on the frontispiece (IMAGE 10) offers a detailed representation of a 'Turkish' sovereign. Solimano wears pointed shoes or boots, several layers of ornate clothing ending in wide long sleeves, a turban draped with fabric and topped off with a plume set in what seems to be a jewel, and a sceptre with a crescent on its tip. Elsewhere (IMAGE 6 and IMAGE 38), a long-patterned cloak is draped over his clothes. In both images, his bearing is stately and regal, which conforms to the deportment of the regal dramatic roles.

Mustafà gets hold of the bottle of poison Isifile is clasping, "e con simil parlar verso di lei / spiegò la cruda e velenata lingua":[42]

Ahi fiera donna, di quel sangue nata
a me tanto nemico, adesso pensi
di ripor meta a così lunghi pianti,
col mezzo del velen c'hora tenevi?
Questo sarebbe troppo al mio pensiero
pena leggier, perché morendo havresti
a tutti gli altri affanni, ch'io ti serbo,
posto non meritato ultimo fine.[43]

39 Mondella, *Isifile*, IV.[1], 62-63.
40 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[3], 74.
41 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[4], 80.
42 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[4], 81.
43 Mondella, *Isifile*, V.[4], 81.

As Armonia tries to soften Mustafà's heart, she is beheaded, and Isifile is enslaved and carried off to Byzantium. The "othoman principe" comes across as cruel and without pity.

Furthermore, Mondella's Ottoman army leader is defined as ruthless by Giunone from *Isifile*'s first act. However, the goddess acknowledges that he nonetheless made peace with his enemies. Therefore, Giunone has to provoke the brutal murder by sending in her furies, and the ghost of the old king of Cyprus gladly lends a helping hand. Since the slaughter takes place as a result of divine volition, the general is not directly responsible for the act. In this way, Mondella makes the real Ottoman sultan a more acceptable ally for the Venetian audience and readers: if Mustafà is not to blame for his actions, but was driven by a divine, hellish force, the 1573 peace with the Ottomans is easier to swallow.

In Giusti's *Irene*, the Armenian bad guy Zalamosso *does* consciously have blood on his hands. It all starts from a prophecy revolving around the *gentil'huomo di corte* Iti from Salamina that the priest received from the god Apollo:

> Ecco […]
> a le mie indegne impure orecchie
> fuor de l'imago del figliuol di Gove
> uscir queste parole: "Tinga ardito
> Iti al re d'Armeno col suo sangue il seggio
> per morte al'hor, che 'l regal scettro prende:
> e Calasiri fia, qual era in prima."[44]

To make Calasiri king again, the royal throne must be covered in blood. But when the priest leaves, his interlocutors, the king Calasiri and the city's prefect Egisto, do not understand whether Apollo wants the Armenian king Zalamosso's blood spilt or Iti's.

In the next scene, Iti is incredulous about the possibility that he should kill Zalamosso, something that seems impossible since he is always surrounded by guards. Therefore, he will kill himself. "A me dunque convien sparger il sangue / non è uopo d'interprete. Il mio fato / vuol che qui il fine sia de la mia vita: / questo importa l'oracolo. I' son pronto / per voi, signor," he assures Calasiri, "et per la patria insieme / a morir mille volte. Eccomi il petto; / quinci uscirà per man di me medesmo / sangue, che tingerà la terra e 'l seggio / del re, come al mio debito conviensi."[45] His king cannot dissuade him, but Iti is more than ready to give his life for king and country.

44 Giusti, *Irene*, [8], 17v.

45 Giusti, *Irene*, [9], 18r.

However, things now take a terrible turn. In the thirteenth scene, a *servo* tells Irene that the disloyal Zalamosso broke his word: the Armenians are massacring the people from Salamina, and their leaders are imprisoned. When, in scene 14, Irene attempts to keep her child from being sent to the Armenians, she is forced to taste defeat. In the seventeenth scene we find out why the events became so bloody. A *messo* arrives who was able to escape the bloodbath after the first *servo* from scene 13. He tells the choir of women from Salamina that "un mostro atroce de l'horrendo inferno"[46] like Zalamosso unchained a "sì scelerato et empio / spettacolo!"[47]

Judging from his story, the slaughter was brought about by Iti's intended sacrifice. After the delegation had been well-received, Zalamosso had immediately declared his regret at what they had suffered, offering his friendship to Calasiri. As Calasiri handed over the royal sceptre, Iti arrived on scene:

> Parendogli a l'hora, e loco, e tempo,
> d'essequir il divin fatal responso,
> *secondo che tra lor s'era ordinato,*
> *si fa venir Iti fedel davanti*,
> con molti ornati fregi a fin disposti
> ch'ei s'appressasse al re senza sospetto
> et di lor fesse lui cortese dono.
> Glieli pose Iti di sua mano a piedi,
> et qui, pieno d'ardir, gridando: "Prendi,
> o cara patria mia, quel, ch'io ti debbo!"
> Appoggiò la man manca a l'aureo seggio,
> per poter meglio poi, cadendo sovra,
> tingerlo del suo sangue; et con la destra
> trasse un pugnal, ch'a questo ufficio ascoso
> portato havea con diligenza molta.
> Ma non successe al suo pensier l'effetto:
> anzi, *fu questa degli affanni nostri*
> *l'origin prima*, et in che guisa, udite.
> Mentre Iti alzava, per ferirsi, il ferro,
> i custodi del re, credendo certo
> che costui dar volesse al lor re morte,
> il colpo gl'impedir, tenendo il braccio
> pria che segnasse, ove a ferir scendea.[48]

46 Giusti, *Irene*, [17], 27v.

47 Giusti, *Irene*, [17], 27v.

48 Giusti, *Irene*, [17], 29r.

The courtier Iti approached the throne and raised his weapon to wound himself. But Zalamosso's men believed that he wished to kill their king and blocked his blow. This, the messenger said, was the origin of the Cypriots' troubles. At first Zalamosso was afraid, and then angry. He believed that king Calasiri commissioned Iti to kill him. "Senza sentir difesa" he ordered all people from Salamina to be tied up:

> A questo atto, per subita paura,
> impallidì, poi d'ira accese il volto.
> Fra tanto, come il mar per Borea o d'Austro,
> si mosse a gran rumor tutto quel campo
> del pauroso suo duce in aiuto,
> il qual, per così strano incontro, mosso
> dal sospetto, ch'ai re sta sempre a canto,
> contra ragione, e 'l vero a creder hebbe,
> c'havesse il nostro re tentato, contra
> la sua fede, per man d'Iti innocente,
> quando meno devea, di darli morte.
> Et qui, fellon, *senza sentir difesa*,
> salendo in piè, con formidabil voce
> impose a' suoi che ci legasser tutti.[49]

The Armenian king's anger was roused by his misinterpretation of Iti's actions, which were the result of humans like Iti misinterpreting divine will. However, Zalamosso's reaction is wrong: he does not listen to Iti's defence. The *messo* explicitly states this. King Calasiri also reproves Zalamosso: "Sì crudel re sei, che l'orecchie / chiudi a giusta difeza, anzi non vuoi / che l'innocenza altrui pur ti si mostri".[50] Zalamosso, of course, calls Calasiri a traitor, and the consequences are well known. *Irene* shows how a leader should behave: the tragedy acts like a mirror of a good ruler's behaviour held up to the 'self'.

As in Mondella's *Isifile*, the massacre is provoked by an external force or person who is not the enemy king. The king responds to what happens before his eyes. However, there are two fundamental differences between the king Zalamosso from *Irene* and the army leader Mustafà from *Isifile*: who induced them to act, and the way in which they acted. First, Mustafà is guided by an external divine influence, while Zalamosso himself makes the decision to kill off his enemies. Mondella insinuates that Mustafà would not have acted as he did without the goddess Giunone forcing him to.

49 Giusti, *Irene*, [17], 29r-v.

50 Giusti, *Irene*, [17], 30r.

But in Giusti's *Irene* we find no extenuating circumstances in this sense. Second, in Mondella's *Isifile*, Mustafà and his captain had agreed beforehand that the Catholics would be accused of killing the Ottomans, whereas in Giusti's *Irene* Zalamosso felt threatened by Iti. Mondella's Mustafà sets a trap for his enemies and Giusti's Zalamosso does not, but both act because their hand is forced, be it by a divinity or by a courtier. In my view, both Mondella and Giusti are attempting to make the 1573 Veneto-Ottoman peace digestible to the Venetians.

This differs from what happens in Fuligni's *Bragadino*. Here, the Cypriot characters gradually become convinced that their enemy is untrustworthy. The *castellano* Andrea Baglione, who was initially certain of the general Mustafà and his *luogotenente*'s honesty, begins to doubt after taking a look at which ships would take the Venetians to Crete. There he observed an exchange of letters between the Ottomans. Upon reading the letters, an officer and his men were evidently distressed:

> Volto cangiò, quasi, che fosca nube
> d'atto maligno s'opponesse al chiaro,
> et a l'honesto de la sua ragione.
> Ristette alquanto fra pensier dubbiosi.
> Tratti da canto gli altri duci poi
> bisbigliò non so che loro in secreto.
> Ciascun turbossi, et fuor dieder gran segno
> d'ira nel petto accesa, et di vergogna
> (havendo forse a schifo un tanto fallo)
> i turbat'occhi, et l'infiammata faccia.
> Chiamato poi, perché con gli altri fossi
> a tempo ad honorare il maggior duce,
> quivi tutti lasciai confusi, et meco
> mi porto sol l'amaro et rio sospetto.[51]

Their faces display indignation, anger, and shame. The captain and count Nestor Martinengo predict that the Ottoman leader will break his word, and that he will find a way to blame the Catholics for it: "Havrà troppo 'l fellone (ove non sia / chi contradica) per coprir suo errore / pronte menzogne, et per far sopra noi / cader di sua perfidia ingiusta colpa. / Né ciò difficil sia, poiché mai turco / di rotta fé non sente alcun rimorso."[52]

51 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, II.2, 11v-12r.

52 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, III.2, 25v.

The Catholic leaders are received kindly, but "con finti / cori et aspetti simulati et falsi".[53] As in Mondella's *Isifile*, what follows is evidently premeditated. The *bassà* accepts the keys from Bragadin and treats them with fake kindness, as an eyewitness tells Nestor and the choir of *cittadini famagostani*. Mustafà starts to praise the Christians, but then seems to feel that he has said too much, as the messenger reports:

> Poscia l'empio
> qual huom fermossi, in cui repente cade
> novo, et grave pensier di cose grandi:
> forse pentito d'haver troppo detto.
> Né potendo soffrir nel cor maligno
> il mordace velen tutto infiammosi
> con occhio torvo, et fiero sguardo intorno
> mirando.[54]

He accuses Bragadin of being disloyal towards the Ottomans, and of having secretly killed his men. The *bassà* becomes agitated, his eyes are like lightning bolts, and saliva runs from his mouth like a ferocious mastiff:

> Via più turbossi, anzi (*se pur non finse*)
> ch'avampasse in quel punto in faccia parve
> l'empio tiranno a quel parlar verace,
> che sembrar gli occhi suoi folgori ardenti.
> Et con bavosa bocca, qual per rabbia
> suole mostrar talhor mastin feroce,
> gridò, ma'l gran furor le sue parole
> rompeva sì, ch'a pena erano intese.[55]

The *messo* tells Nestor and the choir that the Venetian leaders were killed off one by one. They gave edifying speeches like true Catholic martyrs. But the messenger asks himself whether Mustafà was faking his anxiety and anger ("se pur non finse"). As if the increasing doubts that the *famagostani* feel were not already enough, a *nobile famagostano* declares that Mustafà is intent on removing Bragadino anyway: "Nel suo cor doppio et maligno / arda 'l furor (se pur v'arse giamai) / contra quel

53 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, III.3, 28v.

54 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, III.3, 28v-29r.

55 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, III.3, 29r-v.

innocente et pio signore." Being asked by the choir "oimè, hai dunque opinione / ch'accecato 'l bassà non sia da l'ira?", he replies:

> Da lui poco lontan nel padiglione
> (che è fatto albergo d'ogni vitio rio)
> sedea, quando avampò *di falso zelo*.
> *A me sembrò ch'a se facesse sforzo*
> *di mostrarsi per rabbia furibondo:*
> *che pria sapemmo, ch'ei volea tradirci*.
> S'era da l'ira superato et vinto,
> sopportar non potea (com'egli fece)
> l'acre parole, e ingiuriosi detti
> di que' signori in sua presenza morti.
> Ben verso 'l fin lor giuste querele
> (che nullo tacque) impatiente alquanto
> mostrossi, né però tanto che l'ira
> lo spingesse a dar morte al sommo duce:
> dal che giamai non si saria frenato
> se 'n lui poteva il subito furore.[56]

It seems to the nobleman from Famagusta that Mustafà was making an effort to show that he was irate. If the *bassà* had truly been beside himself with anger, he would not have been able to abstain from killing Bragadin. The *nobile* concludes that the lesson to be learned is to be prudent at all times.

Apart from offering this lesson to the reader and/or spectator of the tragedy, Fuligni presents a Machiavellian-style prince who simulates to obtain his goals. Mustafà has to justify why he has broken his oath to the Catholics: he had promised that they would all get out alive, while he had already decided that they wouldn't. The general's *simulazione* is underlined multiple times. The *messo* wonders whether Mustafà's anxiety and anger are real; the *nobile* suspects that he had already been intent on killing Bragadin; and the *choro*'s question on whether the nobleman does not believe that Mustafà is truly blinded by rage triply underscore his falseness.

In chapter XVIII of his *Principe*, which asks the question how rulers should keep their word, Machiavelli states that those princes who are shrewd have the edge over other leaders. Because human beings are intrinsically malicious, it is necessary to use both force and astuteness. Rulers should be both strong like lions and cunning like foxes: "Ma è necessario questa natura saperla bene colorire ed

56 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, IV.1, 36r-v.

essere gran *simulatore e dissimulatore*".[57] *Dissimulazione* is the art which masks the truth, and views on dissimulation were developed regarding political thought and the courts, good manners, moral philosophy, or religious dissent.[58] Machiavelli continues that:

> A uno principe adunque non è necessario avere in fatto tutte le soprascritte qualità, ma è bene necessario parere di averle; anzi ardirò di dire questo: che, avendole e osservandole sopre, sono dannose, e, parendo di averle, sono utili; come parere piatoso [*sic*], fedele, umano, intero, religioso, ed essere: ma stare in modo edificato con lo animo che, bisognando non essere, tu possa e sappia diventare il contrario. E hassi a intendere questo, che uno principe e massime uno principe nuovo non può osservare tutte quelle cose per le quali gli uomini sono chiamati buoni, sendo spesso necessitato, per mantenere lo stato, operare contro alla fede, contro alla carità, contro alla umanità, contro alla religione. E però bisogna che egli abbia uno animo disposto a volgersi secondo che e' venti della fortuna e la variazione delle cose gli comandano; e, come di sopra dissi, non partirsi dal bene, potendo, ma sapere entrare nel male, necessitato.
> Debba adunque uno principe avere gran cura che non gli esca mai di bocca cosa che non sia piena delle soprascritte cinque qualità; e paia, a udirlo e vederlo, tutto pietà, tutto fede, tutto integrità, tutto umanità, tutto religione: e non è cosa più necessaria a parere di avere, che questa ultima qualità.[59]

According to this passage, a prince should *seem* to possess qualities such as humanity, religiousness, faithfulness, or mercy, but he must often not act on these principles to preserve his state and position. A ruler should act according to the events that present themselves, which may also mean that he must behave wickedly when necessary. A leader must, therefore, only utter words that testify to his possessing positive qualities. Fuligni's general Mustafà acts on this advice: he masks his intentions and behaves cruelly when necessary. The only difference is that he is not forced by circumstances like Mondella's and Giusti's leaders. He decides to dissimulate his true feelings to fulfil his own goals and desires.

In summary, while in Barbaro's *Tragedia* the sultan is a menacing background figure, who is not afraid to ruin his own messenger to obtain his goals, in the other tragedies the sultans or army leaders occupy more vivid roles. They assume monstrous physical traits when they are enraged. It is not unusual that a tyrant or

57 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe*, ed. Giorgio Inglese (Torino: Einaudi, 1995), 117.

58 Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 19.

59 Machiavelli, *Il principe*, 118-19.


AGA

king is represented as a cruel usurper. A tyrant is often portrayed as harsh, unjust, or diabolical.

However, the actions of the different sultans and army leaders influence not only how the Venetians perceived what happened in Cyprus, but also how the 1573 peace was registered in people's cultural memory. Fuligni's characterisation of Mustafà might indicate that he condemned the 1573 peace; the fault of the slaughter is entirely the *bassà*'s, so the Ottoman comes across as an evil figure. He is even so sly as to purposefully simulate that he is angry while carrying out a rational plan in order to break his oath and murder his enemies.

Mondella and Giusti, on the other hand, in 1579 and 1585, were more prudent. In both *Isifile* and *Irene*, the enemy leader is not to blame for killing off the Catholics. In Giusti's *Irene*, king Zalamosso misinterprets the actions of Iti and murders everyone. His hand was forced because of Iti's attempted suicide. In Mondella's *Isifile*, by contrast, Giunone is certain that, without a push in the right direction by her infernal furies, the general Mustafà would not have broken his oath. To Mondella and Giusti, perhaps, the 1573 peace was more acceptable, or they had to adapt their story to make it more acceptable, while with Fuligni there was more space for critical reflection regarding the events and Venetian policy. The *bassà*'s premeditation makes Fuligni's Ottoman army leader the most malevolent character, while only *Isifile*'s Mustafà seems hardly to have any blame. In what follows, we shall see that these conclusions can be nuanced when we also consider military leaders.

3.2 THE MILITARY LEADER AS A POLITICAL MIND OR COMIC LAUGHINGSTOCK

In Bragadin's *Fuligni*, more than one Ottoman is critical of Mustafà's decision to eradicate the Venetian Catholics. In a private audience (IV.3), the *agà de' giannizzeri* tells Mustafà that his actions are not unforgivable in a situation of war, and that many would still forgive him breaking his oath since he – the *agà* seems to be fooled as well – in his 'honest' anger did not have Bragadin and Tiepolo killed. The *agà* reminds him that, since word has spread about a *Santa Lega* against the Ottomans, and since they are not invincible, it would be wise to keep the common good in mind.

> IMAGE 35 – Christoph Krieger, *Agà*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-359

But the *bassà* calls his officer a backsliding coward, who cannot praise what has occurred like everyone else does. If the great sultan Selim himself can break his promises, why shouldn't Mustafà? If the

agà is not blinded by pity or love for the Christians, why should he talk like this? The *agà* says Mustafà is mistaken: he has no particular love for the Christians. He only urges the *bassà* to consider the consequences of his actions. But Mustafà is very clear:

> Non più parole, agà, non più, che 'l vento,
> senza altrui pro, seco le porta tutta.
> Sia pur sentenza giusta o ingiusta, voglio
> (m'acquisti honore, o biasmo) ch'egli moia.
> Ma ben per amor tuo, s'egli sopporta
> l'acre parole mie, ch'io non mi posso
> frenar, che non isfoghi il cor, che rode
> rabbia, et lacera l'alma, et mi consuma:
> gli scemerò non poco de la pena,
> c'ho nel petto concetta, ch'egli soffra
> prima che moia, et vo' che moia prima
> che 'l sole oltra l'hesperie si nasconda.[60]

While the *agà* declares to Mustafà that, if "ti cade nel pensiero / (cosa lontana in ver d'ogni ragione) / ch'io turco più de' turchi ami i christiani?",[61] the Ottoman *luogotenente* in Bragadino is concerned with the Catholics. We can see that he feels the importance of respecting his enemy, but is also false and cowardly. When the *luogotenente* first appears on stage, he laments that he is surrounded by "guerriere squadre; / che non sian men di ferro ben armate, / che di giust'ira, et di gran voglia accese / di far sopra di me crudel vendetta."[62] He fears for his life when the Greeks understand that *bassà* Mustafà intends to carry out a massacre:

> Voglio occultar sotto sembianti audaci
> (per non dar più sospetto) il vil timore;
> et da que' greci intenderò se ancora
> s'è del bassà scoperto il tradimento
> che tien celato sotto finta pace.
> Ch'a me non piacque mai, perché so quanto
> la spada tagli in man d'un buon latino
> che si vegga assalito, e intorno stretto
> da finti amici et traditor fallaci.[63]

60 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, IV.3, 44r.
61 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, IV.3, 43r.
62 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, II.3, 14v.
63 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, II.3, 15r.

This passage clearly shows that, contrary to the Ottoman messenger in *Isifile*, who seems not to be aware of his lord's intentions, the *luogotenente* is fully conscious of Mustafà's plans. He wants to save his own life and lies to the *famagostani*. "Do mia fede," he says to them in II.3, "c'hoggi non vi sarà turco molesto".[64] But at the same time, he acts as a mediator between his general Mustafà and Lorenzo Tiepolo, when the latter requests an audience. Towards the Venetian commander, he seems to be sincere:

> Tiepolo, ti vorrei poter col sangue
> servar la vita, ch'è di morte indegna.
> Ma non senza cagion di peggio ancora,
> lasso, temo di te, s'a lui ragioni:
> ch'essendo senza colpa hoggi dannato,
> tu vorrai disputar la causa propria,
> et in tuo danno certo: perch'io bene
> liberi troppo voi latini tutti
> nel favellar conosco. Onde parlando
> con Mustafà, ch'è pien di pazzo sdegno
> et non s'appaga di ragion, né ascolta
> cosa che sia contraria al suo volere,
> per honesta che sia, per giusta et santa.
> Così l'irriterai, che di più acerba
> morte t'aggraverà, c'hor non t'aggrava.[65]

In his final scene too, the *luogotenente* tells Mustafà that he feels obliged to the Catholics for treating him well during his imprisonment, and especially to Tiepolo:

> LUOGOTENENTE. Ond'io per tal prontezza; et perc'hostaggio
> con molta humanità con grand'amore
> veduto sempre fui da tutto loro;
> ma sopra gli altri il Tiepolo far conto
> di me mostrò, come d'ogn'altro turco.
> […]
> Ti prego per l'amor, che m'hai
> (la tua mercé) sì chiaro a prove mille
> mostrato, che dopo quantunque offese
> degni per poco a' suoi flebili accenti

64 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, II.3, 16r.

65 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, V.1, 49v.

prestar benigno le pietose orecchie.
MUSTAFÀ Troppo tu dici 'l ver, ch'io t'ho portato
amore, et per l'amor di molti honori
ti feci, et faccio parte; ancorch'amico
hoggi poco leal meco ti scopri:
Dio pur ringratia, che sol questo frena
l'animo mio sferzato da giust'ira;
che provar non ti faccia quanto importi
dimora in obedire al tuo signore.
Se libertà costui (ch'ogn'un più brama)
non chiede almen vorrà, ch'io 'l lasci in vita,
et io non vo', che 'n alcun modo viva.[66]

Whereas Tiepolo is very human towards the *luogotenente* and can accept his own inevitable death, Mustafà accuses his subordinate of being an "amico / hoggi poco leal meco" and decides to kill Tiepolo so that he cannot avenge what happens in Famagusta. Fuligni contrasts Tiepolo's dignity as a Venetian captain with Mustafà's unrestrained anger and cruelty. Fuligni's *luogotenente* is characterised in a more complex way. He knows that he is lying to the *famagostani*, but he is sincere towards Tiepolo. This can perhaps be explained because, in II.3, he talks to normal citizens, whereas noble military leaders are expected to show each other due respect. But the *luogotenente* is not simply showing the Venetian a courtesy: he is sincerely emotionally involved in Tiepolo's fate, who had previously kept him hostage with the utmost respect.

In *Bragadino*, Fuligni's *agà* and *luogotenente* are much more politically versed. The *agà* clearly sees the catastrophe that awaits Mustafà: he warns his lord that a Catholic fleet is gathering, and that he still has time to reconsider his decision. As in all of these plays, Fuligni evokes the image of Lepanto, in which the Venetians carried out revenge on the Ottomans. The lieutenant is portrayed both as a lying coward who wishes to save his own skin for the people of Famagusta, but also as someone who knows his code of honour and respects Tiepolo. He even intercedes for him with his master.

These assessments invite re-consideration of the conclusions drawn earlier. Above I considered Fuligni with his *Bragadino* to be the most critical author, and Giusti's *Irene* and Mondella's *Isifile* as less condemning of the sultan. Indeed, in *Isifile*, Mustafà is doubly innocent because he has to be spurred on to declare war twice: by Giunone and her furies, and by the ghost of the old king Evagora. However, we find that Fuligni's *Bragadino* exhibits more depth concerning *all*

66 Fuligni, *Bragadino*, V.2, 51r-v.

Ottoman figures: though his sultan is rather cruel, he strongly humanises the *agà* and the *luogotenente*. The lieutenant is mostly compassionate with his peer, Tiepolo, and to a lesser extent with the regular citizens, whom he fears. But both are politically and diplomatically more cunning characters, who understand the dangers they are facing.

In describing these characters in this way, Fuligni again evokes the image of Lepanto. If the *luogotenente* fears the revenge of the *famagostani*, this is a clear reference to the fact that the Ottomans actually will be defeated in the near future. If the *agà* warns Mustafà that rumours are circulating that a *Santa Lega* is gathering, he clearly means the army that vanquished the Ottomans at Lepanto. Lepanto is thus an ever-returning element throughout the plays of this later period. They not only evoke the pain of the loss of Cyprus and so many heroic Venetian citizens, but also the pride of the Venetians for winning the day at Lepanto, a point which Ireneo Sanesi has also argued.[67] This twofold sensation returns especially in Groto's comedy *Emilia*.

Before concluding this chapter with the complex figure of the soldier characterised in *Emilia*, let us first return to Loredano's comedy *La turca*. Though at first glance the figure of Imerale seems to turn all Ottoman stereotypes upside down, he is, in fact, further proof of the fact that the Ottoman ultimately did not turn out to be a pioneering new potential *tipo fisso* of early modern Italian drama.

In the first scene of this play, the elderly "drais" Imerale, a term which stands for the Ottoman *rais* or military leader, has to try and find his wife Famelica, and (re)conquer her affections. He asks the *hostiero* Forcasso to assist him in return for recompense, a conversation during which they use Turkish interjections such as "brè" and "degh":

> Essendo io tra genti a me per natura nemiche, bisogna che la liberalità mi habbia ad acquistar favore. Se tu sarai diligente mediatore in farmi ricuperare la moglie, questa giornata ti darà tanto di utile, quanto lo trafico della tua arte potrà imborsarti in un anno.[68]

The old *drais* identifies the Catholics in Italy as his natural enemy. But even more than the Italians, Famelica is hostile to his advances. When he talks to Famelica

67 Ireneo Sanesi, *Storia dei generi letterari italiani. La commedia*, vol. 1 (Milan: Casa editrice dottor Francesco Vallardi, 1911), 266-67.

68 Loredano, *La turca*, I.10, 17r.

and attempts to convince Famelica to come back to him, she does not weep on seeing him, as he had assured Forcasso she would.[69]

Their following conversation is not the smoothest. While he claims that she was his wife, she denies it and expresses the wish to return to being Catholic. He demands to know what he has done wrong, and she accuses him of having stolen her from her family at the tender age of ten, an act he claims to have performed out of love. She contends that he first abused her, and then (sexually?) ignored her, making her a "vedova con nome di marito vivo",[70] but he claims this was because of his many duties. She laments that he had her surrounded by guards, whereas according to him the number of slaves was meant to honour her person. She also accuses him of being unable to please her sexually:

IMERALE Sai che l'huomo non può essere continuamente in buona dispositione.

FAMELICA Il non destarti mai al gridar dell'Asera dimostrava la tua dispositione essere incurabile.

IMERALE Dunque sei disposta lasciare un sancazzo ricco per servire un mercatantuccio messinese povero?

FAMELICA Che vale a me il tuo essere ricco, quando la tua robba è inutile a' miei bisogni? Colui che è scarso non è tenuto ricco. Ricco è Masutio, la cui robba è sempre pronta in sodisfarmi, né teme spendere in grosso et farmi le paghe spesse et gagliarde.

IMERALE Apri gli occhi al tuo bene et vieni meco, hora che so il tuo volere, da qui inanti ti tratterò in modo che resterai satisfatta.

FAMELICA Povero pazzo, come credi poter vendere vesciche a me, che son esperta della tua disutilitade. […] Non vedi che hai il piede nella fossa? Riconosciti, et attendi a vivere.

IMERALE O mie fatiche inutili, o passi malamente spesi. Et tu, mal'accorta giovane, come costui sarà di te satio, per la mala vita che proverai all'hora, ti verrà a memoria le amorevolezze d'Imerale che con tanta sollecitudine procurava il tuo bene; onde il pentirti non havendo luoco, ti sarà di continovo al cuore un gravissimo stimulo. Deh occhio mio caro, hor che puoi, provedi alla tua salute, et fa gratia al tuo Imerale, che con le ginocchia chine ti prega, et ti supplica.

FAMELICA Toglimiti davanti, vecchio rimbambito, se non griderò che mi vuoi far forza.[71]

69 Loredano, *La turca*, II.5, 25v.

70 Loredano, *La turca*, II.7, 27r.

71 Loredano, *La turca*, II.6, 27r-27v. Asherah is an ancient Semitic goddess of fertility.

If we look at Famelica's accusations from the standpoint of the stereotypes concerning the Ottomans, these seem to be turned upside-down. Loredano *does* present us with a well-off Ottoman, who is also an abductor of children such as Famelica, whom he then converted against her will. He seems to have established a harem at home. However, he is hardly a lustful predator, something which Famelica very much insists upon.

Thus, apart from the fact that he has travelled west, we can conclude that Imerale is a classic *senex*. He is rich, and thus the victim of the classic money scheme, and he is in love with the young woman but impotent and unable to woo her, though Famelica threatens to call out that he attempted to sexually assault her (*far forza*). On the other hand, the Catholic Masutio, who is Gesualdo's father and therefore should be a classic *vecchio* as well, is – and Famelica underlines this extensively – someone who knows how to please a woman, though he is not rich in terms of money. In the end, Masutio gets the girl. Loredano makes fun of Italian characters like the pedant and servant, but he refrains from ridiculing the older Masutio. The Ottoman Imerale becomes the victim of the comic plot.

4 SOLDIERS AND COMPANY: THE BROKEN MILITARY MAN AND WORRIED FAMILY MEMBERS

In Groto's *Emilia*, the soldier is less of a laughing matter. Besides criticising Venetian society, Groto comments extensively on the war in Cyprus, though his comedy was often viewed as superficial.[72] The ambiguity of *Emilia*, where Ottomans admire and sympathise with the Venetians, has been recognised, as well as the fact that this ambiguity can only exist because the genre is comical.

Gurney and Di Maria both analyse this aspect in detail. Both underline that the comic aspect of *Emilia* ensures that a cathartic effect is created: through the nature of the genre, the audience is able to overlook criticism on Venetian society that is present in the work, and can overcome the memories of brutal warfare – an effect which is also underlined by Lohse. However, their interpretations differ. Di Maria feels that *Emilia* is innovative because it questions its own *verosimiglianza* in an artistic way.

72 See Calore, "Le commedie di Luigi Groto"; Edoardo Simonato, "Le commedie di Luigi Groto. Questioni di datazione, rapporto con le fonti latine e volgari," *Studi Giraldiani. Letteratura e Teatro* 6 (2020): 141-80; Lohse, "L'immagine degli ottomani nelle commedie e tragedie italiane del Cinquecento"; Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 165. For a more extensive *status quaestionis*, see Lies Verbaere, "La complessità del turco nell'*Emilia* (1579) di Luigi Groto," in *Atti del XXV Congresso Adi. Scenari del conflitto e impegno civile nella letteratura italiana*, 2024.

Gurney, on the other hand, underlines the political intentions of the author: the Ottoman characters' praise of the Venetians show the audience that even the Ottomans acknowledged the heroism which the Venetians had shown in Cyprus, and thus the bitter aftertaste of defeat was mitigated. To Gurney, the *j'accuse* of the prologue, which tells us that everything the audience will see is fiction, is only a ruse Groto uses to conceal himself in case that the spectators remained perplex or failed to grasp his patriotic message.

To Di Maria, on the contrary, it is exactly Groto's intention to make his audience sceptical regarding the staged action, while it is confronted with a distressing and painful past, and this in a realistic way. Notwithstanding the fact that the characters all identify as Ottomans, Di Maria's analysis clearly confirms that the comedy actually stages Venetian society and culture – a reality that evidently interested his audience a great deal more than the fictional context of Istanbul.[73]

Already in *Emilia*'s prologue, a curious position is taken with regard to the Ottoman. Groto immediately establishes an ambiguity that will be felt throughout the work:

> Signori spettator questa comedia
> è finta, et essi per vera la narrano.
> […]
> Ma per Dio udite questa e poi signatevi:
> vogliono darvi questi pazzi a intendere
> che questa scena sia Constantinopoli.
> E che turchi sian tutti quei che parlano,
> ma ne la lingua che s'usa in Italia.
> E voi siate fra i turchi.
> […]
> Fan che in Hadria sia Constantinopoli,
> città che 'n sé terrebbe cinquant'Hadrie.
> […]
> Una più grossa pensan di cacciarvene:
> c'habbia l'auttore un nuovo privilegio
> di far, che addietro i mesi, e gli anni tornino,
> e c'hor sia quando i turchi entraro e presero
> Nicosia in Cipri. Che baie da ridere.[74]

73 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*"; and Gurney, "Echoes of Wartime in Late Sixteenth-Century Italian Comedy". This article draws on Gurney's chapter "Wartime Echoes in the Comedies of Luigi Groto and Giambattista Della Porta" from her doctoral thesis: "Slavery, Subalternity, Empire. Performing the Multicultural Mediterranean in Italian Comedy."

74 Groto, *Emilia*, prologue, 1v-2v.

On the one hand, the prologue explains that the work is set in the Orient during the war of Cyprus, i.e. in Ottoman territory. On the other hand, this objects to the Aristotelian precept of *verosimiglianza*. Rather than trying to make the action credible, Groto declares that whoever tries to make the audience believe in the reality of the mise-en-scène is insane – be it in the place (Istanbul rather than Adria), time (1571 rather than 1579), and characters (Ottomans and women rather than white Catholic male actors impersonating them). He himself and the actors are, therefore, "pazzi". For if there were truly Ottomans on stage, he warns the women, invoking the stereotype of the libidinous Ottoman, "voi altre femine / stareste fresche. Il prencipe grandissimo / de' turchi fa cercar con diligentia, / e per terra e per mar, tutte le giovani / belle".[75]

If this description of the Ottoman leads one to presume that the 'other' that Groto will propose will be a wicked abductor of the *bel sesso* or merely a comic Fata Morgana, the reality of the text is more complicated. *Emilia* leaves room for a complex image of the Ottoman. The ambiguity around his character is immediately clear when the young *innamorato* Polipo, newly returned home to Istanbul from the siege of Nicosia, talks of the Venetian valour to his friend Neofilo:

NEOFILO Dunque non la virtù vostra, ma il numero
ha vinto Nicosia. POLIPO Sì, a dirlo libera.
Mentre tra noi, dove però stia tacito,
che se fossimo stati pari, o fossimo
stati solo i tre quarti più, possibile
non era certo (a mio parer) di prenderla.
Ma per ciascun di lor, nel nostro essercito,
n'erano diece. NEOFILO […] Ma che si giudica
di Famagosta? POLIPO Si tien per fermissimo
che la città, di sito e mura debole,
per quei che ha dentro non si possa prendere,
se non per tradimento o per assedio.
E quei di dentro non sian per arrendersi
fin c'habbiano tra lor pan, palle, e polvere.
NEOFILO E chi son quei di dentro? POLIPO Marc'Antonio
Bragadin v'è signor per la Republica:
gentil'huom veramente di grand'animo,
d'alto consiglio, e amor verso la patria.

75 Groto, *Emilia*, prologue, 1v-2v.


Giannizzero
Soldato

> NEOFILO Se starà pertinace, risolvendosi
> il signor di voler la città, il povero
> huom vi potria lasciar la pelle.[76]

Curiously, though they identify as Ottomans, the two friends then start to list the famous Catholics that defend the city. They exaggerate the city's weak state in order to establish, as if in a 'mirror game', the military and psychological resilience of the defenders of Famagusta (the 'self' as seen from a Venetian perspective). Again, Venetian eminence is in focus.

However, if we analyse them as Ottomans, these two 'others' hardly seem wicked towards the Venetians. They do treat the Famagusta tragedy with sarcasm by saying that Bragadin "vi potria lasciar la pelle". As Ireneo Sanesi states,

> piace udire in [*Emilia*] esaltata la virtù di Venezia gloriosamente sconfitta […] dalla bocca de' suoi stessi nemici. […] I grandi nomi e le grandi gesta della Serenissima, che il gramo poeta rievocò sulla scena, spensero certo sulle labbra degli spettatori il sorriso ma accesero nelle loro anime un'ardente fiamma di entusiasmo e li fece vibrare di altera e austera commozione.[77]

Perhaps this humour was only acceptable because an Ottoman uttered it, since the quip is raw to a Venetian audience that had only recently seen Ottoman atrocities. However, the tone of the scene is clearly pro-Venetian, and will certainly have made the Venetians in the audience, or the Venetian readers of the play, 'feel Venetian'.

But Groto is also particularly attentive to the sufferings of the enemy. We might consider this attention to the Ottoman to be strange since the audience/reader is Venetian, but if the Ottoman really *is* the Venetian, as Di Maria claims, this reflection on the effects of the war is also a way to induce introspection in Groto's audience. We see these considerations around the psychological effects of the war on the soldier clearly in II.3, when the servant Chrisoforo encounters Polipo's other servant, Tropio, who has just returned from the siege at Nicosia together with his young master. The Ottoman servant enters the scene alone, talking to himself and describing his anguish over the war. When Chrisoforo starts talking to him, Tropio describes his distress:

> IMAGE 36 – Christoph Krieger, *Giannizzero soldato*, 1598, woodcut, 125 x 167 mm, from: Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri* (Venice: Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1598) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BI-1938-0066-366

76 Groto, *Emilia*, II.4, 27v-28r.

77 Sanesi, *Storia dei generi letterari italiani*, 1:266-67.

TROPIO. Io son pur giunto a casa. Non mi rompono
già più la testa i tamburi, gli scoppii,
le artigliarie, le trombette, e le naccare.
Giacerò pure in letto, e starò a tavola
a mio piacer. Non havea pure spatio
di stuzzicarmi le orecchie, né commodo
tal'hor di far quel ch'era necessario.
[…]
CHRISOFORO. […] Ma tu Tropio
sei stato infermo, o confinato in carcere?
Hai una mala ciera, una certa aria
di traditor. Non voglio farti ingiuria,
vo' dire che sei mal disposto. TROPIO. Che credi tu
il patir tanto le spesse e terribili
paure fan coteste cose.
[…]
CHRISOFORO. È bello stare in Cipri? […]
E la polve di Cipri è buona? […] TROPIO. Guardime-
ne Dio. Dove ella ti giunge in perpetuo
ti lascia il segno, o mortale o incurabile.[78]

Even if Groto makes fun of Tropio's drowsiness and gluttony, whims that suit a comic servant more than they do a soldier, there is room for a deeper psychological examination of the military man. As Di Maria makes clear, these topics are not treated in Groto's source *Epidicus*.[79]

They are certainly not usually found in *innamorati* or *servi*, who more often than not run around declaring their (pangs of) love, designing schemes and craving food. Tropio not only narrates the noise of guns and drums. He also has a "mala ciera" because he had been troubled by "le spesse e terribili / paure" and had feared that he would be wounded or killed by the bullets flying past his ears.

The protagonists in Istanbul were afraid during the war, but they also feared that they will share the pitiful fate of the Venetians. In II.6, Fronesio, the old Ottoman Polidoro's friend, talks to Chrisoforo about the war:

CHRISOFORO Mentr'io ritorno, eccoti
i soldati che a schiere, a schiere, arrivano,
carchi di prede e d'armi, e maschi e femine

78 Groto, *Emilia*, II.3, 25r-26v.

79 Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*," 88-90.

conducon per ischiavi, e tutte ingombrano
le vie e le piazze di Costantinopoli
con gran pietà di quella infelice isola.
FRONESIO Quel che è avvenuto a Cipri a noi può simile-
mente avvenir, però debbiam dolersene.[80]

Chrisoforo describes – with compassion – the entrance of the captured Venetians from "quella infelice isola" in the city, a sequence in which the author also stereotypically points out the riches of the Ottomans, obtained at the hands of the Catholics. However, Fronesio reminds Chrisoforo that the Ottomans could suffer the same fate. This has indeed already happened when Groto wrote the work; the Catholics had obtained victory at Lepanto.

The triumph of Lepanto appears once more in Venetian 'Turkish drama', and for the Venetian receiver of the message this is a clearly chauvinistic hint at the God-willed revenge that had been obtained after the public trauma of the fall of Cyprus.

The Ottomans do more than express their sympathy for the Catholics, which makes them sympathetic 'others' if we consider them to be purely Ottomans and not Ottomans who represent Venetians. Their complexity as dramatic figures is also shown by the fact that they do not always agree on the war's outcome. In I.1, Chrisoforo's enthusiasm is opposed to his old master's fear. Whoever will win the war, Polidoro fears that he will lose his former lover and one of his children, and is therefore not in high spirits like his servant:

POLIDORO Non vuoi ch'io senta affanno nello intendere
la presa e la ruina crudelissima
di Nicosia? CHRISOFORO Dovreste anzi allegrarvene
poiché l'han presa i nostri. POLIDORO Hor non consideri
ch'io havea dentro, e di fuor, pegni carissimi?
Di fuora il figlio andatovi a mia istantia
solo, e per mia cagion, che potrebb'esservi
morto tra tanti nostri che si dicono
essere stati uccisi in quell'assedio.
Poiché fin'hora non ne posso intendere
novella alcuna. Havea poi dentro l'unica
mia figlia, che in quel sacco, in quel disordine,
Dio sa che sorte, Dio sa che ricapito,
havrà havuto la vita e l'honor massima-

80 Groto, *Emilia*, II.6, 34v-35r.

> mente di lei. V'era poi ancho Lucida
> sua madre, de' cui danni io così tenero
> sono, e debb'esser, come de' miei proprii.
> E però quando i nostri combattevano
> quella cittade, io non sapea risolvermi
> s'io desiassi più tosto la perdita
> a l'armata turchesca, o la vittoria:
> perché perdendo, i' potea il figlio perdere;
> vincendo, la figliuola iva a pericolo.
> Così da questi pensieri il mio animo
> era più combattuto, che la propria
> città di Nicosia dai nostri esserciti.[81]

The old Ottoman is unsure whether to support the Ottoman cause to conquer and convert the Catholics. His fear of losing his children and his old flame is truly universal. The contrasts which Groto draws in the cited passages perfectly reflect the inconsistencies of the prologue. When the Ottomans speak, their *battute* always reflect a certain 'Venetian-ness'. While the Ottomans have compassion for the Catholics, and fear being on the losing side of the conflict, their dialogues remind the audience of the pain and pride which the Venetians feel and have felt regarding the case of Cyprus.

In Groto, we may either assume that the Ottoman really is a Venetian or take the prologue to heart which states that everything we will see is fiction. Groto's humanising portrayal of the Ottoman may be the result of his actually wanting to represent the Venetian 'self', or his manipulation of the comic genre, which ensures that the enemy can be portrayed in an airy way.

Although Groto's comedy praises the Venetians and thematises the cruel loss of Cyprus, taking a pro-Venetian standpoint, the Ottoman is clearly portrayed as an ambivalent and complex figure. True to the ruling stereotypes, he abducts women and is rich. But Groto looks beyond the stereotype. The Ottoman is also cowardly since he fears that the next battle will be lost, and he suffers just as much because of the war as the Catholics do. He feels compassionately about the Venetians, whose fate he is afraid to share, and he truly admires them.

At the same time, the fear of the Ottomans acts as a mirror for the fate that will await them later: the cruelties of Nicosia and Famagusta would be avenged at Lepanto, and their admiration for the Venetians makes the Venetian reader and spectator, as Gurney argues, feel his own Venetian identity.

81 Groto, *Emilia*, II.6, 3v-4r.

While both Loredano and Groto play with the Ottoman stereotypes, Loredano's *drais* Imerale in the end remains a classic *anziano*. In this way, the enemy figure of the Ottoman can be made fun of: he is insulted by his wife for being niggardly, impotent and an abductor. When Famelica makes a joke of Imerale, he becomes the black sheep of the comedy, while a father like Masutio, by contrast, moves slightly more away from the traditional stock character. Groto alludes to the lustfulness and wealth of the Ottomans, but below the comic surface he explores the tensions and fears that war engenders.

This means going beyond the classical attributes of the comic characters. This exploration enables Groto to explore anxious sensations that the Venetians have felt themselves in uncertain times of the wars with the Ottomans, and, by scrutinizing these feelings through the figure of the Ottoman 'other', the Venetian public or reader can feel safe. At the same time, it allows for Groto to praise the Venetians through the Ottomans, and for him, and 'Turkish drama' in general, to refer to Lepanto, that canonical victory after which the real Ottoman could do no more harm.

To conclude this chapter, in the tragic works the main figures of analysis are the sultans, military leaders, soldiers, and messengers. Apart from the soldier messengers in *Isifile* and in the *Tragedia*, who feel for the vanquished suffering citizens and queens, the *messi* are insensitive providers of news.

The Ottoman sultan or king is absent in *Tragedia*, *Bragadino* and *Isifile*, and his actions and those of the army leader that replaces him when he is not a character, are only recounted by messengers. In the *Tragedia*, the sultan's silence and menacing presence in the background reflects real diplomatic practice in a life-like way. In *Bragadino*, *Irene* and *Isifile*, however, the sultan or his replacement reveal themselves to be monstrous tyrants. The captains who collaborate with the general have more political insight and try to persuade their lord not to make mistakes, which will ultimately lead to the Ottoman defeat at Lepanto. In the comedy *La turca*, Imerale is a captain with the traits of the standard *anziano*: he is rich, impotent, and in love with a young courtesan-figure, but he also travels and abducts women.

While these figures are not so far off from the normal tyrant, captain, or messenger, or from the comic captain, *innamorato*, *servo*, or father, Imerale and others are more original than some characters and capture aspects of the public perceptions of Ottomans. *Bragadino*'s Mustafà is characterised as a Machiavellian tyrant, which adds an early modern touch to the classical figure. *Emilia*'s soldiers, the lover Polipo and his servant Tropio, recount the horrors they have suffered, as do the father Polidoro and young Neofilo. These plays all seem to be concerned with showing their audience the importance of Lepanto, representing it as a moment of vengeance for the trauma of the war of Cyprus. Many a time



> IMAGE 37 – Portrait of the actor Francesco Andreini as Capitan Spavento, the comic *commedia dell'arte* captain – Justus Sustermans (attr.), *Portrait of Francesco Andreini dressed as captain*, early seventeenth century, oil on canvas, 125 x 200 cm – © Château de Villandry, collezione Carvalho, now lost (scan from Ferrone, *La Commedia dell'arte*, 2014)

the military 'Turk' is a ferocious infernal monster, while 'Venetian' strength and identity are strongly in focus. Specifically, the authors of *Isifile* and *Irene* appear to have tried to make 1593 more acceptable, whereas, when Fuligni publishes his *Bragadino*, the climate has possibly changed and critiques about the Ottoman had become more acceptable. In his *Emilia*, Groto significantly explores the tensions and traumas of the war, while holding up Lepanto as a mirror to show the Venetians that, in the end, all will be all right.


Sol.
Al.
Des.
Giaf

CONCLUSIONS

In sixteenth-century Italy, during a period in which the pivotal battle of Lepanto took place which changed Western perceptions of the Ottomans, several authors hailing from the cosmopolitan major book centre of Venice were inspired to write plays which put Ottoman characters or Catholics posing as 'Turks' on stage. It is safe to say that the Venetians kickstarted this genre, perhaps being the first state in all of Europe to do so: they were the quasi-sole producers of 'Turkish plays' in Cinquecento Italy, and there were only two non-Venetian sixteenth-century plays related to the Ottoman subject, one of which did not even stage Ottomans. This thesis has attempted to examine how the 'Turk' was represented in this pioneering set of plays, and how his characterization was shaped in relation to classical literary models.

To do so, *"Friend" or "Infernal Monster"? Comic and Tragic Representations of the Ottomans in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Theatre* has sought answers to four research questions. How did the sixteenth-century Venetians perceive the Ottoman character and dress, and how were these typical traits inserted into Venetian drama? How does the dramatic Ottoman relate to the comic and tragic roles that distinguish early modern drama? Do the plays emphasise elements of performance regarding the Ottoman, and, if so, which features are highlighted? Finally, is it possible to detect a certain 'Venetian' identity, or messages directed specifically at the Venetians, through the portrayal of Ottomans and Catholics in Venetian 'Turkish theatre'?

> IMAGE 38 – The female character Despina and the sultan Solimano occupy the centre-stage in Jacques Callot's illustration for the fourth act of the tragedy *Il Solimano* by Prospero Bonarelli (Florence: Pietro Cecconcelli, 1620) – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-5794

In the first chapter, the Venetian dealings with and perceptions of the Ottoman were discussed. Though in the 1530s and 1570s Venice participated in military campaigns to defend its maritime territories, losing in 1538 at Preveza but obtaining a costly victory at Lepanto in 1571, the *Serenissima* steered its own course. Venice was always careful to keep the peace with the Ottomans: it needed the Ottoman Empire to ensure its own trade and wealth. Scholars have identified 1571 and the battle

of Lepanto as a crucial chapter in Venetian perceptions of the Ottomans. I have established that Lepanto was crucial for the Venetian dramatic production, too. After 1571, the Ottoman becomes a central figure on the Venetian stage.

To answer the question whether the Ottoman inherited prevalent Venetian ideas on his character and dress, the first and second chapter analysed Ottoman figures, behaviour, stereotypes and spectacular representations. In the first chapter, I examined a pan-Mediterranean social network in which Catholic and Islamic diplomats, translators, merchants, travellers, converts, and border residents, both male and female, interacted with one another. I also charted the evolution of Ottoman stereotypes: by the sixteenth century, the Ottoman was seen as a barbarous and violent follower of the wrong religion. The Ottomans were lustful and wealthy, and their sultan was a powerful tyrant.

In Venice, Pedani has asserted that polemic were pragmatically avoided since the Venetians needed the Ottomans. Knowledge of the Ottomans circulated in informative works, literary works, and books containing graphic images. We find, for example, praise for the Ottomans and their well-organised, peaceful society, praise of the sultan as a skilled military leader, but also heroic stories of warfare, and some people even destroyed portraits of the sultan out of hatred. Though the Mediterranean region was 'permeable', paradoxically these books are filled with negative perceptions. Preto has argued that the lower classes were influenced by hateful messages, found, for example, in *avvisi* or sermons, while the patricians were intellectually better prepared to develop more nuanced views. But the populace's knowledge did not derive from seeing or encountering the odd diplomat or merchant: rather, public spectacles and processions shaped the idea of the Ottoman that the regular Venetian had.

Such public spectacles and processions were, as I discussed in the second chapter, highly stereotypical. They focused on the military opposition between Christians and Muslims, and on the physical othering of the Ottoman. The 'Turk' appeared as a military practice target or a combatant in tournaments, as an enslaved soldier in parades, or as a soldier, slave or pirate in courtly ballets and *moresche* dances. He was also represented allegorically as a serpent, hydra, dragon, the inimical biblical Babylonian general Holofernes or the mythical boatsman of the dead, Charon. The men often donned black moustaches, weapons, and Oriental clothing and accessories such as turbans. They are painted black while the women are fair-haired and pale-skinned. The Ottomans are also 'othered' by using certain gestures or by uttering strange speech and accents.

In drama, the 'other' was a familiar character-type in comedy from ancient times, be it in the form of a eunuch, a Persian or Arab prisoner, a foreigner in disguise, or a Carthaginian who speaks his own language. In tragedy, Aeschylus' *Persai* presents us with a cast of entirely Persian protagonists who have lost the war

against the Athenians. In the Early Modern Period, theoretical treatises focus on the fact that the exotic 'other' in theatre, and the use of foreign languages on stage, instil wonder, admiration, and pleasure in the audience, which is focused on the dramatic action. The importance of life-like dress is only underlined by the end of the century by Ingegneri. The only theoretical author who explicitly mentions the Ottoman is Trissino. He says that on stage the 'Turk' should be arrogant, ignorant, immoral, and murderous. To imitate someone, the physical posture and voice are important, and, to play a Moor or Saracen specifically, one should paint one's face black.

Such practices were used to stage Ottomans. Objects like caftans, scimitars, flags with the Islamic crescent, and especially turbans, denoted the Ottoman, as well as exotic clothing and accessories like feathers, jewellery, or slaves' chains. Scenery and foreign music provided a foreign atmosphere, and 'Turkish theatre' even provided realistic Turkish text for its characters. Therefore, all performative elements for 'othering' the Ottoman were present in early modern Italian drama: dress and make-up, gestures, accents and language.

To examine whether this way of 'othering' appears in Venetian drama, which dramatic roles the Ottoman performed in it, how he is portrayed on stage, and whether the Venetian 'Turkish theatre' has any 'chauvinistic' specificity, I examined eight comedies and four tragedies. These all contained Italian characters who disguised themselves as Ottomans or who were actual Ottoman characters, and the works were published between 1542 and 1589, all by authors from the Venetian Republic. The chosen corpus and its authors are described in the third chapter. Many of the authors were connected to one another, and some were even interested in the Ottoman subject throughout their literary career. In Aretino's *Talanta* (1542), Dolce's *Fabritia* (1549), and Calmo's *Rodiana* (1553) and *Il Travaglia* (1556), the Ottoman is a minor presence. However, in Barbaro's *Tragedia* (1541-1548), Giusti's *Irene* (1579), Groto's *Emilia* (1579), Mondella's *Isifile* (1582), Calderari's *La mora* (1588) and *La schiava* (1589), Fuligni's *Bragadino* (1589), and Loredano's *La turca* (1597), the Ottoman theme takes on a greater role and the Ottoman takes centre stage. They focus on social themes such as diplomacy, slavery, warfare, lust, martyrdom, and conversion.

For each play, I noted whether any information can be deduced from authors' biographies or from the early modern printed texts which tells us whether the plays were staged or whether the authors considered the theoretical implications of staging the 'Turk'. While some information about the plays' first and later performances is available, there is little evidence that the authors engaged in theoretically informed reflection. None of these authors appear to theoretically contemplate the 'other', or the Ottoman specifically, in his paratexts. However, it is clear that the 'Turkish theme' does not leave them unaffected, since their writings address the issues mentioned above, which in the Cinquecento context were more

than pressing. Groto, Calderari, Giusti, and Fuligni's prologues and dedicatory letters carve out a very limited space for considerations on the Ottomans, and Fuligni ponders quite extensively on the 'Turkish barbarity'.

In the fourth and fifth chapters I explored the above-mentioned themes, focusing on the four focal points of my research: stereotypes, dramatic roles, performance, and 'Venetian' identity. In my corpus, three stereotypes emerged as significant: the cruelty, falseness, and sensuality or lustfulness of the Ottoman. In Dolce's *Fabritia*, Barbaro's *Tragedia*, Mondella's *Isifile*, Giusti's *Irene*, and Fuligni's *Bragadino*, the cruelty of the Ottoman is central. It is rather innocuous in *Fabritia*, when, in a moment of folly, the *vecchio* Atanagio wants to impale people, and in the *Tragedia*, where no-one is killed although the messenger fears his sultan's wrath if queen Isabella will not obey. But in *Isifile*, *Irene*, and *Bragadino*, the sultan or army leader carries out a massacre for various reasons. The falseness of the Ottoman is more central to Groto's *Emilia*, where the Ottoman men treat the women badly; to Calmo's *Il Travaglia*, in which Arpago has abducted his former master's son; to *Isifile*, *Irene*, and *Bragadino*, in which the enemy breaks his promise for peace by slaughtering the vanquished; and to Loredano's *La turca* and Calderari's *La schiava*, which seem to caution the reader about insincere religious conversions.

Loredano's *La turca* and Groto's *Emilia* touch upon the fact that the Ottoman abducts young women, and his sexuality is emphasised in Aretino's *Talanta*, Dolce's *Fabritia*, and Calderari's *La mora*. Through their use of blackface, these three comedies, and especially *La mora*, emphasise the licentiousness of the *innamorati*, who take on the unbridled Moorish and Ottoman lust as they disguise as this 'other'. By dressing up as slave girls, their passion can also be interpreted as a lesbian love because supposed 'women' seduce real women. They cross all boundaries of decency, and can do so because they have become 'others'. At the same time, the beauty of the Ottoman women is emphasised in Loredano's *La turca* and Groto's *Emilia*: all female 'others' correspond to the early modern ideal of Italian beauty, except for Erifila, who describes herself as ugly. The Moorish Fatma is described as monkey-faced, in contrast with Laureno, who, when disguised as the *mora* is praised for his beauty and skill.

My main contention has been that these stereotypes of cruelty, falseness, and eroticism correspond to the conventions of early modern drama. If we look at the standard comic and tragic roles, the major Ottoman characters from my plays are *innamorati*, *innamorate*, courtesans, fathers and merchants, mothers, servants or slaves, tyrants, messengers, military leaders, or soldiers.

The *innamorati* disguise themselves as the 'other' for their own safety during their adventures (*Talanta*) or to reach their beloveds, as in the cases of Lucilla (*Talanta*), Fabritio (*Fabritia*) and Laureno (*La mora*). Only Polipo and Neofilo are concerned with the consequences of the war of Cyprus. The *innamorate* Flavia

and Emilia from Groto's *Emilia* are beautiful, virtuous, and live for love. Flavia joins Chrisoforo's plan to be with Polipo, and suffers when Polipo casts her aside. Emilia would rather drown herself than be raped. Other young women have more in common with the courtesan. Erifila (*Emilia*) sees herself as not very attractive, but like the comic prostitute she is quite despised and crafts a future for herself in which she is maintained by two of her wooers. Teresa (*La schiava*) and Famelica (*La turca*) are good-looking, cunning, and well-versed. Like the courtesan, they each devise a plan to get the happy ending they wish for. But they are redeemed by marriage, like the *meretrices honestae* of whom Mary Magdalen is a prime example.

Polidoro, a merchant, and Fronesio are both Ottoman fathers. But like other comic fathers, they lost track of their children and search for them, are rich, and are in the end reunited with their family. Polidoro is a wealthy, honest tradesman and is not impotent like many *anziani*, but he did impregnate Lucida and abandon her. However, he is a very human character who fears for the lives of his children. The children's mothers, Ahyssa (*La schiava*) and Lucida (*Emilia*), are virtuous women. The servant Chrisoforo is lustful, like any male servant, and like all female servants, Rustica drives him away. The servant Tropio has seen horrors in the war, and the slave Zarut (*La schiava*) converts to become a free man.

In tragedy, the sultan is diplomatic in Barbaro's *Tragedia*, but in *Isifile*, *Irene* and *Bragadino* he becomes an enraged monster. His messengers recount what was too gruesome to be shown on stage, as was the dramatic custom. The military leaders are figures who honour the political logic of war: one should treat one's opponent with respect and be conscious of the consequences of one's actions. In the comedy *La turca*, the *drais* Imerale is a classic *senex*: he is impotent and old. In short, the actions and preoccupations of these characters are typical for comedy and tragedy.

However, this does not mean that the figure of the Ottoman did not undergo a meaningful re-characterisation in these plays, which contributes to the 'othering' of this dramatic character. Zarut, for example, is not a typical scheming servant: central to his character is the longing for freedom, and he converts to be free. In him, we find the easy religious shifting of the period retold.

Another pressing issue to early modern Italian society which appears in the plays is military conflict. Contrary to the typical *innamorato*, *servo* or *anziano*, Polipo, Neofilo and Polidoro express sincere concern for the outcome of the war of Cyprus, and Polipo and his servant Tropio have clearly suffered from trauma from the same conflict. Turkish military leaders could be humanised, but the sultans and army leaders are particularly cruel. In *Isifile* and *Irene* Mustafà's cruelty stems from external causes, but contrary to the standard tyrant he is regarded as a Machiavellian ruler who feigns his anger in order to break the truce.

A specific conception of female beauty is also at stake in these plays. The real 'Turkish' women in the plays are invariably good-looking. While the ideal of the pretty *turca* perfectly ties in with the notion of Turkish men preferring foreign women, as well as with the literary model of the classical beauty of the comic lover and courtesan, it also erases the 'real' Ottoman woman and endows her with a perfect Venetian appearance. The young male lovers are also all extremely attractive and accomplished in their disguise as women, whereas in *La mora* the real Moorish woman is described as monkey-like and are frequently insulted.

When the 'other' is a mask for the 'self' to wear, as is expressed in *La mora*'s performance using staining carbon, the original 'other' is evidently seen as ugly and beastly in comparison. At the same time, this mask is capable of changing the inner 'self'. In Dolce's *Fabritia* and Calderari's *La mora*, blackface profoundly changes the internal being of the protagonist, who has an unbridled sexuality, but Calderari is the only one to profoundly discuss, time and again, how the makeup was applied. Indeed, the typical clothing of the Ottomans is hardly mentioned in the plays themselves, apart from in Mondella's *Isifile*, while the only in-depth exploration of blackface is found in Calderari's *La mora*.

This research has shown that there is hardly any theorical reflection on the Ottoman as a subject of dramatization, that performative elements are practically absent in this corpus of twelve texts, and that the Ottoman characters are not dramatically rewritten in relation to the standard dramatic roles, although some characters are consciously reshaped, apparently with the aim of expressing societal concerns. Although Jaffe-Berg's suggestion that the impressive presence of foreign characters makes them worthy stock characters to be considered next to figures such as the captain, father, or *innamorato*, it seems that the 'other' – in this case, the Ottoman – receives a *colour locale* per se. He is not necessarily shaped differently because he is an 'other'; he is simply part of the comic or tragic plot like all the other characters are.

Based on the size and range of the corpus examined, I conclude that the status of Ottomans or 'Turks' was a 'condition' of their role (captain, father, *innamorato*), but not a determining factor of their 'being'. Therefore, it is necessary to qualify the point that the Ottoman is to a marked extent rewritten in the sixteenth century. More than one author of these plays injects references to Ottoman stereotypes and themes into these characters, although they never completely subvert the 'standard' dramatic figures. This conclusion makes a new insight into the study of these plays, since scholars have previously neglected the study of the 'other' compared to standard early modern dramatic roles and not taken into account such a vast corpus originating from a unitary geographical area.

The question remains whether the authors from the Venetian Republic, in treating social themes which pertained to the figure of the Ottoman, such as

slavery, warfare, martyrdom, and conversion, are simultaneously commenting on the Venetian 'self'.

In *Fabritia* and *La mora* the Moor and Ottoman becomes a sexual predator and same-sex relations are implied. The audience should be wary of becoming so deprived, but at the same time the blame is placed outside society; the 'other' is the perpetrator. In *Emilia*, men and women are warned to be virtuous as well, and Groto, as Di Maria says, criticises the commercial nature of Venetian society. In *La mora*, the Venetians are warned that converts are not necessarily sincere. If the 'self' appears beneath the surface of these plays, it is indeed to show one's own eminence and superiority. In portraying the 'other' as savage and ugly, and in depicting Ottoman women as Western beauties, the virtue and elegance of the female 'self' is highlighted. In describing monstrous enemy military leaders and the Venetian valour at Famagusta, the Venetian diplomatic and military superiority comes to the fore. If in *Emilia*, *Isifile*, *Irene* and *Bragadino*, the message of Lepanto constantly reappears, it is to emphasise the triumph of the *Serenissima*.

We can therefore confirm the original hypothesis that the Ottoman contributed to shaping 'an' image of the Venetian 'self'. Though the memory of the war of Cyprus was certainly painful to Venetians of the time, they would have been proud of their victory at Lepanto. These 'Turkish dramas' continually refer to the future successful outcome. As such, a clear patriotic feeling imbues the plays which were published after 1571, who use the Ottoman characters to spread a patriotic and hopeful message. In this way, early modern Venetian drama is no different from other literary genres of the period which address the 'Turkish question'. It uses the 'other' to talk about the 'self', and it strongly uses generic conventions to shape the figure of the dramatic Ottoman, though at the same time injecting him with a sense of the greatness of the 'self' and, at times, palpable 'otherness'.

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Illustration by Jacques Callot accompanying the third act of Prospero Bonarelli's tragedy *Il Solimano*, printed by Pietro Cecconcelli in Florence in 1620 – © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-5793