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**Infidels and Insecurity: Religious Anxiety
and Elizabethan Perceptions of Islam**

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Infidels and Insecurity: Religious Anxiety and Elizabethan Perceptions of Islam

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Introduction

The subjects of Queen Elizabeth I were, for the most part, unlikely to leave England, unlikely to visit the Mediterranean, and unlikely to encounter Muslims.¹ They did not, however, let this small fact get in the way of passing comment on the Islamic world. A striking example of this is Richard Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, published soon after the Queen's death in 1603.² Over one thousand pages in length, it aimed to educate its audience on the entire history of the Ottomans from 'the first beginning of that nation' to the present day, in addition to the Christian campaigns against them, and the lives of their rulers.³ Knolles described vividly how this 'warlike nation' had 'from a small beginning become the greatest terror in the world', and how their vast empire was built on their style of living, military discipline, and obedience to their rulers.⁴ There is, however, no reason to believe that Knolles ever left England, or met a Muslim. His entire career after leaving Oxford was as headmaster of a grammar school in Kent.⁵ Regardless, Knolles seems to have had no hesitation in offering the new King James I a remedy to the alarming spread of Islam: a united Christian campaign of both Protestants and Catholics against the Ottoman Empire.⁶ Knolles, along with most English people of his time, was more than qualified to speak on Christian dissension. Although most Elizabethans may not have left England, most of them knew Catholics.⁷ Indeed, many

¹ Matthew Dimmock, 'Awareness and Experiences of the Outside World', in *The Elizabethan World*, ed. Susan Doran and Norman Jones, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp.663-679, (p.663).

² *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* was published less than a year after Queen Elizabeth's death, and written during the final years of her reign. Thus, despite the dedication to James I, this dissertation will regard it as an Elizabethan text.

³ Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes...*, (London: n.pub, 1603), p.1., at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 06.04.2017].

⁴ Knolles, p.5.

⁵ Christine Woodhead, 'Knolles, Richard (late 1540s-1610)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.p., at <www.oxforddnb.com>, [last accessed 06.04.2017].

⁶ Knolles, p.4.

⁷ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603*, 2nd edn, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.120.

remained Catholic themselves, or had at least been so earlier in their lives.⁸ Religious upheaval was familiar to the English.

The significance of religion upon Elizabethan perceptions of Muslims and their empires has heretofore not been fully recognised. Historians of early modern Anglo-Islamic exchange have, over the last two decades, focused on a discourse Gerald MacLean has termed 'imperial envy'.⁹ The influence of this interpretation has led to the importance of religion and the Reformation in Elizabethan understandings of Muslims going largely unacknowledged. This dissertation seeks to counter the dominance of the 'imperial envy' position, and to integrate the early modern image of Islam and Islamic empire-building into the religious experience of the late sixteenth century. It will suggest that at the root of Elizabethan beliefs regarding Islam and Islamic empires were religious anxieties originating in the English Reformation. As England slowly became a Protestant nation, those who already identified with the Church of England were plagued by anxieties concerning English and European religion, which had a profound effect on their understanding of both Islam and territorial expansion.

Historiography

In the main, scholars working on the Reformation in England now acknowledge that it continued for some considerable time into the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.¹⁰ The arguments of revisionist historians, notably Eamon Duffy, Christopher Haigh and J.J. Scarisbrick, that the English people were profoundly attached to traditional religion and that the spread of

⁸ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p.164.

⁹ Gerald MacLean, *Looking East; English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.20.

¹⁰ Peter Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 564-586, (p.565).

Protestantism in England was 'slow, piecemeal and painful', have proved influential.¹¹ Even Claire Cross, who has argued that, as persuasive as revisionist writing is, we may be in danger of being too conservative in our understanding of hostility to the Church at the turn of the sixteenth century, has stated that in 1558 the majority of English people were conforming Catholics.¹² Peter Marshall has argued that the English Reformation stretched into the Jacobean period, but that within two generations of the Elizabethan settlement the cultural changes which marked England as a Protestant nation were beginning to take hold; if England was not Protestant in 1558, it was not Catholic in 1580.¹³ Diarmaid MacCulloch described the population of England in 1558 as apathetic, and 'punch-drunk on religious change', presenting the Elizabethan church with the test of turning them into Protestant activists, a challenge they can generally be considered to have met.¹⁴ The sense that by the late 1570s and early 1580s England was Protestant, but only newly so, and following a long and painful struggle, suggests that Elizabethans were deeply insecure regarding the strength of their religion. This sense of anxiety is corroborated by Duffy, who sees the Reformation as a profoundly traumatic break with the medieval past.¹⁵ By the time England's diplomatic and trade links with the Muslim world exploded in the 1580s, the anxiety surrounding religion must have been overpowering.

The concept of tolerance in early modern Europe has recently been explored by Ole Peter Grell, Alexandra Walsham and Benjamin Kaplan.¹⁶ Grell and Kaplan have drawn attention to

¹¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars; Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580*, 2nd edn, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Christopher Haigh, 'Introduction', in *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. Christopher Haigh, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.1-18; J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.16-17.

¹² Claire Cross, *Church and People; England 1450-1660*, 2nd edn, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p.217, p.106.

¹³ Marshall, *Reformation England*, p.164.

¹⁴ MacCulloch, p.113.

¹⁵ Duffy, p.591.

¹⁶ Ole Peter Grell, 'Introduction', in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.1-12; Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred; Tolerance and Intolerance in England 1500-1700*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006);

the importance of the Reformation in the history of tolerance, presenting, as it did, much of Europe with its first experience of religious plurality.¹⁷ This experience does not appear to have been a positive one. Grell and Walsham have argued that tolerance was a ‘loser’s creed’, supported by those who would most benefit from it and abandoned once they acquired power.¹⁸ Walsham has argued that few people distinguished between hostility to an ideology and hostility to those who held it.¹⁹ Moreover, whilst Walsham and Kaplan have argued for the interdependence of tolerance and intolerance for those who lived alongside adherents of other religions, this does not necessarily inform our understanding of the Elizabethan perception of Muslims, as few English people ever met anyone who was not a Christian.²⁰

Although most English people would never have encountered a Muslim, scholars have demonstrated that under Elizabeth I their interest in Muslims exploded. The last twenty years have seen historical work on early modern cultural exchange between England and the Muslim world increase rapidly, mirroring heightened tensions between Islam and the West today. This is explicitly referenced by historians such as Jerry Brotton, and William Dalrymple who proposed that ‘in the aftermath of 9/11’ it is important to understand the history of the relationship between Christianity and Islam.²¹ Prior to 1998 the major authors on the subject were Dorothy Vaughan and Samuel Chew who offered thorough overviews of mercantile, military, and diplomatic exchanges between England and the Muslim states of the

Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith; Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Grell, p.1; Kaplan, p.4.

¹⁸ Grell, p.4; Walsham, p.3.

¹⁹ Walsham, p.21.

²⁰ Walsham, p.5; Kaplan, p.9, Dimmock, p.663.

²¹ Jerry Brotton, *This Orient Isle; Elizabethan England and the Islamic World*, (London: Allen Lane, 2016), p.306; William Dalrymple, ‘The Porous Frontiers of Islam and Christendom; A Clash or Fusion of Civilisations’, in *Re-Orientating the Renaissance; Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. Gerald MacLean, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.ix-xxiii, (p.xi).

Mediterranean, but presented largely chronological accounts and a more simplistic account of English hostility towards Muslims than is the current scholarly approach to the subject.²² More recently, several studies have traced the unprecedented diplomatic and mercantile ties between England and the Muslim world under Elizabeth I. Lisa Jardine has outlined the development of the alliance between Elizabeth and the Ottoman Sultan Murad III, by tracing the correspondence between them.²³ Jerry Brotton has also studied this burgeoning growth in diplomacy and trade with the Islamic world, though his scope was wider, also charting the diplomatic exchange with Morocco including the presence of Moroccan ambassadors in London in 1588 and 1600.²⁴ Brotton also makes use of the evidence of the ever-increasing flow of Eastern goods into England, the increase in dramatic productions with Muslim characters and settings, the growth in the number of sermons referencing the Ottoman threat, and the popularity of histories of the world, in order to demonstrate the extent of Elizabethan exposure to, and fascination with, the Islamic world.²⁵

Alongside scholarship focused on this increased contact with the Islamic world, historians have produced works documenting how English attitudes to the Islamic world were shaped by such cultural exchange. The primary influence on this work is Nabil Matar, who in 1998 published *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*. He argued that it was inappropriate to apply Edward Said's model of Orientalism to Anglo-Islamic relations in the early modern period, as the Islamic world, particularly the Ottoman Empire, was substantially more powerful than

²² Dorothy Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk; A Pattern of Alliances*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954); Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose; Islam and England During the Renaissance*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1965).

²³ Lisa Jardine, 'Gloriana Rules the Waves; or, the Advantage of Being Excommunicated (and a Woman)', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 14 (2004), 209-222.

²⁴ Brotton, p.13.

²⁵ Brotton, p.8.

England.²⁶ Matar proposed that as the English made faulting attempts to establish control in North America and Ireland alongside their unprecedented trade and diplomacy with the Islamic nations of the Mediterranean, English people recognised their political and territorial inferiority.²⁷ This created an English idea of the Islamic world to which they were both repulsed and attracted, exciting Elizabethans to demonise and disparage Islam in order to lessen its attractiveness and create a sense of English power, albeit false.²⁸ Matar also demonstrated the extent of English interest in the Muslim world, and its manifestation in cultural productions such as sermons and plays, permeating all intellectual and social levels from the accession of Elizabeth I to the death of Charles II.²⁹ The influence of this argument is clear. Daniel Viktus has suggested that the Elizabethan period was an age of plunder, not of empire, characterised by failed imperial ambitions and mercantile success in the Mediterranean, and so post-colonial theories cannot be applied to Elizabethans.³⁰ Similarly, Jonathan Burton has argued that Elizabethans held complex opinions regarding Islam, recognising as they did the power and allure of the formidable Muslim states of the Mediterranean.³¹ Burton has also demonstrated the breadth of the sources, ideologies, and experiences which created the framework of Elizabethan ideas of Muslims, evidencing 'both the scope of English concerns with the Turks and the complexity of the response'.³² MacLean coined the term 'imperial envy' to describe this dominant framework for understanding Muslims and their empires, springing from the intimidatory nature of the territorial expansion

²⁶ Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.11-12.

²⁷ Matar, pp.14-15.

²⁸ Matar, pp.14-15.

²⁹ Matar, p.184.

³⁰ Daniel Viktus, *Turning Turk; English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean 1570-1630*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.7.

³¹ Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning; Islam and English Drama 1579-1624*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), pp.11-12.

³² Burton, p.18.

of the Ottoman Empire, and an understanding that Muslims lived enviable, luxurious lives.³³ He also argued that there existed in England a multifaceted view of Muslims, as people were both scared of their advancement and envious of their wealth and dominion. The influence of Matar, and his centring of imperial ambition and insecurity in English attitudes to Islam, is evident.

Methodology

The greater number of the sources drawn on within this dissertation are the published histories of Islam, written by Protestant authors who had no first-hand knowledge of their subject, during the reign of Elizabeth I. The history of the Muslim world first published in Elizabeth's reign was Hugh Goughe's *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano* in 1566, and new histories continued to be produced until the end of her reign in 1603.³⁴ Whilst some, such as Ralph Carr's *Mahumetane or Turkish History*, are self-contained, others were published as part of longer texts such as John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.³⁵ There are a number of grounds for the selection of published, Protestant histories, the first of which is that as they were produced by authors who had no personal experience of the Muslim world, they can offer a clearer view of the culturally inspired perception of Muslims, in contrast to the more informed opinion of those who had been to Constantinople or Marrakesh. The selection of works with Protestant authorship ensures the sources reflect the religious anxieties of those who worshipped within a new, fragile denomination, beset by critics both within and without,

³³ MacLean, p.20.

³⁴ Hugh Goughe, *Ofspring of the House of Ottomanno*, (London: n.pub, 1566), at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 10.04.2017]; Knolles.

³⁵ Ralph Carr, *Mahumetane or Turkish History*, (London: n.pub, 1600), at <eebo.chadwyck.com> [last accessed 04.04.17]; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 4th edn, (London: n.pub., 1583), at <johnfoxe.org>, [last accessed 06.04.2017].

and at home and abroad, still striving to establish itself. Leaving religion to one side, the nature of the sources utilised, and the low rates of literacy in sixteenth-century England outside the noble, gentry, and urban merchant classes, mean that it is difficult for us to assess just how many people had access to these sources. These sources, therefore, can only claim to represent the beliefs of the Queen's literate subjects, who wrote and read them. The longevity of the ideas they promote suggests that they found a sympathetic audience amongst this group. Moreover, several historians, including Burton, MacLean and Matar, have argued it was sources such as these which shaped the attitudes of literate Elizabethans who did not encounter Muslims but read about them.³⁶ Thus, within this dissertation the term Elizabethan refers to this literate, Protestant audience.

Although the terms Muslim and Islam are used in this dissertation, they are not terms contemporaries would have recognised, and were not used in England until 1615.³⁷ The term used most frequently in the sixteenth century was 'Mahometane'.³⁸ 'Turke' was also used, which could refer either to the Ottomans specifically or to Muslims in general.³⁹ This is indicative of the fact that throughout the period Elizabethans viewed Islam 'through the prism of the... empire of the Ottomans', as the Muslim country with which they had the most exchange.⁴⁰ As such, any assumptions made in the sources on the subject of the Ottoman Empire can arguably be taken to represent Elizabethan opinions on Islam more generally.

MacLean and Matar justified the years covered in *Britain and the Islamic World 1558-1713* by stating that 'all periodisations are problematic, but we begin with Queen Elizabeth I since

³⁶ Burton, p.23; Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.124-126.

³⁷ William Bedwell, *Mohammedis Imposturae*, (London: n.pub, 1615), p.N2, at <eebo.chadwyck.com> [last accessed 04.04.17].

³⁸ Knolles, p.4.

³⁹ Such as in Carr's *Mahumetane or Turkish History*.

⁴⁰ MacLean and Matar, p.26.

it was under her reign that diplomatic and commercial relations with the Islamic world... first began'.⁴¹ This dissertation borrows their explanation, adding to it the continuance of religious change during Elizabeth's rule, as the country steadily became Protestant, but was not, as yet, fully secure in this aim.

Dissertation Plot

In order to make the argument that Elizabethan perceptions of Muslims and their empires were primarily informed by religious anxieties, this dissertation has been divided into two chapters. Chapter One first discusses the most significant English religious anxieties arising from the Reformation. It then considers how perceptions of Islamic strength in the areas where Elizabethans felt most vulnerable led to a sense of intimidation. It will then examine how this sense of intimidation created an English view of Muslims that was both intensely hostile, and full of admiration. Chapter Two examines how Elizabethan concern regarding Islamic territorial expansion was based not on imperial envy, but on religion. It will demonstrate first how Elizabethans understood conquest to be primarily a theological phenomenon. It will then discuss how Islamic imperial power engendered not territorial but religious insecurity. The religious motivations and anxieties of those who produced work on Islamic territorial ambitions will also be discussed.

⁴¹ MacLean and Matar, p.2.

Chapter One: 'Fearefull Puissaunce'

Religion was the most significant influence on how those Elizabethans who had never met a Muslim imagined them to be. Their insecurity in matters of religious belief led them to feel profoundly intimidated by what they observed as Islam's extraordinary ability to convert Christians, and their obedience and unity. This created a complex perception of Muslims which was at once deeply hostile, and based on admiration and envy, imagining them to be aggressive and acquisitive, and at the same time obedient and disciplined. Historians have commented previously on this intimidation and the multifaceted perception it created for Elizabethans. They have, however, been inclined to argue that this intimidation was centred on empire and territory. This chapter proposes that this interpretation has underestimated the significance of religious insecurities. As the Elizabethans turned to the Mediterranean, they saw states which were stronger than their own, but and were concerned and intimidated by the elements of an alien culture which highlighted their religious weaknesses, as this was the field in which, as the Reformation continued, they felt most insecure. It was religious anxiety which had the greatest impact upon how Muslims were perceived by Elizabethans.

As the Reformation progressed, Protestant Elizabethans were plagued by insecurities regarding their religion. A clear example of this was the anxiety surrounding conversion- a topic, as Michael Questier has noted, with which Elizabethans were familiar.⁴² It would have been remarkable if Elizabethans were not concerned about conversion. Within living memory of much of the population, the country had been transformed from being indisputably Catholic to, at the very least, nominally Protestant, and moving ever closer to becoming quite

⁴² Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England 1580-1625*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.4.

authentically so.⁴³ That religious affiliation was not stable, and that people could, and did, cross denominational lines had been painfully revealed to the English. The Queen's Protestant subjects were resultingly anxious to enlarge the Church of England through conversion, and fearful that those within it could be drawn away. The Elizabethan desire to convert, and fear of being converted, is clearly seen in *Baptizing of a Turke*, a printed version of a sermon preached in London in October 1586 by Meredith Hanmer, a Church of England clergyman and historian.⁴⁴ It recounts the conversion of a Muslim man, referred to as 'Chinano', who had spent twenty-five years in Spanish captivity, but was converted to Christianity by the fine example set by English Protestants.⁴⁵ Hanmer opened the sermon by claiming that the news of a converted 'Turke' was joyful, but 'new' and 'strange'.⁴⁶ This language, the dedication of an entire sermon to the news, and its subsequent publication implies that contemporaries regarded the conversion of a Muslim to Protestantism as a desirable event, but one so highly unusual as to be considered newsworthy. Elizabethans were both anxious to convert, and aware that they were struggling in that aim. Hanmer's explanation for this paucity of converts was, that whilst Muslims who encountered Protestants could see 'the virtue, the modestie, [and] the godlines' of Christianity, most Muslims who encountered Christians met Catholics, who showed the infidel 'pride, ambition, covetousness... oppression, crueltye, bloudshedding... and idolatrye'.⁴⁷ This ensured that Muslims stood 'pointing at the Christians with [their] finger and laughing them to skorne'.⁴⁸ Although Hanmer blamed this on the

⁴³ Duffy, p.4; Haigh, p.4; Marshall, *Reformation England*, p.164.

⁴⁴ Meredith Hanmer, *Baptizing of a Turke*, (London: n.pub., 1586), at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 06.04.2017]; Alan Ford, 'Hanmer, Meredith (1543-1604)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.p., at <www.oxforddnb.com>, [last accessed 06.04.2017].

⁴⁵ Hanmer, pp.3-4.

⁴⁶ Hanmer, p.3.

⁴⁷ Hanmer, p.4, p.37.

⁴⁸ Hanmer, p.37.

Spanish, his depiction of the infidel pointing and laughing at Christianity implies that he was profoundly troubled by its inability to attract Muslims, conjuring up such a vivid and humiliating image. Moreover, the inclusion of the Spanish 'stumbling block' points to a desire to disguise the truth of the Protestant failure to convert, and thus an insecurity that such failure existed.⁴⁹

Hanmer's anxiety regarding conversion can also be seen in his conviction that English Christians were vulnerable to the allure of Islam because of 'the fame of their commodities' and their 'forrain riches'.⁵⁰ Hanmer not only believed that the Church of England was struggling to convert Muslims, but that its hold upon English souls was insufficient, leaving its own members vulnerable to conversion. The fear that the growing number of English Christians who travelled to the Islamic world were liable to succumb to the temptations of material gain was not Hanmer's alone. The English translation of Sebastian Münster's *Brief Collection and Compendius Extract of Strange and Memorable Things*, published in 1574, included a claim that any Christian who converted to Islam, which happened 'often times', would be paraded through the streets 'with great honour', and presented with 'manye gifts'.⁵¹ That this alarm also seems to have troubled John Foxe, one of the most prominent members of the Elizabethan Church, can be identified in the 1583 edition of his *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe stated that the 'wilfull defection' of Christians to Islam was increasing because men desired 'the licentious life and liberty of war', and were drawn to the powerful Ottoman

⁴⁹ Hanmer, p.37.

⁵⁰ Hanmer, p.5.

⁵¹ Sebastian Münster, *Brief Collection and Compendius Extract of Strange and Memorable Things*, (London: n.pub, 1574), n.p., at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 06.04.2017]. Whilst Münster was German, the English translation was not a close one, and heavily abridged, arguably suggesting it had been edited to speak to the concerns of an English audience.

Empire which allowed them 'fleshy liberty'.⁵² The temporal nature of the temptation posed by Islam would seem to imply a belief among committed Protestants, such as Hanmer and Foxe, that their co-religionists were exceptionally weak in their faith, and that the lure of material or sexual rewards in this life, offered by Islam, all too often proved more compelling than the spiritual rewards of life in the next offered by Protestantism. This would therefore suggest that as the Reformation continued, Elizabethans remained profoundly anxious about conversion, worrying that the Church of England was both unable to draw people to it or to stop them leaving.

The Reformation had, in addition, left Elizabethans uneasy with regard to obedience and unity within England. The evidence suggests that the growing realisation that the break with Rome had compromised the monarch's claim to the loyalty of their subjects had created a great deal of anxiety in England. The dual allegiance of English Catholics, to their Queen and to the Pope, and the numerous plots against Elizabeth, led to a Protestant fear that saboteurs were living among them.⁵³ This anxiety can be seen in the 1592 response of Francis Bacon to Catholic propagandist Richard Verstegan, who had claimed that Elizabeth, and her religion, had brought upon England 'sundry adversities' and more miserable days than 'all ages past in the memorie of man'.⁵⁴ Bacon lamented that, whereas Elizabeth had never sought to hurt Philip II of Spain, he had encouraged her own subjects to conspire dangerously against her.⁵⁵ Bacon also cited the 'number of libellous and defamatory books and writings' against the

⁵² Thomas Freeman, 'Foxe, John (1516/17-1587)', at *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.p., at <www.oxforddnb.com>, [last accessed 11.04.2017]; Foxe, p.737.

⁵³ Cross, p.124; Eric Ives, *The Reformation Experience; Living Through the Turbulent Sixteenth Century*, (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2012), pp.256-257; MacCulloch, p.120; Scarisbrick, p.110.

⁵⁴ Richard Verstegan, *A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles*, (London: n.pub, 1592), p.2, at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 07.04.2017].

⁵⁵ Francis Bacon, 'Certain Observations Made Upon a Libel', in *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, (London: Longman, 1861), pp.146-208, (p.204, p.147).

Queen and her government as proof of the hostility foreign Catholics had provoked among their English co-religionists.⁵⁶ That Bacon felt impelled to refute Verstegan's claims confirms further his insecurity; he was not confident enough in the loyalty of the Queen's subjects to allow them to decide for themselves the validity of Verstegan's arguments. The anxiety that a number of the Queen's subjects were not sufficiently devoted to her can be seen also in the writings of Richard Wragge. Wragge had visited Constantinople in 1593, as preparations were underway for a campaign against Hungary.⁵⁷ He claimed that as the army massed in the city, soldiers committed terrible 'insolencies, murders and robberies', and whilst he prayed the like would never occur in England, he wished that it could be observed by those who had enjoyed forty years of peace and prosperity under the Queen, but had 'not in all this time brought forth better fruits of obedience to God, and thankfulness to her Majesty'.⁵⁸ He said he had no doubt that this sight 'would stir them up' to be thankful for so great a monarch and 'the true religion of Christ'.⁵⁹ Wragge appears to have been anxious that within England there were a worrying number of people who were insufficiently devoted to their monarch. That he linked this so explicitly with obedience to God suggests that he understood treachery towards the monarch to be tightly bound to confessional loyalties. Significantly, Wragge's account and Bacon's response to Verstegan were written in 1598 and 1592 respectively, some years after the final plots on Elizabeth's life.⁶⁰ This suggests how embedded in English thought this anxiety had become, and that even after Elizabeth appeared to be safe on her throne, worries remained that there were those in England who did not believe that she should be on

⁵⁶ Bacon, p.147.

⁵⁷ Richard Wragge, 'A Description of a Voyage to Constantinople and Syria', in *Early Modern Tales of Orient*, ed. Kenneth Parker, (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.54-60, (p.58).

⁵⁸ Wragge, p.58.

⁵⁹ Wragge, p.58.

⁶⁰ Patrick Collinson, 'Elizabeth I (1533-1603)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.p., at <www.oxforddnb.com>, [last accessed 06.04.2017].

it at all. As the Reformation gathered momentum in England, Elizabeth's Protestant subjects were afflicted increasingly with insecurities as to the strength of the Church of England, and the unity and obedience of the Queen's subjects, and were anxious that England was home to apathetic Anglicans and fifth-column Catholics.

Such religious anxieties were highly significant in English Protestants becoming profoundly intimidated by the Islamic world, particularly so given their perception of Muslims as powerful in the fields where they judged England to be weak. The belief in the Ottoman ability to successfully convert swathes of people is demonstrated by Hugh Goughe's 1566 publication *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano*. Whilst nothing seems to be known of Goughe apart from the authorship of this work, the dedication of the book to the Protestant Thomas Gresham, and its praise for those who worked to secure the safety and religion of England, suggests that on the balance of probabilities *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano* was of Protestant authorship.⁶¹ The primary focus of Goughe's work was the chilling success the Ottoman Empire had achieved in converting Christians to Islam. His intense horror of 'the Turke' can be clearly identified by his description of the Ottoman Empire as a danger 'hanginge universally over our heades', and a 'mortall adversarye' to their souls, and by his conviction that they could soon convert even countries as removed from Constantinople as northern Europe, including England.⁶² Foxe shared this fear, arguing that although 'the Turke semeth to be farre of', England might soon 'feelee his cruell hand' as the Turke attempted 'to lay our

⁶¹ Margaret Pelling, 'Failed Transmission; Sir Thomas Gresham, Reproduction, and the Background to Gresham's Professorship of Physic', in *Sir Thomas Gresham and Gresham College; Studies in the Intellectual History of London in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed Francis Ames-Lewis, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp.38-62, (p.42); *Goughe*, p.2.

⁶² *Goughe*, p.68, p.5.

land waste, to scatter us amongst the infidels'.⁶³ This fearfulness that England, which in reality was far removed from any possibility of conversion, was threatened by the looming force of Islam reveals just how intimidated Elizabethans were by Muslims, and their seemingly unstoppable capacity to convert whole Christian nations ever further from the East, including their own.

Moreover, Elizabethans were particularly cowed by the conversionary powers of Muslims as a result of their belief that Christians were incapable of holding Islam back. Goughe asserted that the terrifying growth of Islam had been allowed to happen because no Christian country had been able 'to revenge and deliver the Christians from their unspeakable afflictions and painefull persecutions'.⁶⁴ Foxe argued that England would not be able to resist conversion, as countries had already suffered that fate which were 'farre better then ours is now, and more like to continue without such horrible overthrowes and desolation'.⁶⁵ This choice of words confirms his conviction in the particular spiritual weakness of many of the Queen's subjects, exposing them to the temptations of apostasy.⁶⁶ Thus, Elizabethans were profoundly intimidated by their perception of Muslims as skilled proselytisers, not only because they themselves seemed unable to convert them in return, but because they did not believe England was capable of resisting Islam.

The evidence also points to Elizabethans being intimidated by the apparent unity and discipline of Islam, in sharp contrast with their perception of England as mired by dissent.⁶⁷ Knolles's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* provides convincing evidence of this, claiming that among those who 'call themselves Islami' there was 'a rare unitie and agreement' and

⁶³ Foxe, p.737.

⁶⁴ Goughe, p.67.

⁶⁵ Foxe, p.737.

⁶⁶ Foxe, p.737.

⁶⁷ Most contemporary authors do not seem to have been aware of the split between Shia and Sunni Muslims.

that they were 'at peace among themselves'.⁶⁸ They also possessed a 'cheerfull and almost incredible obedience unto their princes and sultans'.⁶⁹ Knolles was explicit in his argument that these characteristics were what assured the 'perpetual felicitie' of the Ottoman Empire, and his intimidation was clear in his assertion that in these characteristics 'no nation in the world was to be worthily compared unto them', and so 'their empire hath so mightily increased and so long continued'.⁷⁰ The significance of Islamic concord was also stressed in *Policy of the Turkish Empire*, published anonymously in 1597.⁷¹ The description of the early Church as corrupted by the supremacy of Rome, 'after which ignorance and superstition increased in the West', marks this as a Protestant text.⁷² The author claimed that the 'chiefest cause of [the Ottoman Empire's] fearefull puissance' was the 'excellencie of the Martial discipline joyned with a singular desire' among their people to advance their nation and their religion.⁷³ All their 'actions, counsailes, studies, labours and endeavours' were unified, and for the purpose of serving their country and religion.⁷⁴ These authors not only believed that Muslim states enjoyed high levels of unity and obedience, but that possessing such singularity of purpose was highly significant in the felicity of a nation. The Elizabethan image of the Islamic world must have been profoundly intimidating to a nation which did not see itself as having much of either unity or obedience. It was their own deeply-held religious anxieties which led them to feel overwhelmed and daunted by Islam. Their belief in Muslim strength, in those areas in which they perceived themselves to be weak, and the consequences of this disparity, left Elizabethans cowed by the Islamic nations of the East.

⁶⁸ Knolles, p.5.

⁶⁹ Knolles, p.5.

⁷⁰ Knolles, p.5.

⁷¹ *Policy of the Turkish Empire*, (London: n.pub., 1597) at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 10.04.2017].

⁷² *Policy*, p.8.

⁷³ *Policy*, p.3.

⁷⁴ *Policy*, p.8.

That Elizabethans believed the Islamic world possessed the strengths that England lacked did not lead merely to hostility, although this was certainly part of their perception, and along with their belief that Muslims were in league with the devil, and their depictions of them as cruel and aggressive, they appear to have admired and respected them. Elizabethans had a complex, unstable perception of the Islamic world. As has been noted above, Foxe's hostility to Muslims was seated in his horror at their successful conversion of 'so many Christian churches'.⁷⁵ This hostility was profound. Foxe claimed to chart 'theyr wicked proceedings, theyr cruell tyranny, and bloudy victories', and described both the Ottomans and the Syrians as 'pestilent, rising out... from the bottomless pit to plague the people of God'.⁷⁶ His antipathy was so immense he argued that they were in league with Satan, depicting Muslims as 'swarmes and infinite thousands of barbarous and most wicked people, ministers of Satans malice and fury'.⁷⁷ To fight them was to 'warre against the devil'.⁷⁸ The use of military imagery suggests that Elizabethans saw Muslims as enemy combatants, adversaries to whom they could not be reconciled. And yet, Muslims were not merely their antithesis: Foxe believed that only the devil could have given Islam its terrifying military might, so great was it, and claimed that 'no strength of mans arme is sufficent' to defeat them.⁷⁹ For Foxe, the strength of the Muslims was so overwhelming it could only have been superhuman, arguably suggesting a degree of grudging respect for their power. Foxe was not alone in his volatile perception of Muslims.

⁷⁵ Foxe, p.735.

⁷⁶ Foxe, p.735, p.764.

⁷⁷ Foxe, p.737.

⁷⁸ Foxe, p.735.

⁷⁹ Foxe, p.735.

The English translation of Münster related the 'marvellous celerity' with which Muslims acted for their nation, claiming that 'they will swimme over very deepe and dangerous waters, they passe over strange hills, and being commanded they go through thicke and thinne headlonge, having no regarde of their lives', only regard for their country.⁸⁰ Compared to the Elizabethan belief that there existed with England 'evill disposed subjects' who no longer bore their 'natural love and due obedience' to their queen or country due to their papistical faith, it is perhaps unsurprising this admiration developed.⁸¹ However, *Brief Collection* also highlighted the exceptional aggression of Muslims, who 'tormented' and 'oppressed' Christians, taking them captive and forcing them to convert.⁸² It also described the 'perversity' of Mahomet, 'the prince of all impiety and superstition' who 'set the seedes of all evil'.⁸³ *Brief Collection* was far from alone containing such extremes of language.

Such language was also present within *Policy of the Turkish Empire*. The author, as has previously been discussed, held the view that the Ottoman Empire had attained 'the excessive height of their present greatnes' through their unity and discipline.⁸⁴ Their admiration for both the empire, and its unity, is demonstrated by their effusive language, which described their 'good government', 'the greatnesse of their estate', their 'excessive fortune', and the 'wonderfull puissance of their Empire'.⁸⁵ They also praised their 'rare vertue'.⁸⁶ However, even as *Policy of the Turkish Empire* praised this 'rare vertue', the author wondered how it came to exist 'in so brutish and barbarous a nation', with a 'most base, vile, and ignominious'

⁸⁰ Münster, n.p.

⁸¹ *Defence of the Honourable Sentence and Execution of the Queene of Scots*, (London: n.pub., 1587), n.p., at <eebo.chadwyck.com>, [last accessed 11.04.2017].

⁸² Münster, n.p.

⁸³ Münster, n.p.

⁸⁴ *Policy*, p.3.

⁸⁵ *Policy*, p.3.

⁸⁶ *Policy*, p.15.

beginning.⁸⁷ Such hostility was ignited by the author's belief that the Ottomans would attempt to convert the entire world, having in their unity the means to do so, and provoked them to state that the difference between Christianity and Islam was that between 'the glorious brightnes of the Sunne and the obscure darknes of the Night', the 'fruitful gardens and orchyards' and the 'wylde weedes and hearbs of the fields'.⁸⁸ Their impiety and superstition ensured that they would 'perish in the blindnes of their hearts, and so make a shipwracke both of their soules and bodies'.⁸⁹

Thus, Elizabethans had an unstable, complex view of Muslims, which encompassed both burning enmity and grudging admiration. The argument that Elizabethans had a more nuanced view than might have been expected is not, intrinsically, an original one. However, previous interpretations have centred on an Elizabethan understanding of empire. Conversely, the argument posited in Chapter One is that this uncertain perception was rooted in Elizabethan religious insecurities. As the English Reformation continued, the Queen's Protestant subjects were deeply anxious, most notably in relation to conversion, obedience, and unity, and this is evident until the end of her reign in 1603. That they did not believe the Islamic world to face these same difficulties led them to be profoundly intimidated. It was this intimidation, and these anxieties, which led Elizabethans to veer between rampant displays of rancour, and a jealous approbation.

⁸⁷ *Policy*, p.3.

⁸⁸ *Policy*, p.3, p.85.

⁸⁹ *Policy*, p.85.

Chapter Two: 'The Scourge of God'

Robert Topinka stated in his 2009 review of scholarship on Anglo-Islamic cultural exchange that, since the 1998 publication of Matar's *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*, scholars have been in general agreement that Elizabethans understood Islamic territorial expansion and success via the discourse which MacLean later called 'imperial envy': 'an ambivalent mixture of suspicion, revulsion, and attraction'.⁹⁰ As the English struggled to assert control in Ireland and North America, Islamic conquest both fascinated and terrified Elizabethans who viewed Muslim success through the prism of their own lack thereof. However, the contention put forward in Chapter Two is that this discourse underestimates the role religion played in the Elizabethan comprehension of Islamic empires. Whilst this dissertation does not account for those seafaring Elizabethans who were undoubtedly concerned with England's endeavours in empire, it is arguable that for those who did not leave England, whilst they were aware of the scale of Islamic, and particularly Ottoman, conquest, their primary concerns surrounding it were centred on religious matters. Not only did they interpret territorial growth primarily as a religious phenomenon, but the explanations offered for Christian territorial losses demonstrate how for many Elizabethans, they understood, and were interested in, Islamic imperial might *because* of its relation to religion.

Elizabethans were clearly uneasy regarding the success of Islamic territorial expansion, and yet, the writers who feared the empires of the Islamic world were concerned not that Muslims had empires and England did not, but saw conquest primarily as a religious, rather than political or imperial, phenomenon. The author of Raphael Holinshed's *The Third Volume*

⁹⁰ MacLean, p.20; Robert J. Topinka, 'Islam, England and Identity in the Early Modern Period; A Review of Recent Scholarship', *Mediterranean Studies*, 18 (2009), 114-130, (p.115).

of Chronicles -not by this time Holinshed himself, who had died in 1580- was deeply concerned about the spread of the Ottoman empire, describing the joy in London on the day word was received that the Holy League had defeated the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto.⁹¹ He wrote that throughout the city there were bonfires and banquets celebrating 'a victorie of so great importance unto the whole state of the Christian commonwealth'.⁹² That a victory was so longed for, and believed to be so significant, suggests the extent of the unease in England around the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. However, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* was clear in its interpretation of Ottoman expansion as religious warfare. The author put forward no political or territorial motivations for either side, but instead entirely framed the battle as a victory for Christianity 'against the common enemies of our faith, the Turks'.⁹³ That they singularly failed even to mention the Ottoman conquest and massacre of Venetian Famagusta, which was in fact the Christian motivation at Lepanto, suggests their concern was not envy of their empire, but confessional, seeing it primarily as a religious event.⁹⁴ Moreover, the author's description of revels in London and 'rejoicing through all parties of Christendom' suggests he was not alone in experiencing this as a Christian victory against the infidel.⁹⁵

Ofspring of the House of Ottomano also represented Ottoman conquest as religious warfare, focusing on confessional, rather than imperial, motivations. Goughe claimed his work would 'reveale and make manifeste unto my country men, the nature, disposition, customes, rites and faithe' of Muslims, but it in fact placed greater emphasis on 'how the

⁹¹ Raphael Holinshed, *The Third Volume of Chronicles...*, (London: n.pub., 1587), p.1226, at <eebo.chadwyck.com> [last accessed 04.04.17].

⁹² Holinshed, p.1226.

⁹³ Holinshed, p.1226.

⁹⁴ Andrew C. Hess, 'The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History', *Past and Present*, 57 (1972), 53-73, (p.60-61).

⁹⁵ Holinshed, p.1227.

memorie of Christ by litle and litle wereth to oblivion in the Provinces sumetime of Christian religion'.⁹⁶ Goughe imagined the Ottomans as working not only for the 'enlargement of their empire', but as the 'mortall adversarye unto the name of Christianitie', making no mention of any non-European conquests, and describing how every man was obligated to 'maketh warre... againste the Christians'.⁹⁷ For Goughe, territorial expansion was tied explicitly to religion. He understood the enlargement of the Ottoman Empire to be a religious war motivated by a desire to destroy Christianity, suggesting that he was more concerned about the religious consequences of territorial expansion than he was jealous of their empire.

That English authors primarily understood Islamic territorial expansion through a religious, and not imperial, discourse is also made clear by Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*. He was uneasy regarding the success and size of the Ottoman Empire, aiming to educate his reader on the 'whole and continuat Historie' of the Ottoman Empire, and how they 'hath brought such fatal mutations upon a great part of the world'.⁹⁸ The main body of the work, however, focused primarily on conversion, bewailing 'the long and still declining fate of the Christian commonweale', discussing 'the utter ruine and subversion of the empire of the east', and 'the dishonour done unto the blessed name of our saviour Christ Jesus [and] the desolation of his church here militant upon earth'.⁹⁹ While the Islamic conquest of 'the greatest part of Asia and Afrike' was barely mentioned, Knolles described in far greater detail the Muslim conquest of Europe.¹⁰⁰ They had

overwhelmed almost all of Spaine, and not there staying, but passing the Pyrenei had pearsed even into the heart of France and divers other parts of Christendom, as

⁹⁶ Goughe, p.64.

⁹⁷ Goughe, p.64.

⁹⁸ Knolles, p.103.

⁹⁹ Knolles, p.4.

¹⁰⁰ Knolles, p.8.

namely, Italy, Sicily, the famous island of the Rhodes, with many others of the Mediterranean.¹⁰¹

The respective word counts of the descriptions of the conquest of Asia, Africa, and Europe show that Knolles was overwhelmingly concerned with the territorial losses of Christendom, rather than the territorial gains of Islam. For Knolles, the spread of the Ottoman Empire was not intrinsically threatening, or even worthy of discussion, and only became so when it infringed on Christian lands, and led to conversion. He described how territorial expansion had led to 'the unspeakable ruine and destruction of the Christian religion and state', suggesting that Islamic conquest itself was not what worried him, but the fear that it entailed Christian conversion and suffering.¹⁰² As Holinshed's *The Third Volume of Chronicles, Generall Historie of the Turkes*, and *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano* were not intrinsically religious texts, unlike the work of Hanmer or Foxe, their religious focus suggests that even for authors purporting to write secular works it was the religious aspects of the expansion of the Islamic world which they found most significant.

The sheer success of the Islamic empires ignited religious anxiety. Elizabethans were aware of, and horrified by, both past warfare, such as the Ottomans reaching the walls of Vienna in 1529, and recent conquests, such as their attempts on Malta and Hungary during Elizabeth's reign.¹⁰³ The solutions the authors of the published histories proposed to prevent the further spread of Islam suggests that it intensified the insecurities engendered by the Reformation.

¹⁰¹ Knolles, p.8.

¹⁰² Knolles, p.4.

¹⁰³ Knolles, p.366, Matthew Parker, 'A Form to be Used in Common Prayer, every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, to Excite and Stir all Godly People to Pray unto God for the Preservation of those Christians and their Countries that are now invaded by the Turk', in *Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer Set Forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. William Keating Clay, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp.527-531, (p.527).

This is evident in Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*. He was clearly exercised by the spread of the Ottoman Empire, detailing 'the utter ruine and subversion of the empire of the east', 'the desolation of His church here militant upon earth [and] the dreadfull danger daily threatened unto the poore remainder thereof'.¹⁰⁴ However, his explanations for Muslim strength and Christian 'destruction' were religious, and not imperial.¹⁰⁵ He listed as a cause of Islamic success 'the small care the Christian princes... have had of the common state of the Christian commonweale'.¹⁰⁶ Rather than 'Christian compassion and unitie', seeing all Christian states as 'the principall members of one and the same bodie', the rulers of Europe were 'turning their weapons one upon another', which weakened Christendom so extensively that it 'opened a way for [the Turkes] to devour them one after another'.¹⁰⁷ Together, the united Christian princes, 'the greedie enemies greatest terror', 'might long since not onely have repressed... and abated [Ottoman] pride' but also 'recovered from him most of those famous Christians kingdoms which he by force against all right holdeth'.¹⁰⁸ It is clear that Knolles was convinced that Europe was defenceless against Islamic attack, not because of its imperial weakness, but its religious weakness, as Christian princes abandoned Christendom. That he believed Europe's greatest vulnerability lay in its religious disunity illustrates how prominent this anxiety was for Knolles, dominating his understanding of Islamic imperial expansion. The might of Islamic empires inspired religious, not imperial, insecurities, reinforcing the belief that religious divergence across Europe had left them vulnerable and 'weakened'.¹⁰⁹ This is corroborated by Ralph Carr's *Mahumetane or Turkish History*, published in 1600. Although

¹⁰⁴ Knolles, p.4.

¹⁰⁵ Knolles, p.4.

¹⁰⁶ Knolles, p.5.

¹⁰⁷ Knolles, p.5.

¹⁰⁸ Knolles, p.5.

¹⁰⁹ Knolles, p.5.

little is known about Carr, the description of his three cousins, to whom the work was dedicated, suggests they were Robert, William, and Edward, of the prominent, Anglican Carr family in Lincolnshire.¹¹⁰ Both the familial relationships and Carr's dedication to these 'worthy' cousins suggests that he too can be presumed to have been Protestant.¹¹¹ Carr was disturbed by the strength of the Islamic empires of the Mediterranean, believing them to have committed unparalleled conquests and cruelty, describing the Ottoman Empire specifically as 'conquerors over the whole East' who had now 'become even the terror of the West'.¹¹² Carr's dread can be seen in his conviction that the English should consider themselves forewarned by the 'fresh bleeding... before our eyes', and 'not much devided from our owne doors' their neighbours houses 'flaming'.¹¹³ Yet Carr's solution to the threat of the 'invincible nation' was, as that of Knolles, rooted not in strengthening England's imperial might, but in 'the forces of Christian Princes united'.¹¹⁴ It would be only then that the 'bright shyning day' of Christian victory over Islam could be achieved.¹¹⁵ For Carr, as Knolles, the foremost reason Islam expanded ever further into Christendom was European religious failings, which suggests that he was more concerned about religious disunity than military or imperial weakness. This corroborates the insecurity seen in *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, and the argument that the anxieties the spread of Islamic empires provoked in Elizabethans were religious and not imperial.

¹¹⁰ Carr, p.2, p.34, p.54; N.M. Fuidge, 'CARR, Robert (c.1511-90), of Sleaford, Lincs', in *The History of Parliament; The House of Commons 1558-1603*, ed. P.W. Hasler, at <historyofparliamentonline.org>, [last accessed 17.04.2017]; G.E. Cokayne, *Complete Baronetage*, (Exeter: William Pollard, 1900), p.82.

¹¹¹ Carr, p.2.

¹¹² Carr, p.4.

¹¹³ Carr, p.6, p.7.

¹¹⁴ Carr, p.4.

¹¹⁵ Carr, p.4.

That this anxiety was tied explicitly to the Reformation is evident in Holinshed's *The Third Volume of Chronicles* in which the author lamented that had the Christian victory at the Battle of Lepanto been followed with continuing united Christian action, 'the proud and loftie horne of the Ismaelite had beene so brused' that Christian lands could have been reclaimed.¹¹⁶ Instead he believed, as did Knolles and Carr, that the Christian princes were too divided to save Christendom, having 'more pleasure to draw their weapons one against another than against that common enemy of us all'.¹¹⁷ Disunity created 'the breach, when the flood hath got head, and woone passage through the banke'.¹¹⁸ The author explicitly tied this dissension to the Reformation, describing war between Christians as the result of 'the malice of the time', as he entreated princes to consider 'matters in variance about religion, rather to decide the same with the word than with the sword'.¹¹⁹ He also reminded his audience that Muslims 'regardeth neither protestant nor catholike... those of the Greekish church nor others'.¹²⁰ This can also be seen in Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, which described how Christians killed each other 'for questions of religion', leading to 'such distrust and implacable hatred'.¹²¹ Islamic imperial strength alarmed the author of *The Third Volume of Chronicles*, as his description of the Ottoman Empire as a 'flood' and 'common enemy' reveals, but this fear built to a fever of religious anxiety about the vulnerability of Christendom in the wake of the Reformation.¹²² For those subjects of the Queen who did not trade in the Mediterranean, or travel to North America, fear of the strength and spread of Islamic empires led to an anxiety that the Reformation had opened the wounds which left Europe vulnerable and exposed to

¹¹⁶ Holinshed, p.1227.

¹¹⁷ Holinshed, p.1227.

¹¹⁸ Holinshed, p.1227.

¹¹⁹ Holinshed, p.1227.

¹²⁰ Holinshed, p.1227.

¹²¹ Knolles, p.5.

¹²² Holinshed, p.1227.

conquest and conversion, and a belief that the only way to defeat the Turk was to begin to heal such scars.

Significantly, the reasons offered by contemporary authors for their fascination with Islam indicates that their interest in Muslim conquest originated in its relevance to their own religious thought. Elizabethan thinkers produced work on territorial conflict because it supported their own propositions for religious improvements. This is at its most evident in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. As this work was primarily a hagiographical text written to validate the righteousness of Protestantism, it is not insignificant that Foxe included a sizeable history of 'the Turkes story... theyr wicked proceding, theyr cruell tyranny and bloody victory', detailing how they conquered and converted until 'the barbarity of Mahumaet prevayleth and raigneth in the moste part of the world'.¹²³ For Foxe, the rise and success of Islamic empires was fascinating because of its significance for Christian teaching. This is suggested by Foxe's own explanation for his 'adjoin[ing] after these popes above rehearsed' information about Muslim conquests: it was included because he was convinced it would encourage Christians to 'ponder more deeply with our selves, the scourge of god for our sinnes, and corrupt doctrine'.¹²⁴ As Foxe saw it, the empires of the East were sent as divine punishment for Europe's continuing adherence to Catholicism, and Muslim success confirmed God's continued unhappiness. He argued that whilst the Turks fought with the power of Satan, God did not send Jesus to fight with the Christians because they did not 'seeke our justification as we shoulde, by faith onely in the sonne of God... our doctrine being... corrupt' and 'our hartes with idolatry are polluted'.¹²⁵ God would not send Christ to fight for Catholics, and Europe

¹²³ Foxe, p.735, p.737.

¹²⁴ Foxe, p.735.

¹²⁵ Foxe, p.736.

remained 'corrupted in the church of Rome'.¹²⁶ Foxe believed that if all of Europe accepted that 'Christ alone shall be receaved to be our justified, all other religions... images, patrons and advocates set apart', if all of Europe became Protestant, they would once again fight with Christ at their side and would 'soone vanquish the Turkes pride and fury'.¹²⁷ Foxe's justification for his writing on Islamic conquest confirms that this interested him not because it highlighted England's imperial deficiencies, but because Islamic empires confirmed his already existing anxiety that Europe required further reform. Elizabethan interest in Islamic empires arising from religious concerns was clear even in secular texts, where it could be presumed interest would be more imperial and less confessional.

Goughe seems to have had religious motives for producing *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano*, which also presented the success of Islamic empires as worthy of interest because they emphasised that Christians were not sufficiently devout. Goughe wrote in his dedication to Gresham that he 'counted it good to present your worshyppe with some such treatice' on the terrifying spread of Islam and the Ottoman Empire in order that those in England would 'by considering of the daungers, hanging universally over our heades, may learne hence fourth to amende their sinfull lives, and call incessantlye unto god for succour against that mortall adversarye'.¹²⁸ For Goughe, it was important to detail to his audience the dangers of the Ottoman Empire because it would encourage them to amend their religious frailties. He emphasised this by noting that Gresham was unusually virtuous in using his riches to safeguard the realm and the Church of England, and it is arguable that he hoped his horrifying description of the Ottoman Empire as a looming and threatening force would encourage

¹²⁶ Foxe, p.773.

¹²⁷ Foxe, p.736.

¹²⁸ Goughe, p.5.

others to do likewise.¹²⁹ He concluded his work with the hope that he had encouraged his readers to 'take diligent care for our selves' and our souls, against an enemy that would convert that last part of Europe 'that remaine unto us unperished'.¹³⁰ Goughe's explanation for his writing a history of the Ottoman Empire clearly indicates that even in a secular history of an expanding empire, this expansion was not of interest because it spoke to English imperial anxieties, but because it awoke Goughe's anxieties regarding Christianity, and allowed him to exhort his audience to amend their own religious faults. Goughe believed, as did Foxe, the spread of the Ottoman Empire to be of interest to himself and his audience because it highlighted religious deficiencies.

The *Policy of the Turkish Empire* also claimed that the English people should be interested in the Ottoman Empire as it highlighted Christian failings. The anonymous author believed that although God detested Muslims, He had allowed their empires 'to prevaile against the Christians because they have not walked in the right way and truth of his religion'.¹³¹ Europe's Christians were neither reverent nor obedient enough, and their sins were such that they had 'pierced the heavens', bringing down upon them God's 'most heavie venegance' which was the conquest and conversion of many nations by the Ottoman Empire.¹³² It was 'a plague for all their unthankfulnes, securitie and negligence'.¹³³ The author argued that God's anger at the sins of Christendom were evidenced by the 'too lamentable a prooffe and experience by the prosperous success which that people hath had in their conquests gotten uppon many great... provinces of Christendom', and explained that he wrote *Policy of the Turkish Empire*

¹²⁹ Goughe, p.3.

¹³⁰ Goughe, p.93.

¹³¹ *Policy*, p.82.

¹³² *Policy*, p.82.

¹³³ *Policy*, p.82.

in order to present to his audience this evidence of their religious deficiency.¹³⁴ The author clearly believed that the 'excessive height of [Islamic] present greatness' in 'the enlarging and amplifying of their Empire and Religion' provided 'proofe' of his religious anxieties about the irreligion of Christendom.¹³⁵ This suggests that his primary interest in the policy of the Turkish Empire, their military success, and manner of religion, stemmed from what he believed it revealed about Christendom. The explanations offered by commentators for their work on Islamic empires would seem to confirm that there were strong religious motivations for this production. They firmly believed the most significant aspect of Islamic expansion was its relation to contemporary religious anxieties, and its power to educate an irreligious audience, and used the alarming expansion of the Ottoman Empire to buttress their conviction that Christendom remained mired in sin.

For the majority of Elizabethans who did not leave England, the evidence suggests that whilst they were troubled by the strength and size of Islamic empires, their concerns regarding them were religious. They experienced territorial growth primarily as a religious occurrence, sparking an anxiety that, following the Reformation, Europe lay vulnerable and open to Islamic conquest and conversion. Commentators of the time produced discourses on Muslim empires which corresponded with and supported their own religious convictions. When Elizabethans looked to the Islamic empires of the Mediterranean and North Africa, imperial envy was less significant than religious insecurity.

¹³⁴ *Policy*, p.82.

¹³⁵ *Policy*, p.82.

Conclusion

The end of a thousand years of Catholicism in England was distressing and disruptive, protracted and painful. The histories of Islam written during Elizabeth's reign are powerful evidence of this, revealing her subjects to be plagued by anxieties, unsure of the strength of their new religion, doubting of the devotion of their co-religionists, and fearful of those outside the congregation of the Church of England. This dissertation has sought to demonstrate how these deeply-held insecurities shaped the perception of Islam and its empires among those Elizabethans who did not venture from home.

By integrating consideration of the English Reformation, and its continuation into the second half of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, into discussion of Anglo-Islamic cultural exchange, it becomes evident that the religious instability experienced by Elizabethans profoundly affected their understanding of Islam and Islamic growth. Religious insecurities built to an intense feeling of intimidation and complex perception of Muslims, involving both respect and rancour, and led Elizabethans to experience Islamic territorial expansion as a religious phenomenon which provoked both horror and fascination. The interplay between tolerance and intolerance, respect and revulsion, clearly existed even if adherents to the alien religion lived across continents. In an age of unprecedented confessional plurality, there existed a relationship between an understanding of one's own religious strength, or lack thereof, and a willingness to extend tolerance to those of another religion.

Nabil Matar, in his hugely influential *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*, argued that as ever more English people encountered Muslims, England experienced the might of Islamic states in the Mediterranean and North Africa as both terrifying and alluring, attracting some to conversion

and others to pen scathing sermons in an attempt to obliterate such attraction.¹³⁶ The line of argument within this dissertation is not that Matar's interpretation is incorrect, but that those Elizabethans who did not leave England held attitudes and beliefs regarding Islam and the Muslim world removed from those of the sea-faring adventurers who remain still prominent in the English imagination today. Even as England grew increasingly hungry for knowledge of Islam and Islamic empires, and histories were produced to meet this demand, most people never met a Muslim, or sailed the Mediterranean. It is arguable that these Elizabethans simply understood Islam differently, and were not in the grip of imperial envy, and their own experiences of religion and religious turmoil shaped how they thought about Muslims. It has been proposed in this dissertation that scholarship exploring the experiences of 'England's entry onto the global stage' is enhanced by the consideration of wider cultural forces at work in the period of study, and that what Topinka has described as 'nascent globalism' should be studied with an eye to the interaction between territorial and religious thought.¹³⁷

For the Elizabethans left behind as others sailed far from England, by far the greatest influence on their understanding of Islam was not the inferiority felt by the English in Marrakesh or Constantinople, or frustration at failure to establish control in North America, but the religious rupture in their own country, village, home, and soul.

¹³⁶ Matar, p.4-5.

¹³⁷ Topinka, p.116, p.130.

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