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Eastern Characters on the Elizabethan Stage: Uses and Abuses

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Abstract

In this study, I present representative samples of Eastern characters in four English plays of the late Elizabethan period. Pertinent historical material and travel narratives relating to contacts between West and East are consulted and used for support and contextualisation. Although I will be mainly focusing on the characters of the Moor and the Turk, at times my analysis will extend to cover Arabs and Saracens, non-Northern Africans, and Jews.

My thesis investigates the socio-cultural and ideological roles that Eastern characters played in Elizabethan drama and their relation to English national concerns and issues during the 1580s and 1590s. These issues include the threat posed by Spain to England, the English succession crisis, international trade, politics, religious reform, relations with Catholic Europe, and with Moorish and Turkish dominions and powers. These issues are dramatised in the commercial playhouses where Eastern characters, though abused, seem to have enjoyed prominence during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. I will argue that although the plays were enacted in distant foreign settings, London theatres bring these Eastern figures closer to home to speak to one or more of the English concerns identified above.

In the first chapter, I discuss the relationship between West and East prior to and during the Elizabethan period. I also note the presence of Easterners in England and Scotland. I then examine the uses and abuses of the figure of the Moor in recent scholarship. In the second chapter, I argue that George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* (1588/1589) examines the English succession crisis in relation to the Moorish succession conflict in North Africa, an issue he also articulates in his contribution to *Titus Andronicus*. In the third chapter, I maintain that Robert Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587) addresses the same issue of succession in the play's first part, and then exposes the dangers of political prophecy, popular in the 1580s, through the staging of heathen Moors and Turkish characters in a foreign setting. In the fourth chapter, I contend that Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589) shows the ease with which religion can be exploited to fulfil personal ends through the corrupt actions of culturally suspect strangers of various faiths and ethnicities. In the last chapter, I analyse the figure of the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* (1594) within the context of the Spanish Black Legend. William Shakespeare and George Peele use the Goths and Aaron, the exaggerated Moor/Jew evil figure, to underscore the Moorish-Jewish mixed lineage of the early modern Spaniards and to undermine their claim to true faith (Roman Catholicism). In my conclusion I briefly look at a few Moors/Turks on the immediate Jacobean stage (1603-1625). Though the Moor seems to undergo a shift in gender and function (more women than men), she/he still epitomises devilish evil attributes.

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Author's Declaration

I certify that this thesis is my own work except for the portions which I explicitly indicate are the works of others.

A Note on Primary Texts

For early modern plays, I use recent scholarly editions. The dates used for the plays are from *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue: Volume II and III* (Wiggins and Richardson: 2012-2013). Primary texts from *Early English Books Online* are used for most other primary material. Exceptions are: letters and correspondence, some translated works, corrupt texts, and lost originals. For these, I mostly use collections of full primary texts such as the *Calendar of Letters and State Papers* (Hume [1892] 1971; Green 1872; Gayangos 1877) and *Acts of the Privy Council of England* (Dasent 1890, 1901).

The spelling is always that of each cited source. The modern forms of letters are used to replace the early forms of *i*, *j*, *u*, *v*, and the long *s* (f or j). Except in verse, the ampersand (&), superscript letters, the abbreviations ‘y^e’ and ‘y^t’ have been changed to their modern usage in accordance with the *Modern Humanities Research Association Style Guide* (2013).

A Note on Certain Terms

Certain descriptive designations, common in the literature of the Elizabethan period, appear throughout this dissertation. ‘Saracen’, ‘Moor’, ‘Ethiopian’, ‘Turk’, ‘Jew’, ‘Foreign/Foreigner’, ‘Stranger’, ‘Alien’, among other derogatory variations have a long history of describing what today is termed the ‘Other’, be this an individual, a nation, faith or a geographical area. Difference, moral or material, underscores their oppositional or confrontational significance. Distance — geo-political, ideological, biological, or spiritual — seems essential to all these designations and justifies opposition. Though originally meant to separate the West from the East, heathens from the faithful, Muslims from Christians, these terms were often applied to Westerners themselves during times of tension between two or more European nations or groups. Protestants, for example, called Catholics antichrists, heretics, and lewd and devilish papists (Vinnicombe 2012: 35). This transferability inheres in the terms’ own derogatory nature and range of signification (see below my rationale for the term ‘abuse’ which appears in the title of my thesis).

At one time, ‘Foreign’ [OED, adj. 2b], for example, meant simply ‘not of one’s household or family’. This familial and spatial distance then acquired political implications of threat and difference. Saracen initially indicated the East, where the sun rises; but to the ancient Romans *Saraceni* gained a denigrating charge and signified ‘all the “savage” and “barbarian” tribes that lived east of the limes of their empire’ (Falk 2010: 65). Avner Falk notes that the term ‘referred not only to Arabs or Muslims, but also to all non-Christian or non-European “foreigners”’ (Falk 2010: 65):

after the emergence of Islam in Arabia in the seventh century, and after the great Muslim conquests of the Middle East, North Africa, and Iberia, the term ‘Saracen’ lumped together all Muslims, Arabs, Turks, Persians, and all other ‘strange’ or ‘exotic’ non-Europeans and non-Christians. [...] The ‘Moors’ of Spain were identified as ‘Saracens’. By the early Middle Ages, European Christians equated ‘Saracen’ with Arab, Muslim, Turk, Persian, and all their other enemies. (Falk 2010: 68)

This malleability indicates that demarcations are not as delimiting as they were meant to be. ‘East’ and ‘West’, note the editors of *Cultural Encounters Between East and West*, ‘remain, at best, notional entities with fluid boundaries contingent upon their specific cultural and historical contexts’ (Birchwood and Dimmock 2005: 1).

‘Stranger’ [OED, n. 1a] is ‘one who belongs to another country, a foreigner’. Similarly, an ‘alien’ [OED, adj. 1b] is one who is ‘born in, or owing allegiance to, a foreign country; *esp.*

designating a foreigner who is not a naturalized citizen of the country where he or she is living'. Likewise, 'foreigner' [OED, n. 1a] means 'a person born in a foreign country; one from abroad or of another nation; an alien'. All three words were in use and carried the same meanings during the late 1580s and early 1590s. During the same period, 'Eastern' [OED, n. 1] was used to denote 'a native or inhabitant of the East; an Asian, *esp.* as distinguished from a European'. I use 'stranger', 'alien', and 'foreigner' interchangeably.

During the Elizabethan period, 'Moor' is the most commonly used term to refer to black Africans. It too underwent scrutiny. The *OED* defines the term 'Moor' [OED, n.² 1] as

a native or inhabitant of ancient Mauretania, a region of North Africa corresponding to parts of present-day Morocco and Algeria. Later usually: a member of a Muslim people of mixed Berber and Arab descent inhabiting north-western Africa (now mainly present-day Mauritania), who in the 8th cent. conquered Spain. In the Middle Ages, and as late as the 17th cent., the Moors were widely supposed to be mostly black or very dark-skinned, although the existence of 'white Moors' was recognized. Thus, the term was often used, even into the 20th cent., with the sense of a 'black person'.

An archaic meaning of 'Moor' [OED, n.² 2] (which was in use in the late 1580s) is 'a Muslim; *spec.* a Muslim inhabitant of India or Sri Lanka'. In his extensive tracing of the significations of the term 'Moor', Anthony Barthelemy concludes: '*Moor* can mean, then, non-black Muslim, black Christian, or black Muslim. The only certainty a reader has when he sees the word is that the person referred to is not a European Christian' (Barthelemy 1987: 7). George Hunter reached the same conclusion, 'Moors were, as foreign infidels, virtually equivalent to Turks: the word "Moor" was very vague ethnographically, and very often seems to have meant little more than "black-skinned outsider", but it was not vague in its antithetical relationship to the European norm of the civilized white Christian' (Hunter 1964b: 51).

A less complex term than the Moor is the 'Turk' [OED, n.¹ 2a] which meant 'a member of the dominant race of the Ottoman empire'. Sometimes it 'extended to any subject of the Grand Turk or Turkish Sultan, but usually restricted to Muslim people; (in earlier times) a Seljúk; (from 1300) an Osmanli or Ottoman; a person who was, or considered himself, a descendant of the Osmanlis or other Turks' [OED, n.¹ 2a]. *OED* notes that 'From c1300 the Turks were to Christian nations the typical Muslim power' [OED, n.¹ 3a]. During the Elizabethan period, 'Turk' [OED, n.¹ 4a] also denoted 'any person having qualities historically attributed to Turks; a cruel, rigorous, or tyrannical person; any one behaving barbarically or savagely'.

'Jew' [OED, n. 1a], on the other hand, is defined as 'a member of a people whose traditional religion is Judaism and who trace their origins through the ancient Hebrew people

of Israel to Abraham'. During the period in question, 'Jew' [OED, n. 1b] was also used in an offensive sense to mean 'a Jewish person, *esp.* one regarded stereotypically as scheming or excessively concerned with making or saving money; (also) a non-Jewish person regarded in this way'. A derogatory meaning of 'Jewish' [OED, adj. 2] was used by playwrights of the time to designate a person who is 'extortionate; excessively concerned with making or saving money; stingy'.

As we will see, early modern writers often group together the Moor, Jew, and Turk. And with the 'Ethiopians' they 'are dually recognized in the early modern period as figures of alterity, which are made to stand for modes of experience and being that are foreign to normative white Christianity, and as racial and religious subjects, with souls either to be saved or damned' (Britton 2014: 3). With these figures, the 'Spaniard' is frequently mentioned 'in the same semantic field' (Blank 2006: 100). Elizabethan playwrights used these terms mainly for the negative undertones the characters invoke; the dramatists were not interested in differences between those characters but in their stereotypical similarities. The alien, stranger, Saracen, Turk, Moor and Catholic are often lumped together in early modern writings. These groups are carefully distinguished from white English Protestants. In this way, strangers create the negative end of the bipolar opposition of 'us' versus 'them', the superior versus the inferior, or the righteous versus the impious.

The Moor: Uses and Abuses

To the Elizabethan playwrights (and in Elizabethan discourse in general), the Moor or Easterner served English cultural, national, and international intentions. Though the combined structure of 'uses and abuses' in the title of my thesis seems antithetical, it actually underscores the wide range of utilities the Moor served. 'Abuse' in my thesis indicates the exaggerated form of 'use' or 'overuse' that one finds at the root of the verb 'abuse', meaning 'using up'. Originally, the Easterner served to distinguish geo-politically the Westerner from the Easterner, with the positive values given to the West and Westerner. In contrast, the Easterner 'other' accumulated all the negative traits of race, colour, and ferocious disposition. Such polarisation is essential to both identity and 'othering'.

A further twist takes place when the Moor becomes a disguise for the *white* European. Eric Griffin addresses the importance of this polarisation in relation to Spain: 'If a people cannot know what they are until they know what they are not, it was the Spaniard, by virtue of

his religious and ethnic difference, who could provide the otherness against which England was to measure its emerging sense of national self' (Griffin 2009: 65). Nor is Griffin alone. In *Shakespeare and the Jews* James Shapiro argues that 'the English turned to the Jewish questions' to answer their own English questions. For Shapiro, the posing of such questions provide 'unusual insight into the cultural anxieties felt by the English men and women at a time when their nation was experiencing extraordinary social, religious, and political turbulence' (1996: 1). Jonathan Burton too demonstrates 'how early modern English discourse on the Jews was crucially triangulated by England's traffic with Islam' where Jews, Turks, Dogs, Brute Beasts, and Filthy Villains were conspicuously prominent (2005: 196ff).

In the title of my thesis, this seeming dichotomous 'use and abuse' is congruent with the meanings of the noun 'abuse': 'improper practice', 'violation', 'defilement', and 'wicked act or practice'. As a verb, 'abuse' has also the meanings of 'misuse, misapply', and 'outrage'. As the 'other', the Moor/Easterner — individually and collectively — conveniently embodied all the evil traits, be those social, political, ideological, or spiritual. This was the legacy of medieval times which survived in — and long after — discourses of the early modern period. To these negative charges, the Spaniards readily lent themselves. And the English writers transferred the attributes of the Moor to their *white European* political and religious enemies. 'Abuse' thus takes place when the Jew, Moor, or Turk becomes a figure for the European Spaniard and/or Roman Catholic. For Griffin, the 'racialized outsiders' not only pose English questions but 'often point in the direction of Spanish answers' (Griffin 2009: 9). In his book, Spain becomes the 'spectre' ever lurking behind Elizabethan plays just as the Marranos of Spain populate Shapiro's book. In the second half of the sixteenth century Spain and Spaniards — for historical, political, and cultural reasons — were most suitable to play the role of the Easterner.

That was the time when the Moor was most 'abused' by Spaniards and other Europeans. Griffin himself notes, 'during the "golden age" of *la leyenda negra*, the period between the Armada crisis and the Stuart succession, not only does proximity to and relationship with Africa become an index of Hispanicity, "Africa" begins to signify in such a way as to play into the conjuncture's growing obsession with miscegenation' (Griffin 2009: 10). He is intrigued by the process through which the pejorative association between Africa and Hispania took place successfully and rapidly. He defines the aim of his book: '[m]ore than simply identifying the presence of this propagandistic discourse and observing its pervasiveness, I am concerned with *how* the "white" proponents of this discourse were so

successful in fashioning an opponent that is so manifestly their “black” opposite’ (Griffin 2009: 15, emphasis original). For Griffin, this is the movement of the ‘ethnos’ into the ‘poetics’ (Ethnopoetics) that appears in the title of his book. Insightful and fancy as this formulation may appear, it is — to me — the ‘abuse’ to which the ‘blackamoor’ is put and is then transferred to serve *white* Europeans in assailing one another.

For the Elizabethans of the 1580s and 1590s, the Easterner’s popularity in masques and plays served not only court and public entertainment, but also English cultural and political aims. The dozen theatres (each hosting some 1500 people at a time) served around 25000 people per week (Griffin 2009: 13). In this capacity, the theatre’s importance stood second to none but the church. Louis Montrose noted its political impact: ‘Whether as a means of entertaining the court or diverting the people, the professional theatre seems to have been perceived by the Crown as potentially if indirectly useful, both as instrument for the aggrandizement of the dynastic nation-state and for the supervision and governance of its subjects’ (Montrose 1996: 29). In plays, religious discourse, and Black Legend pamphlets, the Easterner served the English demonisation of Spain and the Catholicism of Rome and Europe. The moment and the politics united in the Moor/Easterner to serve England’s hostile relation to the Holy Roman Empire.

At this point, it is perhaps appropriate to anticipate my reading of *Titus Andronicus* by William Shakespeare and George Peele. In chapter five, I argue that the Rome of the play allegorically represents Spain. This argument draws on the Elizabethans’ general perception of the Spanish Empire, the play’s ruthless action and characters, and the close ties between Spain and Rome throughout the entire sixteenth century. With these aspects in mind, along with additional others I articulate in the chapter, England of the late sixteenth century (the time of the play’s composition and staging) cannot be Rome, whereas Spain had been long known as the ‘New Rome’ and the ‘Holy Roman Empire’. In fact, Elizabethan writers and advocates of England’s emulation and rivalry of the Spanish Empire appeared only during the late 1570s throughout the 1590s. And even then, the English envisioned, in theory at least, an ‘Empire’ differing markedly from anything Spanish.

Introduction

This study focuses on the ‘use and abuse’ of Eastern characters (Moors, Turks, and Jews) in late Elizabethan drama. My investigation covers George Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar* (1588/1589), Robert Greene’s *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587), Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* (1589), and William Shakespeare and George Peele’s *Titus Andronicus* (1592). All four plays feature Moorish, Turkish and/or Jewish characters. These were visible figures in the commercial playhouses of Elizabethan England. Between 1586 and 1611, Louis Wann identifies 32 written or staged plays with Eastern characters (Wann 1915: 426). The *Catalogue* of Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson indexes 25 plays with Eastern characters during the same period (Wiggins and Richardson 2012-2013).

This thesis highlights the roles that Eastern figures play in relation to a range of cultural, socio-political, and religious concerns in late Elizabethan England. Historical, literary, and non-literary works pertinent to the links between West and East in this period are consulted and used for contextualisation. Although I focus mainly on the figure of the Moor and Turk, the term ‘Eastern’ may at times include the Arab/Saracen, non-Northern African, and Jew. Though these Eastern characters habitually reflected the general spirit of European biblical, cultural, and ideological conceptions of the foreigners, they at times were used to heighten audiences’ awareness of specifically English local and foreign issues during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. During those years, England experienced national and international troubles which contributed to a heightened sense of ‘Englishness’ and nationalism (Kermode 2009: 1-22). At the time that my selected plays were written, the main concerns included England’s royal succession, national and international commerce, Church Reform, and England’s relations to Catholic Europe and to Eastern powers and dominions.

The figures of the Moor, Turk and Jew, I argue, were used to mirror and comment on English domestic concerns and anxieties, even though in the roles they played, those Eastern characters tapped into broader stereotypes of evil Eastern corruption, and exemplified all non-Christian and non-English vices.¹ Their treacherous natures or pagan faiths were often used to describe Catholicism; and their black colour was transferred to

¹ Most critics view Eastern characters in Elizabethan drama within the inherited discriminatory, stereotypical scope of hostile race, colour, and faith. To Daniel Vitkus, the Moor and Turk ‘more often [...] signified a generalized Islamic identity’ (2003: 91). See also Anthony Barthelemy (1987: 3-17). To Jonathan Burton, ‘the speeches of the Moors and Indians of Lord Mayor’s Day indicate that dark-skinned characters immediately aroused religious interest and/or anxiety’ (2005: 162); See also Nabil Matar (1999: 19-41), Eric Griffin (2014: 13-36), and Ania Loomba (2002: 71).

the black devil of Rome. Especially at times of political tension, Eastern characters are used to reflect aspects of the Christians who usually spurn them as savage strangers; the Black Legend pamphlets against Catholics and Spaniards best illustrate this point.

Peele's *Alcazar* is pioneering in its use and abuse of the figure of the Moor/Turk. In its treatment of the succession conflict in North Africa, the play reflects on the impending English succession crisis. Queen Elizabeth had not named a successor and drama afforded society a way of obliquely discussing this pressing concern. Similarly, Greene's *Alphonsus* alludes to the issue not only by highlighting the dangers of losing a crown, but also by satirising prophecies which predict the looming end of the Tudor dynasty. Like Peele's play, *Alphonsus* emphasises the importance of taking action to protect the throne and shows the attendant hardships of losing or regaining a crown with the aid of loyal followers. England's succession was underscored by foreign and English public and parliamentary interest in Queen Elizabeth I's marriage prospects.² John Foxe — years before those plays appeared — had underlined the danger that likely results from the lack of a successor. Interestingly, Foxe relates this threat to Rome as far back as England's beginning:

it so happening that Lucius the christian king died without issue. For thereby such trouble and variance fell among the Britons (as it happeneth in all other realms, and namely in this realm of England, whensoever succession lacketh), that not only they brought upon them the idolatrous Romans, and at length the Saxons, but also enwrapped themselves in such misery and desolation, as yet to this day amongst them remaineth. Such a thing it is where a prince or a king is in a kingdom there to lack succession, as especially in this case may appear. For after the death of Lucius, when the barons and nobles of the land could not accord within themselves upon succession of the crown, the Romans stept in and got the crown into their own hands, whereupon followed great misery and ruin to the realm. (Foxe [1583] 1853: 310-311)

The lack of a successor for Lucius means that Britain finds itself under Roman control, a threat that Elizabethans feared most. Succession had been a contested topic since the Parliament of 1559. The Queen banned its discussion in 1571, but in the final decades of her reign the topic was again pressing. *Alcazar*, *Alphonsus*, and *Titus* all show not only the serious troubles that the lack of a named successor may bring about, but also the heinous

² For decades, scholars have been occupied with the Elizabethan succession crisis and its portrayal in drama. See Gertrude Reese (1942: 61), Marie Axton (1977: 47), Alison Findlay (1994: 2), Greg Walker (1998: 202-220), Patrick Collinson (2003: 93), Brian Walsh (2010: 76), and Lisa Hopkins (2016: 19-36). While critics of *Alcazar* discuss succession in the play, none relates it to the English succession crisis. Most often they relate it to the usurpation of the Portuguese throne by Philip II. See Albert Braunmuller (1983: 79), Juan Salces (1996: 174), Peter Hyland (1999: 92), Scott Oldenburg (2001: 55), Reid Barbour (2004: 20 paras), Eric Griffin (2010: 103), and Paulina Kewes (2016: 564).

conspiracies and rebellions surrounding the usurpation of a vacant crown. To varying degrees, the three plays use the figure of the Moor/Turk to articulate these anxieties.

Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* points to the political and socio-economic dangers that strangers posed in the late 1580s through the 1590s. Along with Shakespeare's *Titus*, it stages the dual threat that Spain and Rome posed to Europe in general and England in particular. Those dangers gave rise to a widely publicised aggressive discourse that is commonly referred to as the 'Spanish Black Legend', which I read especially in relation to *Titus*.³ In themes, representation of foreign characters (especially Moors, Turks, and Jews), and proximity in terms of writing and staging, the four plays reflect on the troubled environment of Queen Elizabeth's last years.

During this period, discussions of Moors, Turks, and Jews could be found in travel narratives, discourses of trade adventures, and political and theological pamphlets, all of which provided fodder for the commercial theatres. Since this thesis investigates the social, political, and religious functions of Eastern characters on the Elizabethan stage. I opted for plays in which the setting is a meeting point between West and East. Such settings shed light on the extensive contacts between the two parts of the world and point to the playwrights' relative familiarity with and interest in Eastern figures. While the interaction between the two demotes and denigrates the 'other', it mainly reflects current domestic threats and concerns. The Easterner is thus used to address issues relevant to England. Therefore, I exclude plays like Greene's *Selimus I* (1592) and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine's* two parts (1587-1588) which are set entirely in the East and mostly portray Eastern characters. I also limit the timespan of my study to the late 1580s and early 1590s because in this period England witnessed the height of Papal-endorsed Spanish aggression, and the stage saw the first rapid succession of Eastern characters.⁴ Fears of Spain are amongst the most prominent of English political anxieties, and the Moor is used to reflect this concern. Prior to the launch of the commercial playhouses in 1576,⁵ Moors and Turks appeared in

³ See Julián Juderías (1912), Mark Sanchez (2004: 59), Walter Mignolo (2008: 313), Barbara Fuchs (2009: 116), David Goldstein (2009: 99-133), Eric Griffin (2009: 97-134), Anne Orford (2011: 143-149), Jonathan Hart (2015: 57-62), and Noemie Ndiaye (2016: 59-80).

⁴ See Patrick Collinson (1987: 402-410), Robert Williams (1992: 80-81), Nabil Matar (1995: 83), Gerald Anderson and Robert Schreiter (1999: 10), Scott Oldenburg (2001: 54), Claire Jowitt (2003: 72-74), Frank Ardolino (2005: 147-148), Benedict Robinson (2009: 407), and Eric Griffin (2010: 98, 102, 104, 111).

⁵ According to Andrew Gurr, the first Amphitheatre, the Red Lion, was built in 1567 for John Brayne. At that point, actors had no 'government protection' and the Red Lion was 'probably as temporary in its playing life as in its design' (Gurr 1992: 117). The Red Lion 'does not seem to have been a great success, and may have been constructed too soon to be securely profitable as a regular venue for a playing company'. 'The first royal patent for a company of adult players' was

masques and pageants as early as 1510 (Barthelemy 1987: 19-20).⁶ Less than a decade after the theatres opened, Moors and Turks populated the stage, a fact that underscores the discussion of political concerns by both playwrights and audiences.

Towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign, Spain and Rome became less of a threat to England. After the accession of James I, the relations between England and Spain became more peaceful. James I signed the Treaty of London in 1604 which ended the Anglo-Spanish war.⁷ While Eastern figures remain on the English stage, they show an obvious change in gender and function (a point which I discuss further in the conclusion).

Therefore, I have eliminated later plays like Thomas Dekker's *Lust's Dominion, or The Lascivious Queen* (1600) and Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604) because they do not reflect the unique religio-political tensions of the late 1580s-early 1590s. Set in Spain, Dekker's play presents corrupt religious institutions and friars similar to those I treat in *The Jew of Malta* and *Titus Andronicus* (Bowers 1980: 65-66). *Othello* is only an individual Moor and the play's Turks, though alluded to, do not appear.

In plays like Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), Turks and Moors play relatively minor roles. In Kyd's play they appear in a short scene as characters in a play within the play. The short appearance of the Prince of Morocco in Shakespeare's *Merchant* mainly demonstrates the association between the Moorish Prince and the Prince of Darkness, and the influence of climate on his colour — a sign of evil that George Best (1578) traces back to the 'curse of Ham' (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 263-264; IX Genesis 18-27). I address this point in the last chapter in relation to *Titus'* Aaron. Unlike the excluded plays, the ones in this thesis offer representative samples of major Moorish and Turkish characters that are used as vehicles to comment on important Elizabethan concerns at a period of heightened tension. The four

soon granted on 10 May 1574 (Gurr 1992: 30). In 1576, James Burbage established 'his own permanent playing headquarters in London' called The Theatre (Gurr 1992: 30). Owing to social change, Douglas Bruster finds a correlation between the establishment of the theatre and the emerging market; both the Red Lion and the Royal Exchange were constructed (in 1566-67) as institutions (Bruster 1992: 3-4). I use the year 1576 when referring to the opening of the public theatres in England.

⁶ 'Masques were celebrations that sanctioned behavior outside the usual boundaries of decorum, Moors, as well as other exotics such as Turks [...] served well as symbols of the extravagance of these events' (Barthelemy 1987: 19-20).

⁷ Reasons for Rome and Spain's hostility to Elizabeth I go back to the decision of King Henry VIII to assume supremacy over the Church of England. Queen Elizabeth continued her father's stance and continued to oppose the Catholicism of Rome and Spain. King Philip II of Spain had ambitions that threatened England (including the promotion of the right of Mary Queen of Scots to the English throne). The politics of the time led not only to Elizabeth I's excommunication but also to the Spanish invasion of England in 1588; the possibility of a reinvasion continued to haunt the Protestant English until James I assumed power and smoothed relations with Spain and other Catholic powers (Croft 2003: 48-68, especially 51-52).

plays I discuss feature Moors/Turks who are more central to the action and, as such, are more nuanced, rounded characters. Grouped together, they effectively speak to each other and to their audiences. As the products of a fraught moment in early modern English history, they allow their audiences to participate in urgent religio-political debates.

1. West-East Contacts

This section presents a time map of contacts between West and East before England joined the European traffic in the Mediterranean. The reasons for Europe's increased interest in the East during the sixteenth century were varied and many. In addition to pilgrimages to the holy lands, political and self-serving interests motivated and informed Western contacts and relations with the East. Nor were those contacts new. During the centuries of the pagan and Christian Roman Empires, West and East (the known world at the time) were interlocked in times of conflict and of peace. Warwick Ball sums up the West-East mutual and influential interaction:

We look to Rome for our own European roots. But Rome itself looked East. The Roman East had an immense impact upon Europe in a way that no other part of the empire had. Christianity is the most obvious, but there were many other ways, more subtle but equally important, that the East dominated Rome from the beginning of the imperial expansion. The East was Rome's greatest source of wealth [...]. After contact with eastern royalty Rome itself became a monarchy. From mythological origins in Troy to Syrian emperors of Rome to oriental religious, intellectual and architectural influences, the East transformed Rome. Through this contact, Near Eastern civilisation transformed Europe. The story of Rome is a story of fascination for the East, a fascination that amounted to an obsession. (Ball 2002: 1)⁸

Other than Alexander the Great, Trajan (a Spaniard) was the first to stand on the shores of the Arabian Gulf in 116 CE (Ball 2002: 2). In later times, Christian West and Muslim East were similarly interlocked. By the early modern period, North Africa and Near Eastern territories were well-trodden for religious, geopolitical, and commercial purposes.

The increased presence of Moorish and Turkish figures on the Elizabethan stage prolongs the Roman 'obsession' and testifies to an active political and economic engagement with Eastern people and lands. Recent scholarship on the Moor/Turk has been as active in retracing these relations and interests and in paying the 'Moor-Blackamoor' or 'Turk' careful attention. These works have demonstrated that Europeans (particularly French, Portuguese, Spanish, and the people of Italian city-states) had been in continuous close contacts with the lands and people of the Middle East and North Africa since medieval times (Blanks and Frassetto 1999; Birchwood and Dimmock 2005).

⁸ See also Warwick Ball (2002: 8-29), Donald Nicol (2009: 1-10), Henri Pirenne (2012: 147-185), and Greg Fisher (2011: 34-71).

1.1 England and the Moor

Prior to the launch of London's public theatres, the Moor/Turk had been a visible figure in European socio-culture and familiar to all classes. In England and Scotland, the Easterner's real and textual presence was as familiar. This familiarity owed much to the crusades' written discourses, pilgrimage narratives, and real or imaginative travel reports. Those sources fully or partially informed and defined the roles the Moor would play on the Elizabethan stage in the late 1580s and early 1590s. The specific focus of my thesis (late 1580s and early 1590s) reflects the services that the Easterner renders to the native English anxieties during a time of mounting troubles with other European powers.

England was not as commercially active in Eastern countries as other European states during late medieval and early modern periods. The case, however, had changed since the mid-sixteenth century. Historians conventionally dated England's diplomatic and commercial involvement in the Mediterranean world to the 1570s or, at the earliest, the 1550s (Vitkus 2007: 75-76).⁹ However, the presence of Moors in England goes back much further. During the Roman invasion of Britain, Roman Emperors Septimius Severus and Hadrian had Ethiopians or Africans in their armies (Fryer 1984: 1-13; Edwards 1990: 1-25).¹⁰ Septimius Severus himself was a Phoenician Libyan who, after conquering Mesopotamia, would lead his campaign against Britain (Ball 2002: 18). English history annals and official records testify to continuous English contacts with Eastern and African Moors.

Outside of Europe, the crusades were perhaps obvious occasions for such contacts. Though they were supposedly aggressive military campaigns, the crusades led many Europeans to settle along the Mediterranean Eastern coasts from Ascalon near Jerusalem to Antioch and Alexandretta in northern Syria. In his *Rihla (Travels)*, Muhammad Ibn Jubayr had, in early September 1184 marvelled at the harmonious relationship between the Christian settlers and the native Muslims.¹¹ Other than being required to pay a reasonable annual poll tax, Muslims in European controlled territories:

are not interfered with [...] Their houses and all their effects are left to their possession. All the coastal cities occupied by the Franks are managed in this

⁹ Lawrence Danson wrote, the English 'were late comers: Queen Elizabeth chartered the Levant Company in 1581, by which time England's European rivals were already well established in the eastern and southern trade' (2002: 1).

¹⁰ For Emperor Septimius Severus and the black Ethiopians in Carlisle, England, see G. P. Goold (1991: 425-426).

¹¹ I am using the English translation of Ronald Broadhurst (1952). For the Arabic text see William Wright (1907: 301-302).

fashion, their rural districts, the villages and farms, belonging to the Muslims. (Ibn Jubayr [n.d.] 1952: 316)

Ibn Jubayr becomes incensed, nevertheless. This comfortable life is threatening to Islamic faith itself. The ‘Hearts’ of the Muslims, he wrote:

have been seduced, for they observe how unlike them in ease and comfort are their brethren in the Muslim regions under their (Muslim) governors. This is one of the misfortunes afflicting the Muslims. The Muslim community bewails the injustices of a landlord of its own faith, and applauds the conduct of its opponent and enemy, the Frankish landlord, and is accustomed to justice from him. (Ibn Jubayr [n.d.] 1952: 317)

Such instances confirm the familiarity of each world with the ‘other’ and eventually give rise to the textual and physical presence of Eastern characters in European accounts and, later on, the English stage. In the *Principal Navigations*, Richard Hakluyt collected every available piece of information on English nationals who, individually or in groups, made it to the East between the years 1130-1457 (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 4.307-457).

‘Athelard a Monke of the Abbie of Bathe’ travelled ‘through Egypt, and Arabia’ to return ‘again into his Countrey: he flourished in the yeere 1130’ (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 4.307). Among the numerable lords, knights, soldiers, and pilgrims Hakluyt named two interesting poets. ‘Richard surnamed Canonicus’ who ‘grew to bee such an Oratour and Poet’ was a favourite of King Richard with whom Canonicus ‘undertooke that long voyage [...] into Palestina and Syria agaynst the Turkes’. When he returned to England, Canonicus ‘faithfully described both in Verse and Prose all such things as hee had seene in the Cities, fieldes and tentes of the souldiours, where hee was present’ and that he ‘flourished in the yeere of our Redemption 1200. Under John king of England’ (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 4.343-344). Like Canonicus, William the Pilgrim, ‘a very excellent Poet in those dayes and an Englishman borne, was of great fame, being much given to good letters’. He too caught wind of ‘the preparation of king Richard against the Saracens’ and joined the campaign. ‘He sawe those things which happened in the Spanish Seas, and which were done in Syria and Palestina, against the Sultan the king of Babylon, and the trecherous Saracens’. Finally, he ‘wrote and expressed’ what he saw ‘in lively colours, as if they had bene still in doing before his eyes, and handled the same Argument in Heroicall verse which the forenamed Richard Canonicus did’ (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 4.345).

Recent research has unearthed many cases of Moorish presence in England and Scotland. In ‘Black People in Tudor England’, Marika Sherwood cites a July [26] 1205 entry in the *Close Rolls* of King John, showing a ‘mandate to the constable Northampton to retain Peter the Saracen, the maker of crossbows, and another with him, for the King’s service, and allow him 9d a day’ (Sherwood 2003: 40-42; Bentley 1831: 395). Edward

Churton names two Englishmen, ‘John Inglis a Londoner, and William Scot an Oxford-man’, who in 1200 ‘undertook the first embassy to Morocco’, representing the ‘Order of Trinitarian Friars for the Redemption of Captives’, founded by John de Matha and sanctioned by Pope Innocent III in 1198. They succeeded in redeeming Christian slaves ‘by the hundreds’ (Churton 1862: 56-57). These two seem to have escaped the attention of historians who, instead, focus on Matthew Paris’ scandalous report of the embassy King John supposedly sent in 1211 to the King of Morocco, Muhammad al-Nasir (Paris [1259] 1874: 559-564).¹²

During the early modern period, slavery becomes one more means of contact between East and West. English investment in Moorish slaves predates the commonly acknowledged time of the 1570s. Gustav Ungerer takes issue with the misconception of dating English involvement in the trade to the 1550s. Drawing on official records, Ungerer asserts that English trafficking in Moroccan ‘Moors and Mooresess’ goes back to the 1480s (Ungerer 2003: 91-92). At the beginning of the sixteenth century (1501), Katherine of Aragon is credited for having introduced the Moors to England.¹³ Imtiaz Habib quotes from a letter that Thomas More wrote to John Holt on the arrival of her retinue:

But the Spanish escort — good heavens! — what a sight! If you had seen it, I am afraid you would have burst with laughter; they were so ludicrous. Except for three, or at the most four of them, they were just too much to look at: hunchbacked, undersized, barefoot Pagmies from Ethiopia. If you had been there, you would have thought they were refugees from hell. (Habib 2008: 24n14)

For More, the Ethiopians accompanying the Princess are quite a spectacle, unlike the Moroccans from whom Inglis and Scot redeemed Christian captives ‘by the hundreds’ (Churton 1862: 56-57). The two cases, centuries apart, show the difference between a Moor as a strong opponent in his own land and a Moor transformed into spectacle or entertainment in a London street or a Westminster banquet hall. To Westerners, the familiarity with the Moor and/or Turk was not limited to More’s racially loaded account. The Easterner might also be presented as a weighty rival, a villain of the Elizabethan stage, an abnormal curiosity encountered in Othello’s charming tales, or on pages like those of *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (1355). Recent scholarship has underscored this familiarity. Miranda Kaufmann has recently established the surprising diversity of the

¹² See also John Giles (1849: 283-286), Nevill Barbour (1960: 373-381; 1962: 189-213), Nicholas Vincent (1999: 200-201), and Alice Taylor (2008: 115).

¹³ Imtiaz Habib details the arrival of ‘the Spanish princess [...] in England with her royal retinue that had several black people in it’ (2008: 23).

figure of the Moor in England (2017). Most famous perhaps among those is John Blanke, the trumpeter of King Henry VII and King Henry VIII (Fryer 1984: 4).¹⁴

This familiarity with the Moors and Turks runs across the English socio-cultural milieu, from royal circles to public theatres. Katherine's husband King Henry VIII played the 'Turk' on 'Shrove Sunday' in the first year of his reign (1509-1510), as part of a performance with other dignitaries. Edward Hall's *Chronicle* details the show: 'the kyng prepared a goodly banket, in the Parliament Chambre at Westminster, for all the Ambassadors, whiche, then wer here, out of diverse realmes and countries'. Once guests were seated, 'Sodainly the kyng was gone' to return shortly 'with the Erle of Essex':

appareled after Turkey fashion, in long robes of Bawdkin, powdered with gold, hattes on their heddes of Crimosyn Velvet, with greate rolles of Gold, girded with two swordes, called Cimiteries, hangyng by greate bawderikes of gold. [...] The torchebearers were appareyled in Crymosyn satyne and grene, lyke Moreskoes, their faces blacke. (Hall 1548: 513)

The exotically rich and glamorous details of the fashion underscore Henry's material and cultural wealth and the impersonation of the Turk constitutes a domestication of the enemy.¹⁵ The performance, a kind of *Masque*, included high rank females. The King's sister Mary Tudor, the future Queen of France, played the 'nygrost'. As Hall reports, six disguised ladies, richly attired, entered the hall in pairs:

their heades roulded in pleasauntes and typpers lyke the Egipcians, enbroudered with gold. Their faces, neckes, armes and handes, covered with fyne pleasaunce blacke: Some call it Lumberdynes, which is merveylous thine, so that the same ladies semed to be nygrost or blacke Mores. Of these foresayed. vi. ladyes, the lady Mary, syster unto the kyng was one, the other I name not. (Hall 1548: 514)

This festive scene contrasts sharply with Queen Katherine's retinue in More's letter. It is rather entertaining with its brilliant exotic Turkish fashion and the elegance of the six English 'black' ladies. Unlike the real Moors of Katherine's entourage, the elite players of the banquet are only playing the Moor. In contrast to the ridiculed and diminished Moors of the Spanish Princess, those in costume are well received. The change of spectacle from real Moors to English men and women in Moorish and Turkish costumes underscores the English interest in the exotic Eastern figure and anticipates the display of the Moor/Turk characters on the stage. A year or two earlier, King James IV of Scotland played a more spectacular scene with a black lady of his court.

¹⁴ For John Blanke's detailed biography and career, see Miranda Kaufmann (2017: 7-31) and Michael Ohajuru (2020: 7-25).

¹⁵ At this time, Henry VIII did not seem to be as hostile as other European princes towards the Turk. At times he was willing to join the suggested 1518 crusade against Selim I; but for him, the real 'Turk' remained Francis I, King of France (Scarbrick 1968: 70; Potter 2011: 78-79; Hayward 2017: 16-17).

In Scotland, critics date the Moorish community to around 1500, and the Court of King James IV had at least two Moorish girls and a famous Moorish choreographer and drummer ('traubronar') (Fryer 1984: 2-4; Edwards 1990: 8-10). Their presence in the court and the lavish expenses the three received are duly recorded in the *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland* for the years 1500-1507.¹⁶ Their participations in court entertainments are documented in the famous 1507 and 1508 tournament of 'The Black Knight and the Black Lady' (Fryer 1984: 3). King James himself played the Knight and one of the black girls (Ane Moir) played the Lady. The Scottish poet William Dunbar commemorated the event and the lady in his parodic blazon 'Of Ane Blak-Moir'.¹⁷ Almost a century later, in 1594, Moors and Turks made their appearance in Stirling during the three-day festivities of the baptism of Prince Henry, first son of James VI (Powers 2005: 3-22; Bath 2012: 6-12 of 20 paras).

Queen Elizabeth I too had her 'Blackamoore boy' who seems to have enjoyed her royal generosity. Historians have verified his recorded presence in the Queen's residences for at least a full year (April 14, 1574 until the next April). During this period, she issued two warrants for his clothing and shoes (Arnold 1988: 106). Outside the royal residences, Habib locates on a map the places where some black people resided in London (Habib 2016: 163-171). Blackamoore attendants and entertainers seem to have been closely associated with the royal courts of Spain, England, and Scotland throughout the sixteenth century. It should be no surprise that Peele's *Alcazar* seizes the moment of the royal succession of Morocco to focus on the anxieties of the English succession crisis.

The contact with Moors, however, was not limited to Royal Courts and entertainment. Hakluyt traced trading with the Moors to 1511 and documented the continuity of such trade with the Turks through the 1550s (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 5.62-63).¹⁸ In the second half of the sixteenth century, England's commercial contacts with North Africa and later with the Levant became more frequently recorded. Of an English trading voyage to Barbary in 1551, one James Alday wrote: 'there were two Moores, being noble men, whereof one was of the Kings blood, convayed by the said Master Thomas Windham into their Countrey out of England' (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 6.137). Due to such frequent contacts with Moors and their presence throughout Europe,

¹⁶ See especially Vol. III. (Paul 1901: xlv-lix, cii, 94, 113-114, 120-121, 155, 172, 175, 182, 260, 361, 311, 325, 336, 346, 368, 371, 387-388, 409).

¹⁷ For comments on the tournament, see Sir James Balfour Paul (1901: 3.xlv-lix); on the poem, see Robert Fleissner (1980: 88-96).

¹⁸ See also 6.62-69; 71-105.

Andrew Boorde, an English ‘physiche doctor’, had enough familiarity with the Moors to classify them into blacks and whites (1555: 212-217).¹⁹

To critics, Elizabethan commercial trade and diplomacy initiated ‘extensive contacts [...] between England and Morocco’ (D’Amico 1991: 8). By the late 1570s and early 1580s ‘suddenly there was a tremendous increase in the circulation of goods, people, texts, and ideas between the Mediterranean and England’ (Vitkus 2007: 77). Whether in travel narratives or pilgrimage accounts, reports on trade voyages or piracy, history annals and pamphlets, religious sermons, or on stage, the Moor/Turk was a familiar *textual* and *physical* presence in Tudor England. Introducing his edited collection, *Three Turk Plays: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado*, Vitkus writes: ‘For London theatergoers, the Turk was not an imaginary bogey, and the Turk plays in this volume are not simply fantasies about fictional demons lurking at the edges of the civilized world’ (Vitkus 2000: 3). Indeed, for Matar, the presence of real Moors triggered the interest of London theatres. In *Britain and Barbary*, Matar asserts: ‘[a]t no other period in early modern English history did more plays include Moorish characters than in the second half of the Elizabethan period’ (Matar 2005: 12). If Thomas More gives a written account of the ‘refugees from hell’ (Habib 2008: 24), Matar draws a causal correlation between actual Moroccan envoys and the presence of Moors on the stage:

All the plays appeared soon after the arrival in England of delegations from Morocco: Moors on the streets of London in 1589, 1595, 1600 led to Moors on the stage. [...] Moors on the Elizabethan stage were not, therefore, just a product of literary invention, the European legacy of race discrimination, or biblical denunciations of the sons of Ham: they were a direct result of England’s diplomatic initiative into Islamic affairs and of the negotiations and collusions that took place between Queen Elizabeth and Mulay Ahmad al-Mansur. (Matar 2005: 13)

This causal correlation is somewhat exaggerated; as I have shown, travel narratives, commercial voyages, and political and religious discourses introduced the figure of the Moor/Turk before the late 1570s. Stephan Schmuck points out that:

Before the first ‘Turks’ and Moors appeared on the stages of the Globe or the Rose, court culture had already appropriated them in a number of masks and interludes: *The Mask of Moors and Amazons* (1551), *A Mask of Goddesses, Huntress, with Turkish Women* (1555), *A Mask of Turks Magistrates with Turks Archers* (1555), *A Mask of Moors* (1559), and *A Mask of Turks* (1559). All these masks are now lost, but their nominal use of the ‘other’ testifies to the seeming popularity of these figures. (Schmuck 2006: 18)

¹⁹ His book is printed in 1555, but the dedication is dated the 3rd of May 1542. For Boorde, both black and white Moors are morally the same. He travelled to Spanish controlled territories in North Africa and introduced to England the plant of the rhubarb (Furdell 2008: 3 of 5 paras).

Many titles of non-extant and extant plays predate 1589 (the year the first North African envoy visited the English Court). The increasing textual and physical presence of the Moor/Turk is a historical fact that was translated into dramatic representation.

The encounter with the racial or religious ‘other’ always involves suspicion. Ibn Jubayr finds a serious fault with the Muslims’ ease and comfort of life under the ‘Franks’. Thomas More finds the Moors in London to be laughable ‘refugees from hell’, the expression combining his sense of their insignificance and his expectation of their punishment in the afterlife (Habib 2008: 24). This suspicion of the Moor or Turk is heightened in textual encounters between nations and/or religions. Textualisation and staging of the ‘other’ seem to be a defensive strategy to control and manage the perceived threat. Distortion, demonisation, and alienation are ways of justifying animosity to the ‘other’, be the ‘other’ a person, race, nation or ideology. To the Elizabethans, the Moor/Turk not only served a sense of superior English identity but also provided a language to criticise England’s rivals; his adverse drawbacks and vices were transferred to England’s enemies, especially papal Rome and Catholic Spain.

Like Nabil Matar, Jerry Brotton in *This Orient Isle* (2016) aptly titles a chapter ‘London Turns Turk’. He starts with the embassy to London of the Moroccan envoy Ahmad Bilqasim (otherwise named Marzuq Rais) in January 1589. Brotton too relates the Moor’s physical presence in London to the city’s theatrical culture. Had the envoy Bilqasim visited the theatre during his London stay, Brotton suggests, he would have seen what ‘might have startled him’. That is, the Moroccan could have seen, in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*, ‘scenes and characters from Islamic history with which Bilqasim would have been very familiar, even though their version of events would not have been one he recognised’ (Brotton 2016: 157-158). It would have been interesting had Bilqasim encountered *Tamburlaine* at the ‘Rose’ commercial playhouse, but as far as we know he had not. Bilqasim’s failure becomes an opportunity for Brotton to leave Bilqasim behind and to highlight Marlowe’s intervention in the history of English drama. Brotton will later also wish that Bilqasim visited the theatre and saw his Moroccan monarch Ahmad al-Mansur in Peele’s *Alcazar*. Had he done that, Bilqasim would have also been ‘startled’ to find his Prince renamed ‘Mahamet Seth’ (Brotton 2016: 166). This distortion beyond recognition of the Tartars/Moors does not seem to interest Brotton. Instead, he finds these characters help to bolster the literary reputation of the playwright. This distortion seems inevitable when the Moor/Easterner stands for the European or serves issues pertinent to his/its European ‘other’ as is the case in pamphlets of the Spanish Black Legend. In *Alcazar*, as will be seen later, the Moors served the English national drive to protect the

English crown and the pressing concern of succession. To Peele, historical accuracy was irrelevant as long as the main English issues were presented. Paying little attention to the serious issue of the Moorish succession and its reflection of the English succession at the time Brotton misses the point of the distorted history of the Moors. Bilqasim might have been startled by *Alcazar*'s version of his own history; but such a distortion can also be found in pilgrimage reports, travel narratives, history annals, and even in recent scholarship on Moorish matters and characters. The 'use or abuse' (Brotton's 'startling revision') remains constant even in the work of sympathetic critics. Matar uses the numbers of Moors on London streets and stage to emphasise al-Mansur's power. Vitkus attempts to purge theatrical monstrosities and 'fantasies' in favour of Turkish 'reality', ironically, in *Three Turk Plays*. For Vitkus, there is a clear correlation between the appearances of physical and textual Moor/Turk in sixteenth century London. Unlike critics interested in 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'colour', Matar, Vitkus, and Brotton are interested in the plays not so much as literary works, but as documents reflecting historical, religious, political, economic and cultural evidence. On the other hand, race, colour and ethnicity-focused critics, such as Emily Bartels, are more interested in exploring postmodern approaches and theories through exploiting the Moor/Turk. This character seems to be still serving his/its Western 'other'. The 'aliens' in England during the early modern period were not only Moors. Elizabethan England experienced a 'massive flux of immigrants' from Europe (Espinosa and Ruiters 2014: 5). These groups also provoked cultural and official hostile responses. Even those white Europeans were often criticised as being Moors, Jews or Turks. This is quite clear not only in politically motivated pamphlets like those of the Black Legend, but also in literary forms. Thus, we find the character Moor-Jew-Turk in Marlowe's *Malta*, Shakespeare's *Venice*, *Cyprus*, and *Rome*, Dekker's *Madrid*, and of course *Constantinople* and *London*.

Even in academic scholarship, the Moor/Turk receives no better treatment than a Moorish character receives in a play. In Brotton's study, for instance, the African Moor Bilqasim visited London in 1589 to promote political, economic, and commercial deals beneficial to both England and Morocco. He informed the Queen's government that Morocco was ready to cooperate with and participate in England's retaliatory campaign against Spain's recent aggression and in the intended crowning of Dom Antonio king of Portugal. Bilqasim also revealed his King's promise to fund the expedition and to grant the merchants of England generous commercial privileges. Brotton documents these facts (Brotton 2016: 154-156); however, in his book, Bilqasim becomes a Moorish 'character' as theatrical as any on the London stage. His spectacular and exotic entry to London is

meticulously detailed and emphasised (Ibid., 153).²⁰ Even his unfortunate failure to visit the Rose playhouse is associated by Brotton with the theatre, especially the unrecognisable King Mulay ‘Mahamet Seth’ in Peele’s *Alcazar*. Just as Bilqasim may have struggled to recognise his own King, religion, and history on the London stage, readers too, at the end of Brotton’s book, hardly recognise the envoy; he is now ‘disguised as a Portuguese nobleman’, leaving with the fleet of the generals, Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake (Ibid., 171). Only when mistaken for a ‘Portuguese’ does Bilqasim become a ‘nobleman’.

1.2 Colour, Race, and Ethnicity

England’s active involvement in the Mediterranean world coincided with the opening of the commercial playhouses in the 1570s. Over the following decades, the theatres saw the innovative works of Kyd, Marlowe, Greene, Peele, and Shakespeare who featured Moorish and/or Turkish characters. The Moor (black person, Ethiopian, African) had a long tradition going back in time to the ‘flood’ and ‘curse of Ham’. In sixteenth century plays, the Moor still portrayed the evils his black colour signified in religious discourses, mystery plays, and the ‘vice’ tradition of morality plays. To Medieval mystery writers, ‘long before the creation of man, the face of evil was frequently black. The black faces of the fallen angels signify their fall from grace and make visible the color of their damned souls’ (Barthelemy 1987: 72).

Morality plays too presented black demons who were then replaced by ‘a new kind of character, one who acts as Satan’s agent on earth. This character is the vice’. As morality plays evolved, vice had come to rely on deceit rather than physical appearance. ‘Rather than looking very different’, vice started to resemble ‘the faces in the audience [...] The agent of Satan learns to distinguish himself from the other characters by other means’ (Barthelemy 1987: 73). In time, vice turned into the stage villain which eventually led to ‘the evolution of the villain into a more visibly human character’ (Ibid., 75). Before the late 1580s, villains looked like other characters and could only be distinguished by their actions.

Barthelemy shows the indebtedness of Peele’s *Alcazar* to this tradition. The historical facts of the Battle of Alcazar, including Muly Mahamet’s colour, ‘saved Peele

²⁰ See also Henry Roberts, the Queen’s first ambassador to Morocco who describes how he and Bilqasim, on 12 January 1589, made a spectacular nocturnal entry to London by coach, escorted by some fifty English merchants on horseback with lit torches (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 6.428; cf. Ungerer 2003: 102).

the trouble of making allegorical that which, ironically, offered itself readily as allegory'. Peele, therefore,

fused two dramatic styles, the older allegorical with the newer mimetic [...] The audience is asked to view the new play not as the older dramatic form but as a new form that calls to mind the older one [...] Thus when the audience see Muly Mahamet behave in a manner in concert with its traditional views of blackness, the metaphor of blackness receives reconfirmation and renewed credibility in the real world. (Barthelemy 1987: 78-79)

This development is not limited to the presentation of inherited religious and moral themes; it extends to other Elizabethan issues. The Moor on the stage spoke also to pressing interests and concerns of the moment. 'The moment' here means the early modern moment and that of the modern/postmodern scholar. Historical research by critics like Matar, Vitkus, Brotton, and numerous others, has brought to light the Moor's increasing theatrical presence and augmented it with fresh archival knowledge that explains the Moor's political and cultural dimensions.

In Critical Race Studies, Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton trace the intricate history of the hostility to the 'other', especially the black Moor, in various fields (Loomba and Burton 2007: 1-36). In this critical orientation, Moorish 'characters' — Othello, Aaron, the Prince of Morocco, Eleazar, Tamburlaine or the Moors of *Alcazar* — are taken to challenge the racial prejudice of the superior white colonialist patriarch. Interestingly, for these critics the same Moor who, having earlier carried out theatrical conventions as a devil, monster, vice or exotic other, now occupies a different politico-cultural position and provides newer functions. The Moor is still 'black' and still under the gaze of the 'other' scholar. Bartels' *Speaking of the Moor* (2008) is a good example of this approach. In each of her four main chapters, Bartels focuses on well-known stage Moors: Shakespeare's Othello and Aaron, Dekker's Eleazar, and Peele's Moors in their African setting. The other three chapters are not theatre-based: one deals with Hakluyt's *Navigations* (1589-1600) in which Africa and Africans are prominent; another treats Queen Elizabeth's 1596 and 1601 deportation edicts of certain 'blackamors'; and the last addresses John Pory's translation of Leo Africanus' *The History and Description of Africa* (1550). Since I will be discussing Peele's *Alcazar*, I will limit my comments to Bartels' treatment of *Alcazar*'s Moors.

Bartels argues that key to early modern playwrights' interest in the Moor was their intellectual and cultural response to a nascent 'globalization moment' like our own (Bartels 2008: 7). The staging of the Moor at that Elizabethan moment was not simply a result of contacts with Moors. Rather, 'the impulse behind that staging was much broader, catalyzed not only by England's specific dealings with its Moroccan trading partners but also by the desire to come to terms with a more reaching and emergent globalization' (Bartels 2008:

17). Bartels' 'impulse' and 'desire' problematise, differentiate, and globalise the Moors to the point where the Moor eludes any codifications — be those 'any set or single racial, religious, or ethnic markers — by Africa or the New World, Islam or the Turks, by blackness or tawinness, or by anxiety-provoking strangeness' (Ibid., 16). The African Moor has a unique multiplicity in Peele's *Alcazar*, and the play illustrates a Moorish diversity which challenges any reductive readings. The historical battle, like Peele's play, involved not only an internal local conflict between two Moorish factions, Arabs, Turks, and a sizable regiment of renegades, but also European nationals (Portuguese, Germans, Italians, Spanish, English, among others). Again, this multiplicity is further enhanced by religious diversity — Christianity (Catholicism) versus Islam. To add to this diversity, the battle was said to be fought under the banner of 'Christ' to implant Christianity in Africa, and as such the battle becomes a justified 'crusade' (Hyland 1999: 97). To complicate matters further, Catholic Europeans are assisting one group of Moors against other Moors, and one Muslim group against another Muslim group. Protestant England too is covertly doing the same. Bartels highlights these differences and diversities to advance the thesis of 'globalization' and to speak 'of the Moor'.

Within this multiplicity Bartels, therefore, targets all defining parameters of identity, locality, ethnicity, colour, or nationality. In presenting 'black and white Moors', 'devilish Moors' and noble Moors, the play makes of the Moor 'him-/it-self' a multiplicity that defies any categories, and challenges any 'single or pure, culturally or racially bounded identity'. In short, the Moor 'is first and foremost a figure of uncoded and uncoded diversity' (Bartels 2008: 5). For Bartels, the play stages this puzzling diversity. *Alcazar*'s 'unorthodox mix of genres, convoluted display of Moroccan history, and repeated shifts in focus from one character to the next have baffled critics' (Ibid., 29). Critics, therefore, tend to reduce the diversity of the play and Moors to the discussion of the nationalism of Captain Stukeley or King Sebastian, or at best the political and military dangers in which England may find itself 'entangled'. The play, Bartels concedes, 'starts provincially, with a locally grounded and dramatically archaic revenge play', and does present 'nationally embraceable heroes'; but

as its political geography expands, the play presses significantly against the bounds of history, genre, race, and nation. On Peele's stage, Barbary provides a setting where not only Moors but also Turks, Spaniards, Portuguese, and an Englishman 'perform, in view of all the world'. And as they do, the play explores the dynamic, if unpredictable, interconnections that were shaping the Mediterranean. Within the space of Barbary, the ideals of nationalism necessarily give way, and what emerges in their stead is not a 'tangled web' but an evolving cross-cultural environment, contingent on political alliances and exchange, with the Moor providing the central model and means. (Bartels 2008: 30)

Globalisation dictates this final image of the Moor. Ironically, Bartels leaves the Moor dispersed and spread thin in relation to other European identities, in order to become ‘the central model and means’ instead of saving him from usual reductive approaches.

The Moor, now, is a transparent facilitator of what Bartels terms unpredictable ‘dynamic [...] interconnections’ in a wider space and environment, assuming a new function for the (post)modern scholar. Just what is the ‘model’ that Bartels identifies? A model looks like no one or thing; it is perhaps an abstract or *sense* that someone else may perceive, or is a pure difference. Uncodified and uncodifiable, the Moor melts and disappears to help create what Bartels terms the ‘evolving cross-cultural environment’ of the Mediterranean. The ideals of nationalism that ‘necessarily give way [...] within the space of Barbary’ (viz., within the Moor’s own space) are not his; he is probably incapable of having any; these are those of the Europeans ‘nationally embraceable heroes’ (Bartels 2008: 30). Just as Brotton left Bilqasim to fade away on a London street in order to foreground Marlowe’s lasting fame, so too does Bartels dissolve and disperse crowds of Moors and reduce them to a functional modality and means. In their own way, modern scholars see the ‘Moor’ as a figure to be exploited for their own ends, just as playwrights did centuries earlier.

In effect, Bartels frees the Moor from all identity codes, ethnicity classifications, colour markers, spatial localisation, nationality, cultural idiosyncrasies, and theatrical conventions. The critical reaction which her book received focused on her treatment of Peele’s play. Barthelemy lamented Bartels’ oversight of theatre conventions in her treatment of theatrical characters: ‘Underplaying the English native dramatic tradition and the significance of blackness within its conventions weakens her arguments’ (Barthelemy 2009: 151). A decade earlier Hyland levelled the same criticism against race and colour-oriented scholars, arguing that their ‘totalizing’ approaches ‘misrepresented and distorted some of the texts’ (Hyland 1999: 86). In approaching *Alcazar* and its villain, one must situate both within the conventions of Elizabethan drama; ‘Muly Mahamet clearly has roots in the morality Vice, and many of his villainous characteristics stem from this tradition’ (Ibid., 97). Further on Hyland reiterates, ‘Muly Mahamet’s villainy is not contingent upon his Moorishness or his religion, and comes as much from the stage history he inherited as from the cultural and political context in which he operates’ (Ibid., 99). Valid as this criticism (of Barthelemy and Hyland) may be, it does not answer the question ‘why’ must it come up in relation to the Moor/Turk?

As I will argue, Elizabethan playwrights ‘used’ and ‘abused’ the Moor to reflect standing Elizabethan concerns and anxieties; the politico-cultural characteristics coded in

the term Moor commend its convenient mobilisation against all threatening others. Recent critical studies of the Moor/Turk have exploited that malleability not only to bypass literary craftsmanship and genre conventions but also to enlist the same Moor/Turk to advance current ideological and cultural politics. Peele's play is a good case in point. Apart from its thundering rhetoric and being the first extant play to stage the Moor in a Moorish setting, critics agree on its troubling artistic qualities. Both Hyland and Bartels, though taking two opposing positions on the play, agree on its defective construction. For Hyland, the play 'is, to be sure, generally inept and frequently incoherent, and exhibits little actual knowledge of Islamic religion or culture' (Hyland 1999: 90; cf. 99). Similarly, Bartels believes that the play 'is, to be sure, creaky and erratic' and its 'earliest text [...] may even be a shortened performance script'. The play, she asserts, 'is unquestionably quirky, uneven and disjunct, having no single focal point but a series of several competing foci' (Bartels 2008: 29, 43 respectively).

Half a century ago, Leonard Ashley believed that apart from its 'theatrical production' and an already outdated high sounding rhetoric, the play has little to attract critical interest. In short, *Alcazar* is marked by 'such crudeness and dullness that it is impossible to admire it or love it at all. The literary critics have generally left it alone [...] The textual critics have seized upon it not as a play but as a problem' (L. Ashley 1970: 81-82). Two decades later, Bernard Beckerman used W. W. Greg's method in studying its 'performance plot', not to add to the play, but to see if other plots of other plays can add to our knowledge of the Elizabethan stage practice (Beckerman 1989: 109-124). Only with the recent critical interest in relationships between West and East has the play become pivotal. Bartels thus has read it within the politics of Globalisation. Critics of racial and ethnic studies find it useful to discuss it within modern day ideologies of race and ethnicity. Though Moorish in setting, plot and main characters *Alcazar*, I intend to show, speaks to pressing English issues of its time; and so do all the other plays I discuss in this thesis.

2. The English Succession Question in *The Battle of Alcazar* (1588/1589)

Throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the English succession was a pressing concern for the Elizabethans and other European powers, especially Spain and Rome. George Peele and Robert Greene both address this issue in their almost contemporaneous plays *The Battle of Alcazar* (1588/1589) and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587). Because public discussion of English succession had long been forbidden in the late 1580s, Peele and Greene treat the issue in relation to foreign settings and nations.²¹ In this chapter, I will address Peele's treatment of succession, and the role that the Moor/Turk fulfils in *Alcazar*.

The play opens with a political assassination and the usurpation of a crown from the legitimate heir. Peele seizes on the Moorish succession conflict in North Africa to address Elizabethan concerns about succession; this is a point that, despite recent interest in the play, critics have not considered. A close reading of the Presenter's opening part of the play and the first scene of Act One will show how the Moorish succession relates to England's succession crisis. Peele articulates this relation by echoing the language of the 'Bond of Association in Defence of Queen Elizabeth' (1584) and the Bond's promotion of the cause of the rightful successor. This is also true of the first part of Greene's *Alphonsus* which I discuss in the next chapter.

2.1 Historical Context

As noted in Chapter One, Tudor England was familiar with North Africa (both its people and geography).²² Historians and literary critics have documented the extensive contacts between Elizabethan England and what was commonly referred to as Barbary.²³ At the time Peele was writing, the figure of the Moor appears in travel narratives, reports on trade voyages, pilgrim journeys, and accounts of privateering and diplomacy. It is significant too that *Alcazar* was written and staged concurrently with the publication of Hakluyt's monumental *Principal Navigations* (1589-1600), a collection of texts promoting England's expansion and involvement in new land discoveries and world trade. In this collection,

²¹ Censorship also prohibits 'the stage representation of the reigning monarch' (Clare 1999: 11; cf. 103-104). See also Richard Dutton (2000: 121).

²² Jodocus Hondius' (1563-1612) 'Map of Barbary' encompasses modern day North Africa, Egypt excepted (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 5.494). Early modern critics use the terms Barbary and North Africa interchangeably.

²³ See the various works of D'Amico (1991), Matar (1995; 1998; 1999; 2001; 2008; 2014), Burton (2000; 2002; 2005), Vitkus (2000; 2003; 2007), Brotton (2002; 2016), Dimmock (2005; 2014), Ungerer (2008a; 2008b), and Habib (2008).

Africa and the Moors are frequently visited. Hakluyt's collection, to Bartels, is instrumental in shaping the 'fantasy' of England's imperialism, and appeared 'at just the moment when the Moor was becoming a prominent theatrical subject' (Bartels 2008: 45). Playwrights' interest in the figure of the Moor, especially after the launch of commercial playhouses, seems to emerge from his frequent physical and textual presence in such works. Recent scholarship on race, ethnicity and colour in the period shows a similar interest in the Moor. Peele's *Alcazar* is one manifestation of this interest. As I will argue, Peele 'uses' the figure of the Moor to reflect and echo domestic anxieties concerning the Elizabethan succession.

In brief, the historical material on which Peele based his play deals with the Moroccan Saadian dynasty and culminates in the historical Battle of Alcazar (known also as the 'Battle of Wadi al-Makhazen' and the 'Battle of the Three Kings'). On 4 August 1578, the Moroccan army massacred the invading Catholic forces, which were led by King Sebastian of Portugal. The King and most of the Portuguese nobility lost their lives. Two years later, King Philip II annexed Portugal to Spain. The historical event seems to have inspired Peele's *Alcazar*, and the myth of Sebastian's hidden survival invited not only pretenders but also literary works long after his death.²⁴ Peele's main source appeared in English in 1587.²⁵ Since the 1570s, the English socio-political climate seemed analogous to that of North Africa: Elizabeth's excommunication by way of a Papal Bull, Spain's interest in England, and the long preparation for and eventual launch of the 1588 Armada. All spoke to Spanish/Catholic threats to unseat Elizabeth I. By the late 1580s, with no named successor, England resembled the case of Portugal after the death of Sebastian's great-uncle Henry I in 1580. As I argue, Peele exploited the details of his source to highlight one English concern, the succession crisis.

Critics have explored some of the play's main issues. These include: patriotism, England's Protestant religion, the country's future security and politico-economic alliances in the aftermath of the events of 1588, and the aggression of Spain and the papacy.²⁶ However, the critics' neglect of the play's treatment of succession is rather strange in light

²⁴ Philip Massinger wrote *Believe as You List* (1631); but it was censored, and Massinger had to make proper changes; see Laurence Publicover (2017: 87-94). The most famous of the pretenders is the baker Gabriel de Espinosa; see Ruth MacKay (2012: 97-144).

²⁵ Critics agree that Thomas Freigius' account of the battle in *Historia de bello Africano* (1581) is Peele's main source. Its English translation appeared in John Poleman's *The Second Part of the Booke of Battailles, Fought in Our Age* (1587). See Warner Rice (1943: 428-429), Scott Oldenburg (2001: 46-62), Anthony Barthelemy (1987: 83), and Virginia Vaughan (2005: 42).

²⁶ These concerns were addressed by Nabil Matar (1995: 83), Scott Oldenburg (2001: 54), Claire Jowitt (2003: 72-74), Frank Ardolino (2005: 147-148), Benedict Robinson (2009: 407), and Eric Griffin (2010: 98, 102, 104, 111).

of the many factors that bring succession to the fore. The Queen had no children and was, by the late 1580s, beyond her childbearing years. The importance of succession for the English public, parliament members, and prominent figures was alive throughout Queen Elizabeth's reign. Various conspiring claimants and hostile foreign powers were also serious concerns. Succession was twice discussed officially in parliament (in 1559 and 1572) and in relation to the 1584 parliamentary bill (Bellamy 1979: 47-82; Tanner 1922: 375-381). Mary Stuart's trial in 1586 and execution in 1587 heightened the anxiety over the issue. The *Chronicles* of Raphael Holinshed (1587) detailed the conspiracy that English Catholics, Spain, and the Pope hatched for England and the English crown. All these made the question of succession of burning national and international concern (Collinson 1987: 402, 406-407).

In *Alcazar*, Peele uses the succession of the African Moors to emphasise its parallel importance to their English political and commercial allies as well as to theatregoers, and to vent a Protestant sentiment against Catholicism. In Peele's source and play, the conflict in Barbary is over a usurped throne. And the claimant to the usurped throne of Portugal, Dom Antonio, had been living in London (Brotton 2016: 85, 171-172; Maclean and Matar 2011: 51, 53-54). Peele's 1589 'Farewell' poem honouring the campaign of Norris and Drake is another timely reminder of his interest in foreign threats and the question of succession. One aim of the 1589 campaign was to install Dom Antonio on the Portuguese throne and to inflict further harm on Spain. Theatregoers would draw the analogy between the Moorish and English successions in light of King Philip's recent invasion and interest in the throne of England.

Alcazar opens with the Presenter narrating the history of the North African crisis. Long ago, the founder of the Saadian dynasty established the Moors' Agnatic Seniority law which mandated the succession of the eldest male as king, to be succeeded afterwards by the next brother in line, regardless of whether the reigning king had issue. The first (Abdallas in the play) reigned in peace. But before his death, Abdallas broke the law and named his son (Muly Mahamet, the play's black villain) as his successor. Once Abdallas had committed this treason, his brothers Abdelmelec and Mahamet Seth fled to Algiers, hoping to get Turkish help. Now they have returned to reclaim the throne and reinstate the succession law (Bovill 1952: 22; I. Prol. 57-60).

Since it is so distinct from the tradition of patrilineal succession to which Westerners are used, critics claim that Agnatic Seniority hardly invites English readers or audience to relate the Moors' succession conflict to English succession concerns. To Hyland, 'the rights of the issue could hardly have been clear' to the audience (or readers)

regarding the Moors' conflict 'over the throne of Fez and Morocco' (Hyland 1999: 91). He then concludes (following the spelling of the characters' names that Arabs usually use):

For English observers the right of Abd el-Malek, established by his father, obviously prevailed; yet there must have been some discomfort, to a people accustomed to a patrilineal model of succession, at the exclusion of Mohammad. (Ibid., 92)²⁷

That may well be true; yet it was not as outlandish as critics imply. After the death of Henry VIII, the crown passed to his son. Edward VI tried to advance his cousin from the Suffolk line as his successor: Lady Jane Grey (Mary Tudor's granddaughter [Henry VIII's sister]). However, Edward's sister, Mary Tudor (Henry VIII's daughter), won the succession claim and became queen. The crown finally passed to another sister (Elizabeth I). Alice Hunt clarifies that,

In 1544, due to the paucity of heirs (only Edward was named and he was a child), a third Act of Succession was drawn up. This act reinstated Princess Mary and Elizabeth as legitimate heirs to the throne should Edward die childless. Should Elizabeth die with no issue, then, the act decreed, the crown should pass to the children of Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary – the Suffolk line – and not to the Stuart line through Margaret, Henry's older sister. (A. Hunt 2008: 112-113)²⁸

Henry VIII's Third Act of Succession further states that the reigning monarch retains the right of naming a successor. Although Henry 'had decreed that he alone could exercise this prerogative' it did not prevent his descendants from exercising the same power (A. Hunt 2008: 113). These changes in the laws of succession would have made Moroccan customs seem less alien to an English audience. France witnessed a similar occurrence following the death of Henry II. Three of his children succeeded one another after him: Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III. Therefore, sibling succession in early modern Europe was not as unfamiliar as critics of *Alcazar* purport.

In Peele's *Alcazar*, however, other distancing factors underscore Abdulla's wrong choice and hide a direct reflection of the English succession. As noted earlier, the 1571 'ban statute' prohibited the public discussion of the issue.²⁹ Peele's historical source

²⁷ Reid Barbour discusses the same point: 'For English audiences, it would seem natural for a son to succeed a father according to the custom of primogeniture, and so the very premise of the play is as exotic as the setting' (2004: 10 of 20 paras).

²⁸ Henry VIII's attempt to exclude the Stuart line from the succession did not work and James I/VI succeeded to the throne in 1603 following Elizabeth's death.

²⁹ The ban appeared in the 1571 Acts of Treason concerning the Queen's legitimacy after the Pope's bull, the rebellion of Norfolk, and Mary Queen of Scots' claim to the throne. Elizabeth directed the Parliament to mind government matters and stop 'meddling' with her marriage and the issue of succession. In one section, the Acts deem it treason to claim a right of succession to the crown unless it was according to a 'forthcoming proclamation'. In all its sections, the 1571 Acts of Treason draw on Acts issued by Henry VIII in the 1530s and amended every time he remarried. Both Edward VI and Mary Tudor repealed and/or activated those Acts. See John Bellamy (1979: 47-82) and Joseph Tanner (1922: 375-381).

makes no direct connection to the English situation. From an English point of view, the play's villain Muly Mahamet is the patrilineal successor, having been named as heir by his father, and his uncle Abdelmelec, 'the rightful claimant', would appear to be the aggressor. The matter is further complicated for an Elizabethan audience because the patrilineal successor is the 'usurper' and the black stage villain prototype. Abdelmelec, the wronged fair-skinned Moor, on the other hand, is valiant, noble, and a Christian-like lord. Admirable as his characteristics may be, though, to the English audience (and to critics) Abdelmelec remains, at best, a 'Noble Saracen', familiar from the medieval literary tradition in texts like Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485).³⁰

Such an outlandish setting and complicated terms, however, are perhaps just what Peele needs, and what he exploits to evade the ban on the public discussion of English succession and the censorship of the Master of the Revels. The Moorish succession conflict thus serves its end without the risk of breaking any laws. It surely reminds the audience (and readers) not only of similar attempts at usurpation in England and in Europe, but also of the dire consequences of a monarch leaving a vacant throne without a rightful successor.³¹ King Philip II's annexation of Portugal in 1580 was not only a direct result of the historical Battle of Alcazar but was also carried out under the pretext of his being the rightful claimant to that vacant throne.

This context allows us to explore the relevance of the Moors' succession dispute for the English audience. Peele's careful treatment of the Moorish succession law and conflict, his own additions to his source, and the well-known results of the overwhelming Moorish victory over the allied European Catholic powers lend credibility to such a reading. The play comes a decade after the Spanish takeover of Portugal and is almost contemporaneous with Spain's similar assault on England. However, the strongest point that relates the play to the English succession and security of the throne is the language of the Bond and Oath of the 'Association in Defence of Queen Elizabeth'. Due to foreign and local Catholic threats to England and the person of the monarch, influential members of the government drafted the Bond as an instrument of governance in case of mishap, declaring

³⁰ 'Nina Dulin-Mallory points out, the Saracen Palomides [in the fifteenth-century fiction of Malory] is characterized as a great knight who possessed all the virtues usually ascribed to good Christian knights. Although ultimately accepting baptism, Palomides performed valiant and courageous acts as a Saracen' (Blanks and Frassetto 1999: 6).

³¹ In his comments on the Presenter's devices, Stukeley's role, and Sebastian's praise of Queen Elizabeth, Reid Barbour writes: 'These devices are especially helpful in keeping the audience on top of a complicated plot with its strange notions of succession. But the themes of the play could not be more familiar to Elizabethan audiences: the perils of illegitimate succession, of rebellion, and of ambition. Along the way, Peele makes sure that a character offers praise for Elizabeth and her Protestant nation' (2004: 10 of 20 paras).

England's resistance to any illegitimate successor. The seriousness of the 'Bond' is best illustrated by the profile of its influential subscribers:

Not only the Privy Council was at Hampton Court on 19 October 1584 to sign and seal its own copy but much of the seniority of the clergy of the southern province. Bishops, archdeacons, deans and heads of houses had made their way to the Court for this purpose, gathering in a kind of informal convocation. (Collinson 1987: 414)

As Collinson describes one instance, the ritual of the oath-taking underscores the sanctity of and commitment to the task:

The gentlemen of Lancashire came to Wigan church to witness the earl of Derby taking the oath first of all, bare-headed and on his knees before the bishop of Chester, who in his turn administered it to the bishop, followed by the gentry, six at a time. (Ibid., 414)

The sacred ceremony must have inspired awe and fear, if not alarm about imminent disasters.

The main points of the Bond assert that subscribers 'voluntarily and most willingly bind' themselves 'in the band of one firm and loyal society'. They further 'vow and promise' that, with their 'whole powers, bodies, lives and goods, and with [their] children and servants', they 'will faithfully serve, and humbly obey' their sovereign 'against all states, dignities and earthly powers'. And as long as they live, they will

withstand, offend, and pursue, as well by force of arms, as by all other means of revenge, all manner of persons, of whatsoever state they shall be, and their abettors, that shall attempt any act, or counsel or consent to any thing that shall tend to the harm of Her Majesty's royal person; and will never desist from all manner of forcible pursuit against such persons, to the utter extermination of them, their counsellors, aiders and abettors. (Oldys [1584] 1746: 124-125)³²

The Oath's language, ritualistic nature, and its commitment to revenge, and to the 'utter extermination' of the Queen's enemies, are as disturbing as any of the events in the play. Indeed, one historian sees nothing in the Bond but 'a naked appeal to the most primitive instincts of its signatories' (Plowden 1973: 204).³³ As I will argue, the flaying of Muly Mahamet's corpse at the end of the play can be read as the gross physical embodiment of the Oath's verbal emphasis. The Elizabethan audience would most likely remember the nationwide public promotion of this association and the preparations that the Queen's councillors were making for the possibility of an interregnum in case the throne was suddenly left vacant (Collinson 1987: 407-408).

³² Spelling modernised from 'A True Copy of the Instrument of Association, &c.', in *The Harleian Miscellany, &c.* (Oldys 1746). The original text was proposed by Burghley and Walsingham to the Privy Council meeting of 12 October 1584 (Marshall 2017: 551).

³³ For the history and development of the 'Bond', see Collinson (1987). For the far-reaching aims and implications of the 'Bond' for the sovereign, government, realm and the Church of England, see David Cressy (1982: 217-234).

2.2 The Battle of ‘Succession’

Presenter. Sit you and see this true and tragic war,
 A modern matter full of blood and ruth,
 Where three bold kings confounded in their height
 Fell to the earth contending for a crown,
 And call this war *The Battle of Alcazar*. (I. Prol. 49-53)

In these lines the Presenter ties the battle of Alcazar (the historical event and the play) to the contention for a crown. At that time, England had just contended in 1588 for its own crown and for that of Portugal in 1589. Peele used the Moroccan contention as a disguise, because he was aware of the reactivation in 1571 of the ‘Acts of Treason’ that banned open discussion of succession. In 1587, Peter Wentworth was imprisoned in the Tower of London for, among other reasons, defying the ban.³⁴ The theatre was one outlet to address the issue and escape punishment. Paulina Kewes has recently explained that the safest way to circumvent the ban and address the issue, ‘was the commercial stage, which provided the most public of fora for mediating the forbidden topic, and as such an ideal conduit for political information and discussion’ (Kewes 2016: 551-552). Though interested particularly in Peele’s stage contribution to the debates, she discusses his partial contribution to Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*.³⁵ She covers the relevant European scenes and the political, religious, and civil risks associated with succession locally and abroad.

Kewes refers to *Alcazar* three times, focusing on the Ibero-African conflict. She relates Peele’s villainous Moor to the Machiavellianism of *Titus*’ evil Aaron. Most important, however, is her comment on the play’s succession: ‘Inter alia, Peele transposed the recent Portuguese succession crisis on to the North African civil war in *The Battle of Alcazar*, which also condemned the Hispano-papal interference in Ireland’ (Kewes 2016: 555). This position seems typical of all critics who discuss Peele’s play. They see no relation between the Moors’ and England’s succession.³⁶ If critics happen to have

³⁴ After the death of Mary Queen of Scots, Wentworth ‘had drafted *A Pithie Exhortation of her Majestie for establishing her successor to the crowne*, a tract published by a friend after his death’; it was leaked in 1589 (Haster 1981: 600).

³⁵ As we will see in the last chapter, Peele is thought to have written *Titus*’ first Act, which opens with two brothers contending for the throne of Rome, after the recent death of their father.

³⁶ See Albert Braunmuller (1983: 79), Juan Salces (1996: 190), Peter Hyland (1999: 91-92), Scott Oldenburg (2001: 54) and Eric Griffin (2010: 106).

anything to say about the general matter of succession in the play, the theme is related to the Portuguese crown.

Peele, I argue, makes the connection between England and Morocco through the political assassinations and usurpation of the crown which the Presenter first narrates and presents in dumb shows, which are then reiterated in Abdelmelec's first speech. More directly, the connection is made through the language of the 'Bond of Association' and its 'Oath' with which Abdelmelec concludes his speech. His followers adopt the same language in response to his demand that they pledge their lives to the cause of the rightful prince. To highlight the relevance of succession, Peele sets his Moorish characters to work. Not only does he re-arrange his historical material to make sure succession is foregrounded, but he endows the wronged and morally 'better' Moors with the language of the 'Bond of Association'. To further emphasise succession's centrality, Peele mobilises all his theatrical abilities along with his rhetorical, presentational and *re*-presentational means. In a very short space (53 lines), he sums up the whole play via the Presenter's opening part, through carefully selected materials, characterisations, incidents, and devices of presentation (the alternation and interplay, in two dumb shows, between the Presenter's verbal narration, and the immediate re-enactment of the narrated material). In this manner, life-threatening usurpation is both verbally and physically presented. In terms of importance, crown usurpation and succession take precedence over the battle (which gives the play its title). Succession becomes the reason for which the evil powers collaborate and wage their 'tragic war' against the rightful claimant (I. Prol. 49). In 1589, Peele had his material ready-made: the battle and its outcome (1578) and the Bond of Association (1584), publicised in response to the many conspiracies against the Queen's person.

Two instances in *Alcazar*'s first Act are essential to emphasising the threat of usurpation and succession: the opening 53 lines spoken by the Presenter and the first scene of 135 lines which immediately follows the Presenter's part and introduces Abdelmelec and his associates. Some critics believe that the Presenter is only a device to help the audience navigate the confusing history of the Moors. Hunter believes that 'Peele makes strenuous efforts to explain the genealogical intricacies of the Barbary kingship and to clear up the tangle of political aims' (Hunter 1997: 79). It is certainly true that an English audience might need this help, but it is hardly Peele's only or main aim. The Presenter's opening scene also emphasises usurpation and succession. The graphic dramatisation of assassinations and conspiracies can hardly serve the intricacies of the Moroccan genealogical kingship as it does personify the cultural image of the Moor's devilish

villainy. At the time, the audience and probably Peele himself are more interested in the many conspiracies Queen Elizabeth had herself escaped by 1589.

The lines quoted at the beginning of this section are the end of the Presenter's speech and merit repeating:

Sit you and see this true and tragic war,
A modern matter full of blood and ruth,
Where three bold kings confounded in their height
Fell to the earth contending for a crown,
And call this war *The Battle of Alcazar*. (I. Prol. 49-53)

The Presenter here asks the English audience to sit and watch the true and tragic war. But the audience have so far seen conspiracies and treasonous acts against kith and kin and have already sat and watched true and tragic atrocities told and enacted in the Presenter's two dumb shows. His request at the end only reiterates the appalling tragedies that an illegitimate succession involves. The Presenter has no reason to repeat an earlier, almost exact request that the audience 'sit' and be 'mummed' to watch the crimes performed (I. Prol. 21-22). At the Presenter's conclusion, the audience have already heard and watched the dangers and abhorrent crimes in pursuit of the crown. He asks the audience of the first dumb show to be

Like those that were by kind of murder mummed,
Sit down and see what heinous stratagems
These damnèd wits contrive. And lo, alas,
How like poor lambs prepared for sacrifice
This traitor king hales to their longest home,
These tender lords his younger brethren both. (I. Prol. 21-26)

Addressing the London audience with this emotionally charged picture, the Presenter is not only bringing Barbary to London, but is preparing the English audience for the dire truth of such atrocities. Having presented the second dumb show, he warns the audience of the truth of these crimes:

His brethren thus in fatal bed behearsed,
His father's brother of too light belief,
This negro puts to death by proud command.
Say not these things are feigned, for true they are... (I. Prol. 27-30)

In a sense, the audience have seen the whole play in which three kings 'Fell to the earth contending for a crown' (I. Prol. 52). While the Presenter historicises the Saadian Dynasty, the play re-enacts the almost contemporary battle of the three kings contending for the crown.

Peele has the Presenter introduce Sebastian who, like the Moors, has lost his life and crown. This early introduction of King Sebastian appropriately captures a recent crown usurpation similar to that of Barbary. Both crowns are usurped by a close relative (uncle or

nephew) of the ‘legitimate’ successor. In this short part, Peele’s *Alcazar* emphasises not only the protection of a crown but also the importance of having a ‘legitimate’ and virtuous heir always in place. The play uses the Moroccan and Portuguese cases to emphasise this necessity to which literary works and history testify.

Instead of chronologically following the Saadian historical event, Peele chooses to condense the past in two dumb shows. In both, Sebastian and the villainous Moor are introduced. The Presenter first orients the audience verbally. He introduces the brave Sebastian whose ‘princely mind’ is always spurred by honour and kingly codes of conduct. This King is now about to embark on ‘a dangerous and dreadful war’:

Presenter. Honour, the spur that pricks the princely mind
To follow rule and climb the stately chair,
With great desire inflames the Portugal,
An honourable and courageous king,
To undertake a dangerous dreadful war... (I. Prol. 1-5)

This introduction emphasises Sebastian’s virtues, especially honour and courage to which this waged war supposedly testifies. Peele, nevertheless, seems intent on making a mockery of the ‘princely mind’ (I. Prol. 1). By the very next line, the audience are asked to assess the merits of these princely attributes and the virtues of undertaking the ‘dreadful war’ (I. Prol. 5). Sebastian’s war is launched to ‘aid with Christian arms the barbarous Moor’,

The negro Muly Hamet that withholds
The kingdom from his uncle Abdelmelec
(Whom proud Abdallas wronged),
And in his throne installs his cruel son
That usurps upon this prince,
This brave Barbarian lord Muly Molocco. (I. Prol. 6-12)

This opening undermines the idea of ‘honour’ or the ‘princely mind’ that ‘pricks’ the brave Portuguese King to mobilise ‘Christian arms’ (I. Prol. 1, 6). The audience is told he does so to help a barbarous usurper Moor against Molocco (Abdelmelec), the better and legitimate claimant of the throne. All the praise of the opening lines is shown for what it actually is: a scheming conspiracy and unjust alliance between two contrary powers against the wronged rightful successor. Such an odd opening emphasises how foreign and local powers can work together to serve their own ends — a theme that will also be of importance later. Whether or not the audience can recall the history, they surely will question the ethics of Sebastian’s involvement at this point. Moreover, the topic in this case is appropriately a usurped throne; the audience now know that the usurped crowns are those of Portugal and Barbary; both are usurped by close relatives.

To the audience, these facts render the opening praise of Sebastian ironic as well. By the time of the play's first performance, England had already survived many conspiracies. Native English Catholics had already sought the help of Spain and Rome. The Pope had indeed sanctioned Spain's takeover of the English crown. In Holinshed's 1587 *Chronicles* some of the audience would have read the printed confessions of the Babington conspirators. The ultimatum they advanced threatened that, if Mary Stuart 'by death or otherwise maie not be advanced unto this kingdome', the conspirators

are then determined to set the crowne on the house of Spaine, either by pretense of some putative title, to which effect some pamphlets have beene alreadie composed; or rather (to avoid all controversies) by some grant and investure from the see apostolike: for the dispatch wherof (as the conspirators confesse) doctor Allen an English fugitive, and some others attend in Rome to solicit the pope. [With this they] must secretlie make their repaire hither, and in auricular confession persuade the principall catholikes of this land, and such as are able to swaie the rest, to favor, mainteine and advance that title of Spaine against all others, under paine of damnation. By meanes whereof it is intended that Spaine shall mount to so huge a greatnesse, as to be able of himselfe to give lawes to all the states of christendome. (Holinshed [1587] 1808: 4.926)³⁷

At the time of the play, both Peele and the audience knew more than Holinshed included in his edition which chronicled events up to December 1586. They knew that Mary Stuart was already dead and, in one major attempt, Spain had tried but failed to usurp the English crown. Thus, when the Presenter praised Sebastian's Christian arms, the audience could hardly miss the almost daily news of the 1588 Spanish Armada and the retaliatory campaign of Norris and Drake. Sebastian's doomed attempt to support an undeserving usurper resembles the English Catholics' continuous urging of Philip II to invade England.

Two points are important in the Presenter's short opening. The carefully distributed qualities of the participants betray Sebastian's false honour or, at best, his naivety (though at this point no one knows the mechanisations and duplicity his 'negro' collaborator employs to dupe the princely mind) (I. Prol. 7). The importance of the rightful successor is illustrated by the unbalanced contrast between two Moors, a usurper and a legitimate claimant. At this stage, both reflect negatively on Sebastian's involvement. Peele highlights the contemptible attributes of Sebastian's black co-conspirator Moor. His devilish nature is not only limited to his colour but runs through his bloodline (the Moor's father wronged his own brother and installed his son on the brother's throne). To Braunmuller and Hyland, this *patrilineal* model of succession would be more relatable for

³⁷ This encompassing power of Spain to 'mount to so huge a greatnesse [...] to give lawes to all the states of christendome' is a restatement of the idea of the 'Last World Monarch' common in political prophecies by this time. I treat it in my next chapter as it is mocked in Greene's *Alphonsus*.

English audience, and more directly relevant to the question of English succession.³⁸

However, Peele undermines the son's claim to his father's throne by repeatedly articulating his tyrannical and cruel characteristics, and by emphasising the honourable character and traits of Abdelmelec, the rightful prince.

Nor is Peele content with the negative-positive interplay between Sebastian, his ally the Moor, and the brave Prince Abdelmelec. To heighten the negative sentiment, Peele makes sure to immediately introduce the means of the throne's usurpation: 'The passage to the crown by murder made' (I. Prol. 13). Once this common instrument of usurpation is introduced, Peele cuts short the history by reminding the audience of the sins of the Moor's father who, five lines earlier, wronged Abdelmelec and bequeathed the crown to 'this tyrant king' (I. Prol. 14). Peele then briefly traces the genealogy of this 'negro [...] of whom we treat' (I. Prol. 7, 15). The dynasty's patriarch, Muly Mahamet, had 'sprung from the Arabian Moor' (I. Prol. 15). If this bloodline is not enough to bring up a whole damning heritage for an Elizabethan audience, Peele is careful to emphasise that the usurper is:

Black in his look and bloody in his deeds,
And in his shirt, stained with a cloud of gore,
Presents himself with naked sword in hand,
Accompanied, as now you may behold,
With devils coated in the shapes of men. (I. Prol. 16-20)

Complete as this character assassination may appear, Peele still does more. In the two dumb shows, he visualises in action what is already presented verbally. In the first, six Moors and the usurper crowd the stage, ready to play anew the Presenter's narrated murders of 'the Negro's' own two brothers and one of his uncles.³⁹ Thus, his 'black look' reflects his bloody deeds. The motivation is the usurpation of the throne. Therefore, the Presenter asks the audience to be as 'mummed' as those who are killed in the dumb show on the stage. The eternal silence of murder binds the innocent victims to the audience, both by 'kind of murder mummed'. During this silence, behind a curtain on the stage, in the second dumb show, the victims are put to death while the 'mummed' audience watch.

³⁸ Like Hyland (1999: 91-92), Braunmuller too notes the audience's recognition of primogeniture as the accepted form of succession. Since Muly Mahamet is claiming 'the throne as his father's son [...] [his] title and anger might well have seemed justified'. Braunmuller further points to the fact that Muly Mahamet and Abdelmelec are both described as 'rightful' and 'traitor' on different occasions (Braunmuller 1983: 79).

³⁹ This is Peele's emendation to his main source, also noted by Charles Edelman, the play's editor. Some Arabic sources accuse the Moor of these crimes (particularly Abdallah Guennún [n.d.] 2010); Muhammad al-Ifrani (born c. 1670), relying on older sources described him as 'proud, heeds no one, nor hesitates in bloodshed, and most cruel to his people' ([n.d.] 1998: 117, translation mine), but I do not believe Peele was aware of these sources.

Fiction and fact interplay to testify to ‘what heinous stratagems/ These damned wits contrive’ (I. Prol. 21-26).

The reign of Queen Elizabeth also begins with as ‘heinous stratagems’ as ‘These damned wits contrive’ against her (I. Prol. 22-23); John Strype writes of the early days of her reign,

There were some already of the popish faction contriving mischief against the queen, by setting up the Scotch queen’s title, and by getting assistance from the Guises in France to carry on their designs in her behalf, and by dealing with some conjurers, to cast their figures to calculate the queen’s life, and the duration of her government, and the like. (Strype 1824: 1.9-10)

Once the Presenter has ended his presentation and asked the audience to sit and watch the contention over the succession of Barbary, the rightful claimant Abdelmelec immediately appears. Like the Presenter, Abdelmelec has his own stage audience and companions, in addition to the play’s real audience. Among these are the dames of Fez (Peele’s own addition to his source), the welcoming crowd, and the Turkish Bashaw of the janissaries supporting his cause (another source emendation). In action and verbal exchanges, the scene reinforces the noble character of Abdelmelec that the audience have learnt of through the Presenter’s references to him. The Turkish Bashaw augments the prince’s virtues, bravery, and services to the Grand Turk:

Calsepius Bashaw. Courteous and honourable Abdelmelec,
 We are not come at Amurath’s command
 As mercenary men to serve for pay,
 But as sure friends by our great master sent
 To gratify and to remunerate
 Thy love, thy loyalty and forwardness,
 Thy service in his father’s dangerous war,
 And to perform in view of all the world
 The true office of right and royalty,
 To see thee in thy kingly chair enthroned... (I. 1. 20-29)

The conclusion of the Bashaw (‘to perform in view of all the world’) is exactly the theme of the ‘oath’ and ‘Bond of Association’. The world should know and recall the subscribers’ adamant loyalty and commitment to the rights of the English queen, just as the Moors have been visibly and publicly loyal to the right of Abdelmelec.

Most importantly, Abdelmelec promises, ‘in sight of heaven, even mine honour’s worth’ to ‘deliver and discourse/ The sum of all’ (I. 1. 62-64). Other than stressing the issue of succession, his delivery and discourse add nothing new. Abdelmelec reiterates his lineage, traces the history of the dynasty from its roots in Arabia up to the present conflict, including the wrongs he received from his brother Abdallas and the consequent usurpation of the throne. Towards the end of his speech, right after pointing out the Moor’s brutal

murders, Abdelmelec affirms: ‘But on this damned wretch, this traitor king,/ The gods shall pour down showers of sharp revenge’ (I. 1. 87-88). This is not new either. The Presenter has already accorded revenge ample emphasis just after the murders in the second dumb show, invoking Nemesis as ‘high mistress of revenge, [...] To range and rage and vengeance inflict/ Vengeance on this accursed sin’ (I. Prol. 34-40).

Why is such repetition important to both the Presenter and Abdelmelec? While the Presenter introduces the pivotal issue of succession and political context, Abdelmelec’s repetition of the same material only raises questions. Apart from the concluding few lines of his long speech, Abdelmelec adds nothing new. Having opened his discourse, vowing in sight of heaven and his honour’s worth (I. 1. 62), Abdelmelec concludes on a peculiar note:

And thus a matter not to you unknown
I have delivered; yet for no distrust
Of loyalty, my well belovèd friends,
But that the occasions fresh in memory
Of these encumbers so may move your minds
As for the lawful true succeeding prince,
Ye neither think your lives nor honours dear
Spent in a quarrel just and honourable. (I. 1. 89-96)

These lines raise questions more than they explain matters: why would Abdelmelec need to *retell* a well-known issue to his ‘well belovèd friends’ who already know it? (I. 1. 91). The play’s audience have just witnessed the known matter in the Presenter’s delivery and dumb shows. His friends need no reminding; at his arrival reception, all the characters have referred to the known matter. Nor does the discourse imply distrust of his followers or question their loyalty. What ‘occasions fresh in memory’ and what ‘encumbers’ are meant? (I. 1. 92-93). To what audience is Abdelmelec speaking: his on the stage or the Presenter’s real audience? Abdelmelec is refreshing the memories of his listeners by repeating the known matter. Regardless of which audience is addressed, the intention is noble: to ‘move your minds/ As for the lawful true succeeding prince’ (I. 1. 93-94). These who are moved must, then, sacrifice their lives and honours for a cause ‘just and honourable’ (I. 1. 96). This seems fair enough. Yet, given the tyranny of the usurper and Abdelmelec’s purpose, the addressed followers have no choice but to fight, lose or win; they need no memory refreshing.

In the concluding lines — the only new addition of his long speech — Abdelmelec is actually Peele’s mouthpiece, whose purpose is to remind the audience of the ‘Bond of Association’. It is in the language of the Bond, as quoted earlier, that subscribers pledge their lives, children, servants, and possessions for the rightful prince and ‘neither think [their] lives nor honours dear/ Spent in a quarrel just and honourable’ (Oldys [1584] 1746:

124; I. 1. 95-96). To find the real context for Abdelmelec's delivery and last lines, one should look beyond the geography and history of Barbary (though these are as important). Through Abdelmelec's last two lines, Peele is not only refreshing the memory of the audience to encourage them to choose the lawful ruler but is asking them to subscribe to the widely circulated and publicised 1584 'Bond of Association'. The rest of the scene enhances this reading and clarifies the peculiarity of Abdelmelec's discourse and its odd conclusion. The instant response of Calsepius Bashaw expands Abdelmelec's two lines. In his turn, Muly Mahamet Seth also contributes, and so does Rubin Archis, the widow of his brother Abdelmunen. Most (if not all) of these responses are not in Peele's main historical source; they are added to echo the language of the Bond.

Abdelmelec's call to sacrifice one's life for the rightful prince receives the immediate subscription of the janissaries' Bashaw:

Such and no other we repute the cause
That forwardly for thee we undertake,
Thrice puissant and renownèd Abdelmelec,
And for thine honour, safety and crown,
Our lives and honours frankly to expose
To all the dangers that our war attends,
As freely and as resolutely all
As any Moor whom thou commandest most. (I. 1. 97-104)

This passionate response, from a Turk, recalls the language of the 'Bond': the voluntary and willing subscription, the readiness to serve, obey and defend the sovereign, and the commitment to persist in avenging any wrongs against his (or her) 'honour, safety, and crown'. In 'freely and resolutely' pledging himself to the call of Abdelmelec, the Bashaw is not only echoing the 'voluntary and willing' nature of the subscription to the Bond. He is also binding himself to the Moors, with knowledge of 'all the dangers' that the cause demands. The Elizabethan Bond, we should recall, sought to 'voluntarily and most willingly bind' subscribers 'in the band of one firm and loyal society'. In his last two lines, the *Turkish* Bashaw wants to be commanded as any Moor. He wants to be bound 'in the band of one firm and loyal' Moorish society (Oldys [1584] 1746: 124-125).

Peele emphasises the language of the 'Bond' by editing his historical source and hiding his interest in the English succession question under the cover of Calsepius' wish to be treated as any Moor. This historical Turkish Bashaw (Ramadan, by name) cannot become any Moor; he was a Venetian renegade (Bovill 1952: 22). Neither did he take part in the battle of the contending kings, nor was his service to Abdelmelec free. Contrary to his earlier claim that his janissaries were helping Abdelmelec as friends rather than mercenaries (I. 1. 21-23), they were in fact soldiers for hire and were unwilling to

accompany Abdelmelec to Fez unless he paid them. The moment Abdelmelec regained Fez peacefully, they demanded and received their pay and returned to Algiers (Bovill 1952: 22-23). The Bashaw's insistence, however, seems pertinent to the 'oaths' that are characteristic of 'Group Revenge'. 'Revenge oaths in drama', John Kerrigan asserts,

reinvest with power the oral, the somatic, and the communal, bringing binding language back to its supposed base in the body and in group agreement [...]. There is something radically satisfying about oaths of this sort, vindicating solidarity even as they aim at vengeance. [...] The collective nature of the revengers' oath has a political dimension. (Kerrigan 2016: 135)

At this point Kerrigan himself appeals to the 'Bond of Association' in relation to *Titus Andronicus* of Shakespeare (and Peele).⁴⁰ As we will see, in Greene's *Alphonsus*, oaths of loyalty and commitment to pledging one's life to the cause of the rightful prince are taken by all worthy friends of Alphonsus. Though allegiance to the prince or king is expected of all subjects, the oaths of fidelity to a dethroned prince — as is the case in both *Alcazar* and *Alphonsus* — bring to mind the commitment of the Bond's signatories to regaining the crown in case of its catastrophic loss.

Peele changes the historical facts not only to foreground the Bond but also to address publicly (but covertly) the Elizabethan question of succession. He distributes the Bond's language among the loyal characters. In addition to Calsepius' substantial contribution, the immediate comments of both Muly Mahamet Seth and Rubin Archis fill in the Bond's other parts. If Rubin Archis will sing only 'of death, of blood, of wreak and deep revenge' (I. 1. 109), Mahamet Seth emphasises active and immediate 'revenge'. For him, Abdelmelec is 'so slow' to demand the punishment of the proud culprit 'with the fury of the sword' and 'follow this pride, then, with fury of revenge' (I. 1. 105-106, 108). These are his immediate responses to Abdelmelec's call. Later, Mahamet Seth will underscore the Bond's emphasis on pursuing culprits to their ultimate death:

Sheathe not your swords, you Moors of Barbary
That fight in right of your anointed king,
But follow to the gates of death and hell,
Pale death and hell to entertain his soul. (I. 1. 120-123)

To describe Abdelmelec as an 'anointed king' sounds odd; however, the Christian sense of the 'anointed king' anticipates Sebastian's praise of Queen Elizabeth. Peele employs Sebastian to emphasise the English succession and the Bond of Association. In his

⁴⁰ Richard Stacey, however, takes the issue further in his thorough treatment of the 'Bond' in relation to *Titus*, concluding that 'Group swearing may be a method of exploring the ideological possibility of conciliar rule, even as an interim between monarchies and with no real access to those outside of the aristocracy. However, it is also a force potent enough to activate a change which may not have been envisaged in the rhetorical terms of the original binding pact' (Stacey 2017: 70).

‘threatening’ persuasion of Stukeley ‘to leave to seek [his] country’s overthrow’ (II. 4. 136), Sebastian first enumerates England’s defences (divine protection, a powerful navy, and natural impenetrable water boundaries) (II. 4. 102-122).⁴¹ Then, he cautions Stukeley and his companions that it is only ‘Their course to hell that aim at her [the Queen’s] disgrace’ (II. 4. 125). Sebastian finally warns them that it is foolhardy

To wrong the wonder of the highest God,
Sith danger, death and hell doth follow thee,
Thee and them all that seek to danger her. (II. 4. 131-133)

Common to the contributions of both Mahamet Seth and Sebastian is the pursuit of offenders to death and hell. In his long speech, Sebastian approximates, in words and purport, the language of the Bond, and warns Stukeley and his companions of the society’s sworn commitment to pursuing all offenders, and what the Bond calls ‘their counsellors, aiders and abettors’ (Oldys [1584] 1746: 125).

Mahamet Seth’s final flaying of the usurper Moor only perpetuates the Bond’s sense of persistence and dedication to the utter extermination of any attempt at usurpation or harm to her Majesty’s royal person. In *Barbary*, the Moor has threatened the life of the prince and usurped his crown. Thus, even the traitor’s death by drowning is ‘too good for such a damned wretch’. Though now the ‘rage and rigour of revenge’ cannot be carried out, Muly Mahamet Seth will literally carry out the Bashaw’s promise of performing ‘loyalty’ and commitment ‘in view of all the world’. Seth therefore insists, the Moor’s ‘skin we will part from his flesh/ And being stiffened and stuffed with straw’, he will become a lesson ‘all the world may learn by him to avoid’ (V. 1. 246-254).

The aim of the Bond of Association was meant to inform the whole world that any illegitimate attempt at the English throne, even if successful, would not be tolerated by the Bond’s signatories and would be avenged. In *Alcazar*, Stukeley is a representative of the real domestic and foreign collaborations, especially those ‘in Spain, where all the traitors dance,/ And play themselves upon a sunny day’ (II. 4. 120-121) to attack England. The flaying of the Moor in Stukeley’s own play (*The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley*, 1605) depicts the punishment more elaborately:

Muly Hamet. For Muly Mahamet, let his skin be flayed
From off the flesh from foot unto the head
And stuffed within, and so be borne about
Through all the parts of our dominions,
To terrify the like that shall pursue
To lift their swords against their sovereign. (Sc. 29. 14-19)

⁴¹ Before he joined Sebastian’s army, Stukeley was on an expedition sanctioned by the Pope to overtake Ireland.

Taken together, these responses in defence of Abdelmelec underscore the determination to avenge the lawful prince. As the Bond has it, the subscribers ‘will never desist from all manner of forcible pursuit against such persons, to the utter extermination of them, their counsellors, aiders and abettors’. Dramatising the failure of Sebastian’s mobilisation of European ‘Christian arms’, and his failed collaboration with the Moor to usurp the throne of ‘Barbary’, *Alcazar* achieved the same ‘utter extermination’ that the Bond promised ambitious invaders (Oldys [1584] 1746: 125).

2.3 Conclusion

Abdelmelec is not the first Moor that Peele recruits in his writing to comment on English concerns. In 1585, he had a Moor open the festivities of the Lord Mayor’s Day and tell Londoners of his exotic origin: ‘from the parching *Zone* behold I come/ A stranger strangely mounted as you see,/ Seated upon a lusty *Luzerns* back’. He then delivers his praise of the great many attributes London, this ‘lady’, enjoys (Peele [1585] 2013: 236). And at the end of the decade, no other character could have served Peele and the English theatre better, dramatically and politically, than the contending Moors of *Alcazar*: the usurper Muly Mahamet and his princely uncle Abdelmelec. Barthelemy applauds Peele’s time-honoured treatment of black Muly Mahamet. This black Moor proved Peele a pioneering playwright for having transformed the traditional black devil (portrayed as Vice in medieval morality plays) into a more nuanced stage villain. Though colour was unnecessary and redundant for the delineation of the villain, Peele was fortunate to have had his villain, in the historical source, not only morally corrupt but ‘black’ as well. Peele exploited the opportunity to the maximum. In 1589 Peele, says Barthelemy, ‘rejuvenated for the popular stage in England a metaphor which, without exaggeration, profoundly and adversely affected the way blacks were to be represented on the stage for years to come’ (Barthelemy 1987: 78).

Peele merged the villain prototype with the historical battle and its overwhelming consequences to address current English concerns. The timing of the Moors’ succession conflict (1574-1578) coincided with the English preoccupation with their succession question. To emphasise the English concern with succession, and relate it to the play’s conflict, Peele amended his source and added situations and characters endowed with the language of the famous Bond of Association. To investigate the question of succession via Abdelmelec was, both historically and politically, an appropriate disguise. Under this

cover, Peele, like his Presenter, attempts to bring up ‘fresh memory’ and ‘move’ the ‘minds’ of the Elizabethans to address their own concerns.

The eventual victory of the Moroccan army over the Western invaders offers a lesson that justice and rightful princes ultimately restore order and prevail against the machinations of conspirators. Once the Moors defeat the armies of Sebastian and the villain Moor, a smooth succession follows. Muly Mahamet Seth, the brother of Abdelmelec, assumes power. This is the result of the Moors having put their house in order soon after capturing Fez. At this point, Abdelmelec immediately, formally on the stage and in the presence of the lords of Barbary, names Mahamet Seth as the rightful heir in accordance with their father’s reactivated law:

Ye Lords of Barbary, hearken and attend,
Hark to the words I speak and vow I make
To plant the true succession of the crown:
Lo, lords, in our seat royal to succeed
Our only brother here we do install,
And by the name of Muly Mahamet Seth
Entitle him true heir unto the crown. (II. 1. 13-19)

Taking the title of al-Mansur (the victorious), this historical successor also earned the title of the Golden for the wealth his kingdom enjoyed after the throne was reclaimed. By the time the play was first performed in London (late 1588 or early 1589),⁴² this very successor was not only enjoying a peaceful and thriving kingdom in Barbary but was England’s trading partner and political ally. His envoy Ahmed Bilqasim had been in London for some four months before he left ‘disguised as a noble Portuguese’ with the 1589 expedition to install Dom Antonio on the Portuguese throne (Brotton 2016: 171).

In *Alcazar*, the figure of the Moor has served to comment on native English and European threats. He flexibly speaks to one of the main pressing issues of the late Elizabethan period: succession. Peele does not seem to have been interested in the diversity of Eastern characters in and of themselves. Rather, he used those characters as vehicles to reflect on issues of national importance which, for diverse reasons, could not have been openly discussed. The foreign settings and characters are ways of distancing England spatially and temporally from the discussed issues. *Alcazar*’s treatment of the Moorish succession of the African nation underscores the dangers associated with succession and stages the attendant dire consequences of crown usurpation.

⁴² Ungerer gives the following information concerning the play’s date: ‘The play was printed in 1594. Its title page mentions that it had been acted sundry times by the Admiral’s Company before 1594. John Yoklavich, in his introduction to the play [...] argues that the play was written before the Portugal expedition weighed anchor on 18 April 1589’ (Ungerer 2003: 121).

Though the Moors are of a different race and colour, living on a remote continent, their succession strife speaks to the English apprehensive concerns about their own nation's future in light of the political ambitions of Spain, Rome, and native English Catholics. The English government were aware of these dangers and took practical steps to warn the world in case anything endangered the crown. As early as October 1584 the Kingdom issued and publicised the 'Bond of Association in Defence of Queen Elizabeth', to which *Alcazar* alludes through the promotion of the cause of the rightful successor. Peele is not the only author who saw dramatic and political potential in staging Eastern characters. In the next chapter, I show how Greene too uses Eastern characters to stage the issues of succession and political prophecy in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*. Like Abdelmelec and his brother in Peele's *Alcazar*, Alphonsus too, in Greene's play, will regain his usurped crown and promise to win the diadem of the Grand Turk.

3. Succession and Political Prophecy in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587)

Robert Greene's *Alphonsus* (1587) is European in setting, action, and characters. Yet, in its socio-political and religious interests the play remains English. Like Peele's *Alcazar*, it presents two pressing Elizabethan issues: royal succession, and the 1580s English obsession with astral prognostication and political prophecies. In this chapter I discuss succession and highlight the importance of prophecy and astrological prognostications for the Elizabethans during the 1580s. Like Peele, Greene displaces the issue of succession to a European setting and uses the Turk/Moor to attack the widespread faith in vaticination. By distancing the setting and characters Greene is able to avoid accusations of discussing the prohibited issue of succession, and to underscore the dangers of investment in political prophecy during a period of political uncertainty.

Written sometime between 1587 and 1589 (Wiggins and Richardson 2012: 2.381), *Alphonsus* invests heavily in the metaphor of the head, be that the head of a goddess, right prince, loyal follower, the head of State (Capital), crowned heads, or the brazen head of God Mohound/Mahomet. Each of these heads appears first bare and troubled then regains tranquillity and satisfaction. Taken together, these various heads culminate in the head of a unified world, implying the fulfilment of the prophecy of the last world Emperor, thereby symbolically tying the first part of the play to its second part; that is, the European West to the barbaric East. Throughout the first half of the play, these heads often hang down when distressed, but end up crowned, indicating that sincere commitment to a rightful cause of keeping or regaining a crown ultimately succeeds. This theme breaks only with Mahound's deceptive promise of victory to Belinus, King of Naples in the second half of the play. This failure accords with Christian hostility towards Islam and Muslims, and promotes the common Christian belief that the entire world will eventually embrace the true faith.

The play has attracted little critical attention, and what there is has been mainly negative. The play's defects, critics claim, include its fictitious hero, episodic construction, and, most of all, its relation to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. In this scant yet unfavourable critical evaluation, one learns more about *Tamburlaine* than about *Alphonsus*. Even in editions of Greene's own works, the discussion of the play is regularly subsumed under and measured against *Tamburlaine* of which one editor finds it 'a servile and even absurd imitation' (Collins 1905: 40).⁴³ Some critics believe that the play's negative reception at

⁴³ Such editions of Greene's works include J. C. Jordan's (1915) and C. W. Crupi's (1986).

its first performance incited Greene's comment on Tamburlaine's scandalous atheism and on Greene's own alleged inability to write tragedies:

Lately two gentlemen poets [...] had it in derision, for that I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like the faburden of Bow Bell, daring God out of heaven with that atheist Tamburlaine, or blaspheming with the mad priest of the sun (Greene 1588: 3).⁴⁴

Alexander Grosart, among others, agrees that Greene here was responding to the critical reaction of his *Alphonsus* (Collins 1905: 74).

Today, the play fares no better. For Martha Rozett, Greene 'has borrowed only the superficial sources of Marlowe's success, superimposing them on the arbitrarily chosen Alphonsus V, whose actual history and character he ignores' (Rozett 1984: 165). In this account, where Marlowe succeeds in every characteristic of his play, Greene fails.

Alphonsus usually gets a one-line evaluation in relation to *Tamburlaine*, and that one line is often a generic label: it is termed a romance, a heroic romance, or a comic parody (M. Hunt 2002: 338). In Brian Gibbons' chapter on Greene, only the title of the play appears twice (Gibbons 2003: 207, 214). Tracing the old tradition of the 'talking head' to classical times (Homer) and statues of ancient Egypt, Kevin LaGrandeur finds *Alphonsus* merely another instance in this long tradition where 'heads' harbour suspicious and dangerous occult knowledge (LaGrandeur 1999: 408; 416-417).

Even critics who allocate more space and attention to the play are similarly dismissive. Noting first the play's relation to Marlowe's tragedy, Ladan Niayesh finds *Alphonsus* 'stag[ing] the exploits of its fictitious eponymous hero over vast territories, from his native Aragon to Asia Minor by way of Naples and Milan, as he fulfils fantasies of chivalric and erotic conquests over enemies east and west' (Niayesh 2016: 57). In an endnote, Niayesh first asserts the fictional nature of the hero, and then argues that neither Alfonso I nor Alfonso V had anything to do with the Turks:

Greene's protagonist may be loosely modeled on Alfonso V of Aragon (1396-1458) [...] who of course defeated no Turkish sultan and married no Turkish princess at any point. Greene may have conflated this figure with that of Alfonso I of Aragon, nicknamed 'the Battler' (fl. 1104- 1134), who lived long before the Ottoman empire was founded by Osman I at the end of the thirteenth century and had no connection to Italy, but was famous for his many victories over Muslim armies in Andalusia. (Ibid., 65n4)

This sweeping statement intends to show how, unlike *Tamburlaine*, *Alphonsus* and its hero are loosely put together. Her position, however, is historically inaccurate. Alfonso V did entertain high ambitions to engage the Ottoman Turks and the Mamelukes in Syria and Egypt; he even seriously pursued an alliance through marriage between his brother and a

⁴⁴ On the 'Mad Priest of the Sun', see Tom Rutter (2010: 109-119).

daughter of Prester John of Ethiopia so that both nations could join ranks to attack Egypt from land and sea (Salvadore 2017: 36-53; Heldman 1994: 139-162). And from the mid-1440s until his death in 1458, Alfonso V was in league with the famous Albanian rebel Scanderbeg (George Castriot) who defeated the Turkish forces in many battles (McJannet 2006: 44-46; Brackob 2017: 55-90). Moreover, during the late 1440s Christians were concerned about the Turkish threat to Constantinople, and serious plans for a crusade to defend it were widely discussed. In this enterprise, the Pope was counting on Alfonso V to play the leading role. However, defence plans effectively ceased after the fall of the Byzantine capital in 1453 (Aloisio 2017: 64-74). Pope Pius II literally gave his papacy and life in 1464, dying in the course of trying to overcome political differences and distrusts among the Christian kings of Europe, in order that they might join ranks and push back the Turks.

Although neither Alfonso I nor Alfonso V married any Turkish Princess, interfaith marriages were an issue in history and literary fantasies. If we conflate issues and characters across time — as Niayesh conflates Alfonso I and V — we find enough examples of such interfaith romances between West and East. One famous case in point is the betrothal of the Christian Princess Teresa, sister of Alfonso V of León (999-1028), to the Moorish King of Toledo. Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo reported the story in his *Chronicle of the Kings of León*, composed between 1121 and 1132 (Barton 2015: 27). The story survived in various versions in chronicles, ballads, and plays through to the seventeenth century.⁴⁵ The marriage of Princess Teresa to the Moorish King would make a perfect, though inverted, model for the marriage of Alphonsus and the Grand Turk's daughter in the play. Of course, the widespread rumour of the proposed marriage of Princess Joanna (sister of King Richard the Lionheart) to the brother of Saladin was another case; and around the time of the rumour another case became as widely known; namely, the romance legend of the English 'crusader' Gilbert Becket and the 'Saracen' princess, from whose supposed marriage St. Thomas Becket was born (Guy 2012: 5; Staunton 2001: 40; Hodges-Kluck 2019: 70-72). Kat Lecky has recently explored the economic aspects of interfaith romance in certain works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton (Lecky 2019: 203-233). Greene had enough examples to draw on and chose one congruent with the final world peace that the Last World Emperor was supposed to bring about. Niayesh's own dismissive statement of 'the exploits' of the play's 'fictitious eponymous hero over vast territories'

⁴⁵ For more details, see Barton (2015: 76-82). For a synopsis of the story and an English translation of the ballad, see Lockhart (1842: 82-84),

(Niayesh 2016: 57) agrees with the traditional prophecy of world Imperial Monarchy. These very territories, as we will see, are what the prophecy covers.

Interested exclusively in the play's classical allusions (including their geographical locations and historical-literary sources), Niayesh finds only a tenuous relation between the play and Elizabethan concerns. The closest that her argument comes to contemporary relevance is to link the 'Europeanizing' of the Turk to the commercial and political relations that Elizabeth I maintained with the Sultan in the 1580s. For Niayesh, Greene might have been adopting the lesser known theory that says the Turks, as a race, came from Troy rather than from Asia. As such, they become respected Europeans rather than being the threatening 'base' Asiatic race (Ibid., 64). This position also overlooks the play's investment in the prophecy and its pertinence to East and West relations.

More relevant, though disapproving, is Matthew Dimmock's recent assessment of the play: 'If the play has any significance at all, it is as a "Turk play" — possibly the first that might be properly labelled as such' (Dimmock 2014: 836). In his earlier longer study, he limits his treatment of the play to 'Old Mahomet's head'. In the play, this 'head' is exotically a speaking and fire-flaring idol which the Turks obey and worship. Dimmock traces the history of heads in literary, non-literary, and religious discourses. Most important, however, is the relevance and significance of the head in general to English culture. For Dimmock, this particular one appears in a 'key scene' presenting certain 'peculiarities' which 'are also specifically English, and a product of English concerns' (Dimmock 2013: 102-103). One of these is Greene's portrayal of the head on the stage; another, more important, is its location in the 'darksome grove'. Traditionally, Dimmock argues, a 'grove' is a place of idol worship and a symbol of pre-historic idolatrous faith. Thus, the idol stands 'in opposition to English Protestantism'. Dimmock further reminds us that '[i]n the wake of the break with Rome, Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I had all been symbolically associated with the great idol destroyers of the *Bible*, to whom Mahomet and his "law" are placed firmly in opposition' (Dimmock 2013: 103).

Interesting as Dimmock's insightful study is, he sidesteps the play's treatment of political prophecy and succession to focus on the religio-cultural depiction of idolatrous Islam and Catholicism. Both are important to Protestant England. In addition to showing the audience Mahomet's idolatrous head, however, Greene's play also capitalises on the Moor/Turk to highlight, in addition to succession, another widespread English concern: prophecy. After all, it is Amurack the Turk whose superstition demands the trip to the 'grove', 'Where Mahomet this many a hundred yeare/ Hath prophesied' (III. 2. 897-898). As I will argue, the Turks and Moors of the play are used to underscore additional

important English issues, especially faith in prognostication and prophecy. Amurack's insistence on prophecy (an insistence of a pagan Turk worshipping a pagan Idol and the prophecy's catastrophic outcome) aptly speaks against such a faith. The first part (on succession) will show that success comes from loyalty and commitment to action; the second part will show that blind faith in prophecy leads only to failure.

Because the play is not well-known, a brief plot summary is necessary before discussing the importance of succession and prophecy. *Alphonsus* opens with a Venus-led chorus, which introduces every act thereafter. Prior to the events of the play, Carinus (Alphonsus' father) was dispossessed of the crown of Aragon by his treasonous older brother. He has accepted his fate and now urges his son to do the same. Alphonsus rejects his father's advice and insists on regaining his rightful crown. The current King of Aragon, Flaminius (the usurper's son), wages war on Belinus, King of Naples. Albinus, an Aragonite exile, now a follower of Belinus but still loyal to Alphonsus' family, encounters Alphonsus and the two agree that Alphonsus would join the army of Belinus as a mercenary soldier, given the condition that he keeps anything he wins on the battlefield. Alphonsus kills Flaminius and thus regains his crown, but his identity is still unknown. He then claims the crown of Belinus who, with Milan, flees to Amurack, the Great Turk. Alphonsus rewards his faithful followers (Albinus, Laelius, Miles) with the crowns of Aragon, Naples, and Milan, promising to win the Turkish crown for himself.

At the Turkish court, Amurack promises to help Belinus, if God Mahomet permits the act. Escorted by the King of Moors and King of Berbery, Belinus visits the 'grove' of Mahound for a prophecy. Meanwhile, Amurack's Amazonian wife Fausta and daughter Iphigina enlist Medea to foretell the outcome of the expected war. Through Medea's conjuration, Amurack sees in a dream his defeat, capture, and a union between his daughter Iphigina and Alphonsus. When Amurack wakes up, Fausta and her daughter react angrily and are banished; they then seek military aid from the Amazons.

At the 'darksome grove', Mahomet's two priests are worried because the prophet seems angry and unwilling to vaticinate; and unless he does, his priests will face death. Mahomet reconsiders and delivers a prophecy that helps his priests but deceives Belinus and his attendants. They are told that only if they rush now to fight Alphonsus can they be victorious. They obey but are killed. Their defeat is first narrated in Amurack's dream, then in Venus' prologue to Act IV, and in Mahomet's exchange with his two priests before the delegates arrive at the 'grove'.

Amurack then faces Alphonsus in battle and is taken captive. Alphonsus pursues Iphigina's affections, but she rejects him. To save her captured father, she finally agrees to

marry him; this time Alphonsus rejects her. Carinus, having dreamt the night before of his son's fortunes, meets and kills his old enemy the Duke of Milan and convinces his son to accept Iphigina. This results in a peace agreement and Alphonsus leaves for Naples as the future heir to the Turkish crown. In these details many dreams, predictions, and prophecies are shown. Most significant of these is the emphasis placed on the repeated revelation of the falsehood of Mohamet's prophecy and its distance from what was accepted as political prophecy.

Rupert Tylor was the first to give this 'genre' its name in 1911. Recently, political prophecy has attracted the interest of literary critics. Their work has shown its widespread significance in Elizabethan culture. 'In the sixteenth century', Tim Thornton writes,

ancient prophecy appealed to a wide spectrum of society from the elite downwards. Although they might differ as to its specific worth, virtually everyone from the king and his ministers to the poorest of the poor still gave credence to the prophetic traditions which they believed had been handed down to them. (Thornton 2006: 51; cf. 75; 99)

Helen Moore describes the characteristics of the inherited prophecies of Merlin as 'oblique and riddling predictions'; they 'comprise the most influential early example of the genre called "political prophecy" which attained a new forcefulness and relevance following the religious and political turmoil of the Reformation' (Moore 2006: 98).

3.1 Succession in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*

Greene divides his plot into two parts to treat the two issues. The first deals exclusively with the restoration of a lost crown. Though it has no Moors or Turks, it prepares the audience for the encounter with Mahound's head in the second part. The rightful heads we meet in the first part of the play create a sharp contrast to that of Mahound's, showing the difference between following a legitimate leader versus a false idol. The first part also thematically relates to *Alcazar's* succession and the language of the 1584 Bond of Association.

Alphonsus thus opens with Calliope 'hanging down her head' (I. Prol. 47) and culminates with the speaking and fire-flaring head of Mahomet before Alphonsus becomes the heir of the Turkish Empire. Goddesses, Heads, and Alphonsus' wedding to Iphigina (daughter of the Grand Turk), taken together, underscore a socio-political environment in which the safety of the sovereign and legitimate succession are foregrounded. In the opening Prologue of the play, Calliope's head becomes the main issue. All other Muses are happily playing their instruments,

Only excepted fair Calliope,
 Who, coming last and hanging down her head,
 Doth plainly show by outward actions
 What secret sorrow doth torment her heart. (I. Prol. 46-49)

Her 'outward actions' betray her inner distress. In 'hanging down', the head mirrors the 'torment' of 'her heart'. As we learn from the Muses' interaction, the throne of eloquence, at the moment, has no claimants. 'Poets are scarce', says the Prologue's first line, and Clio realises Calliope's 'secret sorrow' and marvels at Melpomene's failure to see through Calliope's 'outward actions' (I. Prol. 46-49):

Clio. Melpomene, make you a why of that?
 I know full oft you have in authors read,
 The higher tree, the sooner is his fall,
 And they which first do flourish and bear sway,
 Upon the sudden vanish clean away. (I. Prol. 58-62)

Erato comments on Calliope's justification for this temporary scarcity of poets and wants to know when Calliope will regain her 'spent [...] scholars' (I. Prol. 75-76). Melpomene, again, jeers: 'When husbandmen shear hogs' (I. Prol. 78). To end this antagonism, Goddess Venus intervenes and crowns Calliope again.

On its own, the play's main Prologue portrays an instructive scene involving a conflict, a threat of losing the realm of eloquence, and its recovery. To achieve this happy restoration, faithful friends are essential. In this main Prologue, the goddess Venus loyally takes the cause of Calliope. Pointing to 'the mortal hatred' (I. Prol. 81) the Muses bear Calliope, Venus advances the cause of the Queen of eloquence:

Yes, Muses, yes, if that she [Calliope] will vouchsafe
 To entertain Dame Venus in her school,
 And further me with her instructions,
 She shall have scholars which will dain to be
 In any other Muse's company. (I. Prol. 87-91)

With this intervention, order is restored. Calliope's response to Venus is perhaps the most interesting:

Most sacred Venus, do you doubt of that?
 Calliope would think her three times blessed,
 For to receive a goddess in her school,
 Especially so high a one as you,
 Which rules the earth, and guides the heavens too. (I. Prol. 92-96)

The scene is generally comic and the attributes that Calliope transfers to Venus are those that poets and painters assign to Virgo-Astraea, Queen Elizabeth herself.⁴⁶ Venus,

⁴⁶ The definite study of Astraea-Virgo is Frances Yates (1947: 27-82). She identifies various attributes relating Venus to Astraea-Virgo (Ibid., 68-70) and the image of Queen Elizabeth ruling the world (Ibid., 61-62).

endowed with the attributes of Astraea, is the most valuable asset of Calliope's school: 'To those born under [Virgo] she gives great facility in eloquence and all branches of rhetoric' (Yates 1947: 31). Diana and Cynthia, among other goddesses, appear often in the play, and Venus introduces every Act of the play. We know that Greene is Horatian in attempting to blend entertainment with instruction in his work (Greene 1588: 3). If the main Prologue entertains, the first scene of the play ought to remind audience and readers of the serious matters of regicide, crown usurpation, revenge, and recovery of one's legitimate dues. The play is about to 'Set down [Alphonsus'] noble valour presently' (I. Prol. 102).

The comic scene of the Muses over the crown of eloquence anticipates the first scene of the play which disputes the usurped crown of Aragon. Like Calliope's 'head' and 'outward actions', Alphonsus' head too reflects his long untold secret sorrows. Carinus (Alphonsus' father) soon notes:

I never yet could see thee joy at all,
But hanging down thy head as malcontent,
Thy youthful days in mourning have been spent.
Tell me, Alphonsus, what might be the cause
That makes thee thus to pine away with care? (I. 1. 4-8)

Alphonsus, like Calliope before the reviving intercession of Venus, is heavily burdened by a loss of a crown and his failure to avenge and recover it. And like Calliope, he too has sorrows deeply buried: 'Ne're to unfold the secrets of my heart' (I. 1. 14). His father has often told Alphonsus stories about the glories of their ancestors and the ill-fated loss of Aragon. Today, his father recalls: an unnamed younger nephew 'by secret treason robbed' Carinus Senior 'of his life,/ And me, his son, of that which was my due' (I. 1. 28-29).

For Alphonsus, the crime is composite and treacherous: fratricide, regicide and usurpation (I. 1. 25-28). His head is troubled by two specific and related causes: treason and their usurped throne. In answer to the question of his unhappy outlook, Alphonsus says:

For ever since my mind hath troubled been
Which way I might revenge this traitorous fact,
And that recover which is ours by right. (I. 1. 33-35)

Unlike Venus, his father advises him to 'bridle' these thoughts; the crown is lost forever (I. 1. 36-41). Yet Alphonsus — like the Bond signatories — remains adamant in his intention. For the recovery of his crown, he sets himself an ultimatum: either he will succeed in this mission or 'I [...] myself will die' (I. 1. 53). At last, his father wishes him success and leaves to spend his life in 'this silly grove [...] / with prayers and orisons / To mighty Jove,

to further thine intent' (I. 1. 62-64).⁴⁷ As Alphonsus pursues his 'fortune', it is the same troubled 'head' that he, again, reiterates: 'A noble mind disdains to hide his head,/ And let his foes triumph in his overthrow' (I. 1. 68-69). In this persistence, Alphonsus is a perfect subscriber to the ideals in the Bond of Association.

Like Abdelmelec, Alphonsus too is assisted by loyal and committed friends. Though they are not Moors or Easterners, they not only help Alphonsus regain his throne and win other realms, but also prepare the way for overcoming the Turks and Moors in the second half of the play. In this first part, however, those friends demonstrate the sense of common cause and shared patriotism evident in the Bond of Association. Each one of them has a revealing first meeting with Alphonsus. He first meets Albinus, an Aragonite who is now on a reconnaissance mission for Belinus, King of Naples. Flaminius (son of the usurper and now reigning King of Aragon) is waging war against Naples. Albinus, misrecognising Alphonsus, first challenges this stranger but shows loyalty when he finally identifies the prince. Like the heads of Calliope and Alphonsus, the head of Albinus too becomes burdened with sorrows and regrets for this misrecognition. Echoing Alphonsus' noble mind above (I. 1. 85-86), Albinus will not 'fly and hide my traitorous head/ From stout Alphonsus whom I so misused' (I. 1. 93-94). He proves his noble mind and decides to 'confess [his] fault' to Alphonsus even if it means his death (I. 1. 98-99). He kneels, apologises, and is soon pardoned.

Like the intervention of Venus, Albinus' appearance sets the play in motion and advances Alphonsus' cause. Loyal followers of the slain ancestor of Alphonsus are still faithful. Albinus himself has suffered for his loyalty to that King and for speaking against the usurper. As he recounts the old treason and the hardships that led him to Naples, he describes what happened after Alphonsus' father Carinus left 'His native soil and royal diadem',

I, for because I seemèd to complain
Against their treason, shortly was forewarned,
Ne're more to haunt the bounds of Aragon
On pain of death. Then, like a man forlorn,
I sought about to find some resting-place,
And at the length did hap upon this shore,
Where showing forth my cruel banishment,
By King Belinus I am succourèd. (I. 1. 114-122)

Like Alphonsus and his father, Albinus too has suffered for his loyalty. Fortunately, this meeting could not have come at a better time. From Albinus, Alphonsus learns of the

⁴⁷ This 'silly grove' is perhaps an early anticipation of the 'darksome grove' in which the audience discovers Mahomet's head in the play's second part.

possibility of meeting his enemy. So timely is this piece of information that Alphonsus suspects Albinus of making it up. In response, Albinus swears:

The gods forbid that e're Albinus' tongue
Should once be found to forge a fainèd tale,
Especially unto his sovereign lord. (I. 1. 137-139)

In his protest, Albinus emphasises his loyalty to Alphonsus, his 'sovereign lord' and creates a bond of trust between the two men, which initiates a plan to which Albinus faithfully agrees. Alphonsus will play a mercenary 'base soldier', and Albinus will reveal no knowledge of who Alphonsus is (I. 1. 148-149) nor does he ask for details; all he says: 'Whate're Alphonsus fittest doth esteem,/ Albinus for his profit best will deem' (I. 1. 152-153). They agree that Alphonsus will serve in the forces of Belinus on the condition that Alphonsus keeps as his own whatever he wins in the field, even if it be the crown of Aragon. Ultimately, Alphonsus kills Flaminius and the forces of Aragon flee the battlefield. Only Laelius, another noble Aragonite, attempts to avenge Flaminius.

Laelius too proves as instrumental as Albinus has been in advancing Alphonsus' cause. Alphonsus' encounter with Laelius mirrors the earlier meeting between Alphonsus and Albinus. In this second encounter, after a similar case of misrecognition, challenge, and final recognition, Laelius shows similar loyalty, veneration, and commitment to prince Alphonsus and his cause. He too takes a binding vow:

Ay, noble lord, by all the gods I vow;
For first shall heavens want stars, and foaming seas
Want watery drops, before I'll traitor be
Unto Alphonsus, whom I honour so. (II. 1. 42-44)

Alphonsus now has influential noble followers, ready to die for the cause of their prince. Belinus fulfils the condition of Alphonsus, i.e., to keep his own whatever he wins in the field. And in the field Belinus crowns Alphonsus King of Aragon. Just as Alphonsus has had a pact with Albinus, now he holds another with Laelius; he sends Laelius to call back the routed Aragonite forces to fight with their returning prince against Naples and Milan. The thematic parallel with Peele's *Alcazar* is not only limited to crown usurpation and loyalty to the rightful prince but extends to the evil characteristics of the usurper.

Before the battle, King Belinus of Naples has introduced the audience to Flaminius. He is cruel, treasonous, a destroyer of cities, and a slayer of conquered subjects. In short, Flaminius plays 'the devil' wherever he passes (I. 1. 167). The audience already knows that his father murdered his own older brother to seize the throne of Aragon. When getting ready for the battle, the King of Naples himself has said if Flaminius wins, 'Belinus were undone,/ His country spoiled, and all his subjects slain' (I. 1. 174-175). Much distressed, Belinus is desperate for advice, defensive strategy, and men to shield his crown and city.

He is another but more serious echo of Calliope and Alphonsus in earlier scenes. One expects to see a burdened ‘head’. This time, through a long and elaborate analogy, Naples ‘that city of renown’ (I. 1. 170) becomes the head of Belinus’ kingdom and seat of sovereignty, and he suggests that if all his men retreat inside the city, they can defend it better. Albinus offers an ironic analogy to argue for what he sees as the best strategy. Naples, the head of Belinus’ land, is like the head of the ‘silly serpent’; when it escapes harm, the rest of the body parts regrow (I. 1. 184-187). Otherwise, ‘the silly serpent lie for dead,/ Nor can the rest of all her body serve’

To find a salve which may her life preserve.
 Even so, my lord, if Naples once be lost,
 Which is the head of all your grace’s land,
 Easy it were for the malicious foe
 To get the other cities in their hand.
 But if from them that Naples town be free,
 I do not doubt, but safe the rest shall be.
 And therefore, mighty king, I think it best
 To succour Naples, rather than the rest. (I. 1. 191-201)

Can this elaborate analogy be extended and allegorised? No definite agreement has been reached on a specific date of the play; the possibilities range from 1587 to 1591. However, over the span of the suggested years, London was living with the anxieties that Naples faces here. Spain was threatening (or had already launched) a military invasion; conspiracies and suspicions of uprisings were real threats. And a real ‘bosom serpent’, the Queen of Scots, had been a head ‘conjoining’, while in custody, her diverse body of conspirators.⁴⁸

Ironically, the Serpent plan of Albinus succeeds. Unaware that his ‘crown’ is at stake, Belinus heartily approves the plan: ‘by my crown I swear,/ I like thy counsel and will follow it’ (I. 1. 202-203). Still, to give Alphonsus’ hidden plan a chance to work, it is at this very moment of swearing by his crown that Belinus spies Alphonsus close by. He sends Albinus and Fabius to Alphonsus to recruit him as a mercenary soldier. Alphonsus kills Flaminius and sends him down — head first, it seems — into ‘the Stygian lake’ with a message to his traitorous father:

Go pack thou hence unto the Stygian lake,
 And make report unto thy traitorous sire
 How well thou hast enjoyed the diadem
 Which he by treason set upon thy head.
 And if he ask thee who did send thee down,
 Alphonsus say, who now must wear the crown. (II. 1. 1-6)

⁴⁸ Francis Walsingham dubs Mary, Queen of Scots, the ‘bosom serpent’ in a ‘letter to Queen Elizabeth, dated 12th September 1581’ (Nicolas 1847: 196); the Babington’s conspiracy was one case (Holinshed [1587] 1808: 4.926).

Alphonsus is now relieved of his two main concerns: the need to avenge his wrongs and recover his dues. As Belinus soon after appears, unaware of the new plan of Alphonsus and Laelius, all he has is the praise of the victorious Neapolitans. Through a chaotic image of wolves assailing unattended sheep, his laudatory conclusion runs:

So do the fearful youths of Aragon
Run round about the green and pleasant plains,
And hide their heads from Neapolitans.
Such terror have their strong and sturdy blows
Struck to their hearts, as for a world of gold,
I warrant you, they will not come again. (II. 1. 62-67)

The irony of ‘hid[ing] their heads’ and their non-return is compounded not only by the plan of Alphonsus and Laelius but also by Alphonsus’ line ‘A noble mind disdains to hide his head’ (I. 1. 68), on the one hand, and by Naples being imagined as the Serpent’s head, on the other. The supposedly scattered youths of Aragon now lay in wait to claim the ‘head’ of the serpent: that is, the city Belinus has been anxious to defend and is now about to lose. Alphonsus will soon claim the crown of Naples. The image of unattended sheep being attacked by wolves is about to become truer of the Neapolitans than of the ‘fearful youths of Aragon’.

Having regained Aragon, Alphonsus demands absolute loyalty and obedience. In language reminiscent of the Bond of Association, he wants Belinus to promise him:

All things belonging to the royal crown
Of Aragon, and make your lordings swear
For to defend me to their utmost power
Against all men that shall gainsay the same. (II. 1. 98-101)

Belinus does swear but takes exception to what may be ‘prejudicial’ to his ‘honour or [his] country’s soil’ (II. 1. 108). Albinus and Fabius, on the other hand, commit themselves:

Albi. And by the sacred seat of mighty Jove
Albinus swears that first he’ll die the death,
Before he’ll see Alphonsus suffer wrong.
Fabi. What erst Albinus vowed, we jointly vow. (II. 1. 109-112)

Appreciating the oath of Albinus and Fabius, Alphonsus demands that Belinus himself join in and acknowledge his sovereignty, but Belinus — shocked — belligerently declines. Having earlier sent Laelius to call back the forces of Aragon, Alphonsus leaves, promising to take Naples before night fall. Conquerors seem to set no limits to their ambitions. The troubles, conspiracies and demands pressed against Naples mirror the nervous socio-political climate that motivated Elizabethan officials to institute the ‘Bond’ for the defence of Queen Elizabeth and the safety of the realm.

In Naples, a dangerous exchange testing Albinus’ loyalty ensues. Infuriated, Belinus starts calling Alphonsus insulting and denigrating names. Only Albinus, proving

true to his oath, defends Alphonsus and is ready ‘to die’ for his sovereign. Fabius, on the other hand, proves untruthful to his vow, even though he refuses to kill Albinus when Belinus orders him to ‘presently slash off’ Albinus’ ‘traitorous head’ (II. 1. 180). His refusal, however, has no relation to his vow; as Belinus explains, Fabius either fears revenge or has become ‘so dainty, that you dare/ Not use your sword for staining of your hands’ (II. 1. 189-190). Belinus himself, therefore, is about to carry out the execution when Alphonsus surprises them, and the scene at once ends.

The exchange between Albinus and Belinus in this scene is crucial. It has to be treated in relation to two other scenes: the next appearance of Albinus with the youths of Aragon where Laelius is still convincing them that Alphonsus is alive and well; and the immediately following scene with which Act III will open, where Alphonsus crowns his three faithful leaders. The arrival of Albinus at the Aragonites’ gathering place ties together these three successive scenes. A major part of these scenes is devoted to vows of loyalty to and defence of Alphonsus, a theme that runs throughout the whole play.⁴⁹ On a first reading, this repetition of traded vows, especially in the case of Albinus, appears redundant. The audience or readers have already been acquainted with his absolute loyalty and obedience to his sovereign in words and in deeds since their first meeting at the beginning of the play. He has even suffered exile for voicing his objections to the old crime before meeting Alphonsus. In the first of the consecutive three scenes, Albinus has proved his true and resolute commitment to the wishes of Alphonsus; he has also taken the strongest ‘oath’ when Alphonsus, having won the crown of Aragon, demands such an oath from the ‘lordings’ of Belinus. Putting his life on the line towards the end of that scene, Albinus has enacted this theme and his constancy on the stage. He is ready to die rather than to betray his rightful prince. Fabius has just handed his drawn sword to Belinus who menacingly threatens Albinus:

I hope the very sight of this my blade
Hath changed your mind into another tune.
Albi. Not so, Belinus, I am constant still.
My mind is like to the asbestos stone,
Which, if it once be heat in flames of fire,
Denieth to becomen cold again.
Even so am I, and shall be till I die;
And though I should see Atropos appear
With knife in hand, to slit my thread in twain,
Yet ne’er Albinus should persuaded be... (II. 1. 196-205)

⁴⁹ As we shall see in *Titus Andronicus*, this demand for vows of loyalty and allegiance is a ‘cultural paradigm from the later wars of religion’ (Miola 2002: 198).

This is the persistence to which the Association's members commit themselves and must pledge their lives, possessions, children, and servants for righting the wrongs done to the rightful prince. In the second scene Laelius, referring to Belinus, reiterates the same commitment as he urges the youths of Aragon for the defence of their king:

And could the traitor harbour in his breast
Such mortal treason 'gainst his sovereign,
As when he should with fire and sword defend
Him from his foes, he seeks his overthrow?
March on, my friends: I ne'er shall joy at all,
Until I see that bloody traitor's fall. (II. 2. 86-91)

The closing couplet expresses the commitment of the Bond's members to relentlessly pursue culprits until their wrong is avenged with utter extermination. Alphonsus himself will voice these points in the crowning ceremony of his loyal friends at the opening scene of Act III.

In his comments on the off-stage events which the audience has not seen, Alphonsus concentrates on the valiant achievements of the youths of Aragon. They have courageously fought and won the war, and Alphonsus himself is indebted to them all. This is the result of unity between the Prince and faithful followers. His general description is punctuated by the particular deeds of the three main noble characters: Albinus, Laelius, and Miles. Here, we learn that the blows of Laelius made Belinus 'scud apace'; and the 'sturdy arm' of Miles took on Milan who gave 'more credence to his frisking skips/ Then to the sharpness of his cutting blade' (III. 1. 8; 11-13). Since we have not seen what happened when Alphonsus surprised Fabius and Belinus as they were about to behead Albinus, here Alphonsus fills in this gap:

What Fabius did to pleasure us withall,
Albinus knows as well as I myself;
For well I wot, if that thy tired steed
Had been as fresh and swift in foot as his,
He should have felt, yea, known for certainty,
To check Alphonsus did deserve to die. (III. 1. 14-19)

Comic as these comments may be, the scene also underscores the serious issue of loyalty to the prince (as Abdelmelec in *Alcazar* reminded his audience on and off stage of the importance of such loyalty).

3.1.1 The Crowning Scene

Responding to Alphonsus' generous praise of their valour in the war, Miles (whose name in Latin means 'soldier' or 'knight') is fittingly the first to voice the theme in this scene:

[...] for if our willing arms
 Have pleased you so much as you do say,
 We have done nought but that becometh us,
 For to defend our mighty sovereign. (III. 1. 26-29)

In crowning Miles and Laelius, Alphonsus cites their commendable deeds which seem to have earned them this high reward and honour. Careful attention to the respective citations reveals an emphasis on the tireless persistence in pursuing their missions and winning the possessions of their enemies. If this seems somewhat similar to Alphonsus' condition for serving as part of the forces of Naples at the beginning, we have to remember that Alphonsus' intention has always been to regain his rightful throne and avenge the original murder. The case is different with those he is about to enthrone. They are described as true to their oaths and thus deserve reward, whereas all the defeated are labelled traitors and conspirators and thus lose their lands and titles.

Starting first with Laelius, Alphonsus describes in minute detail his unyielding chase of Belinus:

First, for because thou, Laelius, in these broils,
 By martial might, didst proud Belinus chase
 From troop to troop, from side to side about,
 And never ceased from this thy swift pursuit,
 Until thou hadst obtained his royal crown,
 Therefore I say, I'll do thee nought but right,
 And give thee that which thou well hast won. (III. 1. 37-43)

The reward is the full possessions of Belinus, the traitor:

Here does *Alphonsus* crown thee, Laelius, king
 Of Naples town, with all dominions
 That erst belonged to our traitorous foe,
 That proud Belinus in his regiment. (III. 1. 44-47)

The crown of 'Millan dukedom' is then awarded Miles because his 'sword deserved no less' (III. 1. 48-49). Of the three, Albinus is the special case. He deserves the peerless crown of peerless Aragon. To Alphonsus, the main attributes of Albinus are his faithfulness and friendship; and as his head has been an issue in perilous circumstances, nothing short of the crown of Aragon will do for his 'faithfull head':

Now to Albinus, which in all my toils
 I have both faithful, yea, and friendly found.
 Since that the gods and friendly Fates assign
 This present time to me to recompense
 The sundry pleasures thou hast done to me,

Sit down by them, and on thy faithful head
 Receive the crown of peerless Aragon. (III. 1. 54-60)

Faithful as he has always been, Albinus faces a dilemma with this high honour. With the crown of Naples awarded to Laelius and that of Milan given to Miles, Alphonsus will have no crown if the diadem of Aragon is taken. Albinus, therefore, will not accept the offer until the Turkish crown of Amurack settles the issue. As Alphonsus puts it,

[...] my Fates have so decreed
 That Aragon should be too base a thing
 For to obtain Alphonsus for her king. (III. 1. 70-72)

[...]

Alphonsus shall possess the diadem
 That Amurack now wears upon his head. (III. 1. 80-81)

This prophetic anticipation prepares the way for the play's second part (beginning at Act III. 2). Heads and crowns culminate in this scene where faithful loyalty and commitment to the cause of the rightful sovereign eventually win. This is set against what we will see of the heads of pagan Mahound and Amurack in the play's second half.

Technically, the crowning scene splits the play into two distinct parts. Whether or not this partition approximates 'an extravagant imitation of the two parts of *Tamburlaine*' (Collins 1905: 72), the first addresses the faithful allegiance to the rightful prince, and thus reflects the current socio-political concerns of Elizabethan England. The second underscores the absurdity of prophecy, another pressing concern in England since the accession of Queen Elizabeth I. A justification for the latter half of the play seems to be Greene's interest in and response to the English obsession with propagandist religious prophecy and astrological prognostications, which were both predominant issues during the 1580s. The extension speaks to the Elizabethan public's interests in prophecy, as well as to Alphonsus' ambition to win the crown of the 'heathen' Turks. It is not by chance that the play ends with Alphonsus as the heir apparent of the world.

Delivered via the play's characteristic light-hearted comic touches, the final triumph of Alphonsus over the heathens (in the second part) parodies the prophecies of the 'Last World Emperor' who not only unites Christendom but liberates Constantinople and Jerusalem. Mindful of the Spanish invasion and the interests of Philip II in England and Scotland, Greene seems to be alluding to the dangers of belief in prophecy and astrological prognostication. Swords, for Greene, not prognostications, win victories. In the wake of the 1588 Spanish Armada, Greene notes how the 'hieroglyphical symbols, emblems, impresses, and devises' of the Spanish commanders 'did prognosticate (as they supposed) their triumphant victory and our dishonourable and miserable overthrow, playing at dice for our noblemen and knights, and dividing our land into portions' (*The Spanish*

Masquerado 1589: 16). Persistent action of the loyal and patriotic members is the accurate road to success, a point that the Bond seeks to instil. It is most appropriate that we find, in the following section, Amurack the Grand Turk, Belinus of Naples, and the Moors of Africa and Asia faithfully entrust their fates not to military might, but to the prophecy of Mahound's speaking head.

3.2 Prophecy, Law, and Politics

In *Alphonsus* Greene seems to be mocking the popular faith in prophecies. He presents two major prophecies: the false prophecy given by Mahomet, and the dream vision of Amurack's defeat and Alphonsus' victory. Both lack the main characteristics of ambiguity and need of interpretation that prophecies usually require. At times, a prophecy is expressed obscurely, often implying the opposite of what it means. In the case of Greene, prophecies read more like straight orders. His careful choice of the idolatrous setting (the darksome grove) and the outlandish believers (the Turk, Moor, Berber and the supposedly Christian Belinus) reflect negatively on vaticinations and prophecies. The beliefs and behaviours of these prophecy-devout characters are at odds with the teachings of a true Christian religion. The seekers of a prophecy from a pagan 'God' are no different from the heathen believers in astrological prognostications whom Phillip Stubbes attacks; those who 'attribute thus much to the starres, not onelie rob the majestie of God of his honour, but also strenhthen [*sic*] the hands of the heathen, pagans, infidels, and idolatrous people, to persevere in their cursed idolatrie still' (Stubbes [1583] 1882: 61).

In *James the Fourth* Greene shows his familiarity with the Galfridian prophecy and its characteristics.⁵⁰ R. Taylor cites Greene's play as evidence of the popularity of this form of prophecy among Elizabethan dramatists. In the Galfridian prophecy, however, 'symbols not really allegorical are used for real living individuals' (R. Tylor 1911: 129). In one example from *James the Fourth*, Taylor matches all the symbols in the prophecy to their historical individuals: 'the two Lions are the Kings of England and Scotland who each bore a lion in his coat-of-arms. The Whelpe is of course Dorothea, daughter of the King of England. Nano is the hind, Ateukin the Fox, Jacques the Wolf' (Ibid., 130). Recently, Brian Walsh has addressed the Elizabethan contemporary issues of prophecy and succession in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (Walsh 2010: 63-85). Though

⁵⁰ From the Latin name of Galfridus Monemutensis, Galfridian refers to Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100–c.1155), also known as Galfridus Arturus. He was a cleric and one of the major figures in the development of British historiography and the popularity of tales of King Arthur. His Merlinic prophecies were invoked by opponents of the Reformation (Crick 2004: 1-20 of 20 paras).

Alphonsus also presents these two issues, Walsh never mentions the play. Instead, he begins with Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in 'which Merlin predicts the ascension of a "royall virgin"' then moves on to Friar Bacon's vision of 'the ascension of "Diana's rose"' (Ibid., 63).⁵¹ The Elizabethan government took measures to curb prophecy's popularity and influence along with the Spanish political interest in prophecy as it relates to England. This Spanish interest augments my argument that, like John Lyly's *Midas*, *Alphonsus* at one point becomes an allegorical figure of Philip II. That is why the heroism of *Alphonsus* is mainly comic; around the hostile years of the 1588 Spanish Armada, it is unlikely that Greene would celebrate the conquests of a Spanish hero.

The laws all Tudor monarchs issued against prophecy testify to its virulent nature. Elizabeth I faced the threat of the practice during her first days as Queen, and in 1559 she submitted a law to Parliament against the 'fond and phantasticall' prophecies (Gladwin 1997: 142-143). Those laws were necessary: political prophecies targeted the Tudor monarchs and the public believed their truth. A famous example of propagandist prophecies is the 'HEMPE' — an acronym for the Tudor monarchs — anticipating the end of their dynasty and the accession of King James I/VI.⁵² In one version, it reads: 'After Heme is sown and growen/ Kings of England shall be none' (Gladwin 1997: 77).⁵³ Francis Bacon heard this 'trivial prophecy' when he 'was a child and queen Elizabeth was in the flower of her years'. His version is 'when heme is sponne/ England's done'. Bacon contested not the truth of the end of the Tudor line, but the implied 'utter confusion' of England. As it turned out, he argued, it was but a 'name' change; England now is Britain (Bacon [1625] 1908: 167-168).

Historically, prophecy was mainly religious in character, and Elizabethan laws deemed only Scriptural prophecies legitimate. Still, even those were not necessarily welcome as 'reformers argued that the spirit of prophecy no longer existed in their period' (Gladwin 1997: 48). Moreover, all prophecies threatening the safety of the monarch, the welfare of the realm, or the true (Protestant) religion were capital crimes punishable under acts of high treason. Such laws sought to control prophecy's harmful results because '[i]n England predictions, if not the moving cause of uprisings, seditions, and rebellion,

⁵¹ Both refer to Queen Elizabeth; the 'Diana's rose' refers to the badge of the 'Tudor rose' adopted first by Henry VII (Walsh 2010: 67).

⁵² The prophecy appears in the *Diary of Robert Birrel* who dates it to the reign of Henry VIII (Birrel [1532-1605] 1798: 58-59). Birrel clarifies: 'H, for Henry; E, for England; M, for Mary; P, for Philipe King of Spaine, that mariet with Queine Marey; and E, for guid worthie Queine Elizabeth' (Ibid., 59).

⁵³ For the history of this prophecy, see Moranski, (2004: 177-178), R. Taylor (1911: 103, 115) and Gladwin (1997: 34, 77).

certainly helped to complicate the situation by arousing in the rebels false hopes, even certainty of victory' (R. Taylor 1911: 104). There is no exaggeration in Taylor's statement. Thornton recently writes: 'The prevalence of ancient prophecy was a significant reason for, amongst other things, potential dynastic change in or immediately after Henry's [VII] reign' (Thornton 2006: 16). And in April 1529 James, the Irish 10th Earle of Desmond, wrote to the Holy Emperor Charles V seeking his help to unseat King Henry VIII. Two reasons informed his 'hostility to the King of England':

1. The first is an old prophecy, to which the English attach faith, namely, that the whole of their country will be conquered and subdued by one count of Desmond. This prophecy is recorded in the old chronicles and other writings of England, but by whom made I, the Count, have been unable to ascertain.
2. The second cause of my enmity towards them is that, from fear of the above-mentioned prophecy, the King of England gave my predecessors, who had already much power and great estates in Ireland, the government of this country (*potestatem suam*); but as Thomas, Count of Desmond, my grand father, was peaceably attending the Royal Parliament of Ireland he was arrested, and without any crime whatsoever being imputed to him, and merely out of fear of the above mentioned old prophecy the King had him tried and beheaded.
(Gayangos [1527-1529] 1877: 992)

Faith in biblical or non-biblical prophecies seems to cut through all socio-political classes. This wide spectrum of people believing the truth of prophecy is attested most clearly in the final battle of Kett's rebels in Norwich.⁵⁴ The prevalence of prophesying meetings showed that anti-prophecy laws failed to curb prophecy's harmful effects (Gladwin 1997: 46-48). Prophecy's popularity, however, caught the attention of the Spaniard officials in London concurrently with Queen Elizabeth's accession. This seems important to Greene's *Alphonsus* and to the play's treatment of the prophecy of the Last World Emperor. To heed prophecy's laws, it seems, Greene distanced the play's action to foreign settings and infidel characters.

I will first highlight the Spaniards' interest in prophecy in general, and then in world Imperial Monarch in particular. On December 29, 1558, ambassador Count de Feria sent King Philip II a long report on England's conditions under the new Queen. Early in the report, he writes: 'the Catholics and decent people are pleased that your Majesty should gain ground here, and there are many of this sort in the kingdom' (Hume [1892] 1971: 16). Later, the ambassador notes how the English people are 'so full of prophecies',

that nothing happens but they immediately come out with some prophecy that foretold it so many years ago, and it is a fact that serious people and good

⁵⁴ Believing prophecies that assigned the battle ground to 'the vale/ Of Dussinsdale', the rebels 'determined to forsake the hill they had hitherto occupied, so advantageously for themselves, and so greatly to the injury of others, and where, too, the Earl's horsemen would not have been able to act against them' (Russell 1859: 143).

[C]atholics even take notice of these things and attach more importance to them than they usually merit. (Ibid., 17)

This careful Spanish attention seems politically driven. Prophecies, Feria immediately adds, predict that the new Queen:

will reign a very short time, and that your Majesty will again reign over the country, but the true prophecy is that this nation is very fond of novelty, and she is beginning to govern in a way which gives reasonable hopes of a change every hour. The people are already beginning to gossip about her being flighty and since she has been dipping her hand into the subsidies they have become more displeased. (Hume [1892] 1971: 18, emphasis original)

The ambassador seems to have been well informed, and the conditions in the country validate his report. Before the coronation on 15 January 1558 [1559], while the Queen was yet to move to London from Hatfield, a prophecy predicting her death was already circulating. Some of ‘the popish faction’ were already

contriving mischief against the queen, by setting up the Scotch queen’s title, and by getting assistance from the Guises in France to carry on their designs in her behalf, and by dealing with some conjurers, to cast their figures to calculate the queen’s life, and the duration of her government, and the like. (Strype 1824: 1.9-10)

Only five days after Mary Tudor’s death, Elizabeth and her Council were aware of conspirators. The suspects were instantly arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned. Strype would sympathetically note, ‘[t]hus early did this excellent lady’s enemies plot, and continue their devices of mischief against her, and combine to dethrone her, when she had been scarcely possessed of her crown’ (Ibid., 1.9-10). Along the HEMPE’s lines, this early conspiracy not only was linked to a political prophecy anticipating the Queen’s short life and reign, but also to one of worldwide implications concerning Philip II personally.

A few years later, seven of those conspirators were tried for high treason and were convicted on February 26, 1562. Elizabeth, however, spared their lives.⁵⁵ In the trial, they revealed that they did not mean to carry out the conspiracy ‘before the queen should die; which as they were persuaded by [John] Prestal, a conjurer, should be about March following’ (Strype 1824: 1.546). In the Julian calendar, ‘March following’ meant the year 1563. It is not clear whether Prestal depended on his own divination or was aware of a prophecy to that effect. Official records, however, show that the year 1563 was part of vaticinations that the government, two decades later, discovered in 1584. Feria’s dwelling on the English fondness of prophecies, the Queen’s anticipated short reign, and his ironic ‘true prophecy’ on the Queen’s corruption, would imply that Feria was aware, if not a propagator, of the 1563 prophecy.

⁵⁵ For the indictment details, see Strype (1824: 1.555-557).

Two other successors of Feria made much of the prophecy: Bishop Alvaro de la Quadra and Diego Guzman de Silva. Writing to Philip II on the departure of the Sussex led campaign to Ireland in 1561, Quadra dismissed the declared English reasons for the campaign and advanced his own: the English feared a Spanish fleet landing in Ireland, moving to Scotland, and easily entering England. As he closed his letter, he asserted that HEMPE prophecy stood behind the mission:

It is to be concluded that this idea is not only founded on the marriage of the Scotch Queen, but also upon a prophecy that is very current amongst these Catholics to the effect that the ruin and destruction of this line of kings of England is to commence in Ireland. (Hume [1892] 1971: 207)

Again, on 12 August 1564, Elizabeth's illness and relative youth became an issue. De Silva wrote to Philip II on the Queen's cutting short her visit to Cambridge: 'They say that the cause of this is that the places she was to stay at are unhealthy, and she is much in fear of falling ill, which I do not wonder at if they tell her the prophecies that are current about her short life. Everybody is talking of them' (Hume [1892] 1971: 374).

Since the 1570s, owing to the Northern Rebellion and Papal Bull, agents of the Privy Council and of Walsingham had been busy in the North rounding up, interrogating and trying suspects, especially from the area of Carlisle and its vicinities. The official records described many suspects as 'lewd wicked pillar[s] of papistry' and promoters of Catholicism. Three, however, were of special relevance: Richard Cliburne, Richard Kirkbride, and his brother Percival Kirkbride. A search of their chambers yielded interesting finds: 'one containing news from Scotland, the other fantastical and foolish prophecies' (Mary Green 1872: 104-105). Those 'fantastical and foolish' prophecies predicted disasters for England and saw Philip II leading up to the world Imperial Monarch. In the Calendar of State Papers of February 7, 1584, the report to Secretary Walsingham had:

58. v. Book of Miscellanies, commencing as follows

—But sorrow and plagues for their offences,
 Battle and famine, and all pestilences,
 As a desolate land, brought it shall be;
 What shall be more, none know but He.
 England, take this monition,—
 Be wise, change thy condition.
 Doubt not, but think it sure,
 This storm thou shalt endure;
 With heart contrite, confess thee,
 And to Heavenward address thee,

This is then followed by prophecies of England's downfall:

If thou be wise, O Germany, Frenchmen, English flee,
 And suffer not the Venice land to join in league with thee.
Behold, for out of Philip's blood a worthy brood shall rise,
Who shall redeem the world's misdeeds with warlike enterprise,
And the proud Turk he shall constrain the true faith to embrace,
 And thee deprive of princely port, and put thee out of place.
 When five three hundred years are gone, since Christ, our Lord, was born,
 And six times ten with three by course to us are worn.
 All this the ruler of the skies, who sitteth in Heaven so high.
 Bade me to tell unto the world, as stars had told to me.

(Mary Green 1872: 108; emphasis mine)

Both prophecies concerned England's terrible fate. The first seems rather general in that it could apply *mutatis mutandis* to any case. The second seems reminiscent and a timely update of the older prophecies of Adam Davy and Gildas. It refers to present-day nations, to Philip II, and to the year 1563 which begins in 'March following' and to which year the conspirators assigned the death of Queen Elizabeth. In form and style, it imitates the prophecy of the 'wonder year' of 1588, attributed to Regiomontanus — the fifteenth century mathematician.⁵⁶ In Garrett Mattingly's translation, this prophecy reads:

A thousand years after the Virgin birth
 and after five hundred more allowed the globe,
 the wonderful eighty-eighth year begins and
 brings with it woe enough. If, this year,
 total catastrophe does not befall, if land
 and sea do not collapse in total ruin, yet
 will the whole world suffer upheavals, empires
 will dwindle and from everywhere will
 be the sound of great lamentation. (Mattingly [1959] 2005: 176)

Both prophecies anticipated worldwide destruction. The Northern prophecies, however, served the interests of the Catholics and Philip II, who was the future hope of Christendom. Catholics in Scotland, England, and Europe had pleaded for his intervention, as early as 1558, to help enthrone Mary Stuart in the place of Elizabeth. In this context, the 1563 prophecy seemed to have been cultivated and disseminated much earlier than its confiscation date of 1584. In the prophecy and in his relation to the Turks, Philip II became a descendent of Edward II in older prophecies. The geographical areas conquered in these prophecies, as will be seen, were those that Alphonsus anticipated to inherit at the end of Greene's play.

Rupert Taylor details the early fourteenth century propagandist Adam Davy's *Five Dreams* (R. Taylor 1911: 92-98). In summary, Davy's visions culminated in Edward II's

⁵⁶ For a detailed account of the life and works of Regiomontanus, see Ernest Zinner (1990).

winning the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. This crowning dream closed with the prayer that the king conquer his enemies and ‘all wicked Saracens in every place’. In the fourth dream, at the chapel of the Virgin, Davy saw Christ descend from the cross, declared His intention to go on a pilgrimage with the king who would conquer ‘the heathens’. The Virgin also implored her son to attend the king day and night. These two visions fulfilled the first dream in which Edward II was seen crowned with gold on the high altar of Canterbury, where two knights fiercely assaulted him. He did not fight back nor was he hurt. When the knights left, four radiant bands of light (white and red) issued from his temple and reached far and wide into the country (R. Taylor 1911: 93-94; Furnivall 1878: 11-16).

More important is the ‘wilder prophecy’ that Taylor summarises in a long footnote.⁵⁷ In this prophecy, Edward II crowns his eldest son King of Scotland and conquers France, uniting the three realms in one. He then marries a German princess who gives birth to a mighty soldier. Edward later invades and defeats Spain, passes over into and conquers all Africa, the Holy Land, Persia, and Babylon. Envoys of the Pope, meeting Edward at Tholmuida, ask him to become the Holy Roman Emperor as well as Emperor of Constantinople (R. Taylor 1911: 95-96).

In the 1563 prophecy, the conquest of these specified domains of ‘heathens and wicked Saracens’ seems to have been transferred to Philip II who has inherited the characteristics and mission of Edward II in the older prophecies.⁵⁸ Like Edward II and his worthy son, Philip too will have an Edward-like son; the 1563 prophecy asserts that ‘out of Philip’s blood a worthy brood shall rise,/ Who shall redeem the world’s misdeeds with warlike enterprise;/ And the proud Turk he shall constrain the true faith to embrace’ (Mary Green 1872: 108). The execution of Mary Queen of Scots becomes a providential ‘design’ for Philip. Mendoza, now the Spanish ambassador in Paris, writing to King Philip II on the Queen’s misfortune, says: ‘I pray that your Majesty will hasten the Enterprise of England to the earliest possible date, for it would seem to be *God’s obvious design* to bestow upon your Majesty the crowns of these two kingdoms’, England and Scotland (quoted in Mattingly [1959] 2005: 40, emphasis mine). In drafting the Queen’s execution under ‘God’s obvious design’, Mendoza specifies God’s favour in eliminating French impediments to Philip’s ‘Enterprise of England’. This divine ‘design’ and the prophecies

⁵⁷ Taylor found it in the *Exposition of the Verses of Gildas concerning the prophecy of the Eagle and the Hermit*, and dated it to the 1320s.

⁵⁸ Critics subsume this ambitious undertaking under the idea of ‘Imperial Monarchy’ or ‘Last World Emperor’. See the works of Marjorie Reeves (1999), Norman Cohn (2004), Parry (2011) and Streete (2017).

Philip's ambassadors reported earlier seem to have influenced the launch of the 1588 Spanish Armada.

During the Elizabethan period, the domains Edward II had conquered were the lands of infidels and enemies of (Catholic) Christendom. His conquests brought the world into the fold of the true faith. In Greene's play, Alphonsus will enact a similar mission, where the heathen lands that Edward II conquered are now under the control of Amurack the Turk who, in the words of the 1563 prophecy, will be forced to 'embrace the true faith' by Philip's 'worthy brood'. This political prophecy has a further turn; for Philip, the heathen lands are no longer limited to those of the Turks but include the lands of Protestant heretics. Mendoza's letter refers to the English as 'these accursed people' (Hanson 2006: 17).

The 1563 prophecy seemed to have revived Davy's visions to serve Philip's disparate interests in England and in becoming the Catholic defender of the faith. Queen Mary failed to bear him an heir, and Philip tried to find a politically suitable husband for Elizabeth I. He himself proposed to her at one time (Hanson 2006: 20). Ambassador Feria exerted relentless efforts to steer Elizabeth's marriage:

There is a great deal of talk lately about the Queen marrying Duke Adolphus, brother of the king of Denmark. One of the principal recommendations they find in him is that he is a heretic, but I am persuading them that he is a very good [C]atholic and not so comely a gentleman as they make him out to be, as I do not think he would suit us (Hume [1892] 1971: 19, italics original).

'Suit us' here meant Feria and his King. Earlier Feria comforted his King regarding the wooing of the Swedes who 'still urge the marriage, but these people [the English] take no notice of them'. The ambassador's great fear was Elizabeth's marriage: 'I am afraid that one fine day *we shall find this woman married, and I shall be the last man in the place to know anything about it*' (Hume [1892] 1971: 12; 16, italics original). Philip's reply was to the point. On January 10, 1559 the King, having approved his ambassador's course of action on the issue, demanded that Feria 'continue to do [his] utmost to prevent this [the marriage]' (Hume [1892] 1971: 22). Interest in Elizabeth's marriage underscored Philip's own interest in ruling England, Scotland and Ireland. The prophecies and the godly 'design' promised Philip the achievement of his hope.

Another competitor, France, also had the same interest in England. Both Philip and Feria were most concerned. In a revealing statement, the ambassador emphasised:

The fact is that these people are going on in a way that will end in their coming to grief, and your Majesty must get the affair in your grasp. We must begin at once to see that the king of France does not get in or spoil the crop that your Majesty has sown here. (Hume [1892] 1971: 20-21, emphasis original)

The 1558 conspiracy was supposed to receive Spanish funding with the French providing the manpower. It was delayed until the conspirators were well prepared (Strype 1824: 1.555-557). Later, Spanish help or even invasion was part of a long series of attempts: Roberto Ridolfi's plot of 1571, schemes of English Catholic exiles in Spain throughout the 1570s, the Jesuit Mission (1580-81), the serious plot of Throckmorton of 1583, William Parry and his 1585 case, Anthony Babington's plot in 1586, and finally the Spanish Armada in 1588. All these underline Philip's pressing interest in England and accord well with the prophecy anticipating the end of the Tudor monarchs. These conspiracies showed that prophecy seemed always in need of the help of a politically motivated hidden hand, be it that of the devil or providence.

Political and religious prophecies and astrological prognostications were an important part of the Elizabethan socio-cultural and religious scene during the late 1570s through the 1590s. In the 1580s, Greene was familiar with the widespread interest in prophecy and astrology. He himself wrote a pamphlet entitled *Planetomachia* (1585).⁵⁹ Greene and his circle were active players in and instigators of a series of polemics on the flaws of astrological prognostication.⁶⁰ And well-known to Greene's group was John Doleta's *Straunge newes out of Calabria*.⁶¹ One of Doleta's ten prognostications proclaimed that in 1587 'the Turke with his God Mahomet shal lose his Scepter [...] through hunger and warres, so that the most parte of them will rather seeke for reliefe by the Christians then at his hands' (Doleta 1586: Bi^v).⁶² The backdrop of Doleta's short pamphlet was the published work on planetary prognostications and prophecies since 1578, leading up to Richard Harvey's discourse on the 'terrible conjunction' of the superior planets (Saturn and Jupiter) of 1583; it was supposed to trigger global devastations and usher in the second coming.⁶³ During the 1580s, popular interest in astrology reached a high pitch. As Allen put it, after certain 'treatises of the 1560's, a calm of twenty years duration prevailed before another tempest of controversy about the merits of astrology caught the attention of the Elizabethans' (D. Allen 1966: 112). The excitement in Europe

⁵⁹ For Greene's position on the nature of the stars and their influence on humans, see Das (2009: 151-163), and her 'Critical Introduction' (2007: ix-xliii).

⁶⁰ See the works of Nashe (1589) and the Harvey brothers: Richard (1583), John (1583; 1588), and Gabriel (1573-1590s); see also Nandini Das (2007).

⁶¹ Greene, Marlowe, and Jonson, it is suggested, contributed to the authorship of the lost play *Terminus & Non Terminus* which Matthew Steggle attributes to Thomas Nashe and Robert Mills. Doleta is a ridiculed character in the play; see Steggle (2015: 33-38).

⁶² The following year, T. R. wrote *A Confutation of the Tenne Great Plagues, Prognosticated by John Doleta* (1587). To discredit works such as Doleta's, John Harvey wrote *A Discursive Probleme Concerning Prophecies how far they are to be Valued, or Credited* (1588).

⁶³ For a detailed account of the works during this five-year period in England, see Don Cameron Allen (1966: 110-113; 122-125).

was similarly intense to the extent that in 1586 Pope Sixtus V had to issue a Bull banning astrological divination (Eamon 2014: 186).

Expectations were high, but the anticipated calamities of 1583 or 1587 did not materialise. Nor did it help to transfer those anticipated disasters to the 1588 ‘wonder year’.⁶⁴ For opponents of vaticination, such failings gave rise to scathing sarcasm and satire.⁶⁵ Part of the renewed interest in astrology involved a raging controversy between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe; Greene was pivotal to that controversy. The debate was first stirred by Nashe’s preface to Greene’s *Menaphon* (1589). Nashe included Gabriel Harvey among the few praise-worthy intellectual writers of his time, but Harvey desired more distinction. Thereafter, the controversy caught fire and brought in all the Harveys. Richard’s discussion of the 1583 conjunction was derided and Gabriel Harvey would hold his grudge even after Greene’s death.⁶⁶ The failings of prophecies and astrological predictions reinforced the wisdom of the prohibition laws and lent credence to the opponents of the practice. In general, the intellectuals and educated entertained less faith in prophecies. Taylor maintained that ‘the Elizabethan dramatists as a rule disapproved of the widespread credence given prophecies, and not infrequently gave voice to their disapproval’ (R. Taylor 1911: 128). To Bacon, ‘dreams, and predictions of astrology [...] ought all to be despised; and ought to serve but for winter talk by the fireside’ (Bacon [1625] 1908: 169). To ‘wise men’, Henry Howard wrote, prophecies were ‘the scomme of pride, and dregs of ignorance’ (Howard 1583: ¶ii^v).

Whatever influence such scant statements might have wielded, they would have made no dent in the populous sea of believers of all walks of life that Alexandra Walsham has documented in *Providence in Early Modern England* (1999). It was to such a turbulent environment that Greene arrived in London in the mid-1580s, the decade during which Philip II’s plans for England were well known and coloured by astral and religious prophecies. Philip was said to pay no attention to prophecy (Mattingly [1959] 2005: 177), but his London and Paris-based ambassadors often invoked its relevance. Mendoza read the execution of Mary Stuart as ‘God’s obvious design’ foretelling Philip’s success in the ‘Enterprise of England’. Feria’s 1558 detailed letter to Philip strongly implied the possible exploitation of the English superstitious fondness of prophecies (Hume [1892] 1971: 17-18). Geoffrey Parker and Glyn Parry documented the keen interest of both Philip and his father Charles V in the prophecy of the ‘Last World Emperor’ (Parker 2002: 167-221;

⁶⁴ On the importance of the prophecy of 1588 in England and Europe, see Eamon (2014: 181-183).

⁶⁵ Stubbes’ *Anatomy of the Abuses in England, Part II* was one of the first works to denounce astrologers and astronomers (Stubbes [1583] 1882: 55-66).

⁶⁶ See Collins (1905: 45ff.) or Alexander Dyce (1874: 55ff.).

Parry 2011: 45). In the following section, this prophecy of the Last World Emperor is analysed in relation to Alphonsus' becoming the heir apparent to the Turkish throne at the end of the play.

3.2.1 Prophecy in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*

This overview provides a frame for the astrological prognostication and prophecy which the second part of Greene's play satirises. This part offers many prophecies and predictions that culminate in the final submission of the Turk to Alphonsus, a common theme in Medieval and Early Modern literary works and religious discourses.⁶⁷ *Alphonsus* owes much to that theme and Medieval prophecies as it does to contemporary late sixteenth century astrological events, especially the 1583 Superior Conjunction and the predictions of disasters for the 'wonder year' of 1588. In the play, these predictions explain Alphonsus' anticipation of the Ottoman crown at the end of the first part, the prophetic dreams of both Amurack and Carinus, and Mahomet's false prophecy to Belinus, in addition to the influence of planets on the catastrophic loss of Belinus' kingdom and, eventually, life. These, again, should be considered in the context of the active controversies surrounding the publicised 'Superior Conjunction' of April 28, 1583; the Nashe-Harvey controversy and the pamphlets to which it gave rise (1589-1592); Greene's publication of *Planetomachia* (1585) and *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1589), and the widespread anxieties about the alarming predictions of Doleta for the years 1587 and 1588.⁶⁸ To Greene, these contextual factors make prophecy and astrological prognostication a particularly current and controversial issue.

Act III, scene 2 is central to the treatment of prophecy and prognostication. It opens with the arrival of fugitive Belinus at the Turkish Court. The visit and Amurack's court are Greene's inventions. Belinus introduces his plight through a metaphoric encounter between Jove (Jupiter) and Saturn. Greene seems to have used these superior planets to remind the audience of the worldwide disasters that Elizabethan astrologists assigned to the 1583 conjunction, which passed in peace. Belinus, unlike some classical kings or Gods, has not come to Amurack in pursuit of Midas' golden touch or of sexual desires (III. 2. 13-20):

But as poor Saturn, forced by mighty Jove
To fly his country, banished and forlorn,

⁶⁷ These works are best addressed in the 1999 collection of essays *Western Views of Islam*, edited by David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto.

⁶⁸ Alexandra Walsham explains that Doleta's 1586 predictions for the 1587 "Climactericall yeare" when the moon was in Pisces, "the watrie sign", were very nearly realized two years later in the guise of the Spanish Armada' (1999: 175).

Did crave the aid of Troos, King of Troy,
 So comes Belinus to high Amurack;
 And if he can but once your aid obtain,
 He turns with speed to Naples back again. (III. 2. 21-26)

Here, Greene carefully conflates the Greek and Roman myths. The cruel relation of the Grecian Cronus and Zeus would speak better to Belinus' case, but Greene chooses the Latinised version of the Jupiter-Saturn myth to recall more directly the planets and their conjunction. If the Roman Saturn seems a peaceful and passive character, Greene counts on the implied cruelty of Belinus' plight, while the memory of the peaceful passage of the conjunction points to the falsehood of astrologists' predictions. Greene thus combines the relevant elements of the two myths to evoke the ongoing debate on the 'terrible conjunction'. The conflict of Alphonsus and Belinus embodies the supposedly terrible disasters predicted by the conjunction of the superior planets. Astrological prognostications and prophecies after the fact can benefit both winners and losers; but only a well planned course of action determines the outcome.

In pleading his case, Belinus raises questions more than he elicits sympathy. Historically, Alfonso V had a legitimate claim to the crown of Naples. In the play Belinus, in league with Milan, has been instrumental in the usurpation of Alphonsus' crown of Aragon. Before killing Milan, Carinus (Alphonsus' father) reveals this fact: 'This is the man which was the only cause/ That I was forced to fly from Aragon' (IV. 2. 60-61). Milan himself recalls the joyous festivities when 'Carinus and his son/ Were banished both for ever from Aragon' (IV. 2. 92-93). Unlike Amurack, readers and audiences will have no qualms about the Jove-decided fate of Saturn (who here represents Belinus). The play's opening scene emphasises the exact case that Carinus and his son Alphonsus have wrongfully suffered. More puzzling perhaps is the exaggerated analogy through which Belinus has presented his case. He is 'poor Saturn', abused and dethroned by 'mighty Jove'. This relation seems to have created a problem for the editors of the play. Niayesh follows Dyce on 'Troos'. To both the added 'O' to Tros' name is necessitated by the measure suggesting that Saturn fled to Troy rather than Rome (Niayesh 2018: 80). To Collins it is an invention typical of Greene. Glossing '*poore Saturne*', Collins writes:

[W]hat Greene's authority for this legend may be I know not; he has certainly as little classical authority for it as he has for giving Tros an additional 'o' to his name. It is probably a bold invention, like so many other mythological illustrations in the Elizabethan writers. Greene is full of this pseudo-mythology. (Collins 1905: 285)

If 'Troos' is a 'bold invention', it is certainly not the only one of Greene's. Just as outlandish are Belinus' visit to his *cousin's* Turkish court (III. 2. 1) and the vast Eastern

and African geographical spaces which Amurack controls in the play. These have not been, at the time, part of the Ottoman Empire. Such inventions seem calculated to highlight prophetic and astrological functions; Belinus' loss of his kingdom under the sign of Jove-Saturn is a calculated topical allusion to the sweltering controversy on conjunctions and prophecies.

In 1564 Cyprian Leowitz related the superior conjunction of 1583 to the apocalyptic 'Wonder Year' of 1588 (Parry 2011: 43; Eamon 2014: 182). Thereafter, the conjunction ignited a passion for prophecies. 'People', says Eamon, 'remembered the prophecies it generated long after the conjunction had come and gone' (Ibid., 182). In England, important works appeared debating the outcome of the conjunction and prophecy.⁶⁹ The publications engendered intellectual and satirical controversies that in literary and cultural circles continued until the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered in 1599 'that all Nashe's bookes and Dr. Harvey's bookes be taken, wheresoever they may be, and that none of the same bookes be ever printed hereafter' (Lee 1894: 106). *Alphonsus*, dated to around 1587, must have been written during the climax of the controversy.

On one level, the arrival of Belinus at the Ottoman Court parodies the prophetic structure of the prophecy about the 'Last World Emperor' who first unites Europe, eventually conquers the heathen Turks, liberates the Holy Land, and convinces all nations to embrace Christianity. Fugitive Belinus is surely far from such an ambitious leader or mission. To the Turks he comes in supplication and is welcomed as 'cousin' of heathen Amurack, the Turk (III. 2. 1). In concluding his supplication, Belinus avers his lack of interest in any imperial ambitions: once granted Amurack's aid, 'He turns with speed to Naples back again' (III. 2. 26). The high ambition, however, has to await Alphonsus to whom Belinus will bring the Turkish Empire, as Alphonsus predicted at the end of the play's first part.

Belinus' analogy of Jove and Saturn is more than just a conflation of two myths; it invokes the current and widely publicised astrological debates in the 1580s. The audience not only will hear the controversy's tintinnabulation but will also reflect on the falsehood of the prophecies relating to the Turks that conjunctions and prophecies generated. Belinus' reference would provide a timely reminder of John Doleta's prophecy of the horrifying events and collapse of the Turks that he projected for 1587 (Doleta 1586: Bi^v).⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Among those predicting disaster were the Harvey brothers: Richard and John, and Robert Tanner; against those stood Lord Henry Howard, Phillip Stubbes, and Thomas Heth. Afterwards, Thomas Nashe, Greene and John Lyly joined the debate.

⁷⁰ Critics believe that Doleta's prophecy is a fabrication, though at the time it was popular (Steggle 35-36; Jonathan Green 2014: 117, 187).

In his 1585 *Planetomachia*, Greene distinguishes between astronomy and judicial astrology, and confines his remarks to the former. Unlike astrologists like the Harveys and Robert Tanner, Greene is ‘not discovering [...] any strange or miraculous news of the opposition or aspect of the stars, but only showing their nature and essence’ (Greene 1585: 4). Nandini Das has shown that Greene started his text ‘in the summer’ of 1583, after Richard Harvey’s ‘dire prognostications’, when the ‘survival of the world [...] offered good fodder for elite and popular groups alike’ (Das 2009: 153). Though Greene believes that astrologists are in error, he attacks no one. But in his *Quip*, he openly targets the Harveys (father and sons). He has the ‘rope-maker’ father comment on his own sons. John, the astrologist, ‘is a physician or a fool’, having ‘spoiled himself with his *Astrological Discourse* of the terrible conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter’ (Greene 1589: 73). Though this designation fits Richard better, Greene has better insults for Richard. He is ‘a vainglorious ass’, who ‘writ alate *The Lamb of God*, and yet his parishioners say he is the limb of the devil’ (Ibid., 73). The father himself fares no better. It is said ‘that witches say their prayers backward, and so doth the rope-maker earn his living by going backward, and the knave’s chief living is by making fatal instruments, as halters and ropes, which diverse desperate men hang themselves with’ (Ibid., 53). With this reference to the ‘devil’ Greene is drawing on the popular idea that non-biblical prophecies are inspired by the devil. ‘[I]t is the malice of the devill’, wrote Stubbes in response to the 1583 conjunction, ‘that draweth us to evill [...] and not the starres, or planets’ (Stubbes [1583] 1882: 64).

In the *Quip*, the father’s reference to Richard’s *Lamb* is as redolent as Belinus’ reference to the conjunction. In the epistle, Richard rekindles the Harvey-Nashe controversy by attacking Nashe, Lyly, and Greene. Nashe has claimed that Gabriel Harvey helped his brother Richard write the epistle. And under the pseudonym ‘Adam Fouleweather, student in Asse-tronomy’, Nashe hits back in 1591.⁷¹ The name (Fouleweather) alludes to the anticipated rain and floods that supposedly accompany the conjunction. The controversy, current at the time of the play’s composition and later performances, has raged through the 1590s, especially after Greene’s death. In Belinus’ Jupiter-Saturn relation, Greene keeps alive the cultural and literary controversies on astrological prognostications and prophecies. During the play’s first performance, the audience would have recognised the allusions to the still raging debate and reflected on the now proven falsehood of the panic-striking prophecies.

⁷¹ Sidney Lee attributes to Nashe, *A wonderful, strange, and miraculous astrological prognostication for this year of our Lord God 1591. Discovering such wonders to happen this year as never chanced since Noah’s flood. Wherein if there be found one lie, the author will lose his credit forever* (Lee 1894: 104).

Examination of the exchanges between Belinus and Amurack reveals a strong pagan faith in prophecies and planet-driven promises, reminiscent of the letters the Spanish ambassadors wrote to King Philip from 1558 through 1587. By the time Greene was writing, however, all recent prophecies and predictions associated with planetary conjunctions had failed. His hints or open references to prophecies and planetary conjunctions only emphasised the falsehood of non-biblical vaticination and underscored the dangerous service prophecy would lend to foreign ambitious powers. The steadfast belief in prophecy of heathen Amurack led to the loss of his empire and the death of those who sought prophecy from the pagan 'head'. In mocking prophecy Greene hopes that his audience will be wary of the dangers to which it leads or its promoters entertain. His treatment of prophecy serves as a lesson to audience and readers; after all, Greene often proclaims a Horatian commitment to mixing the instructive with the pleasurable (Greene 1588: 3).

The first speech of Belinus on his situation and relation to the Turk sets the stage for a decisive articulation of the absurdities of prophecy. Without recalling the controversy of the 1580s, one misses Greene's point and may arrive at the same conclusion of editor Collins: 'The play is not so much a drama as a phantasmagorical medley. To truth to nature and life it makes no pretence' (Collins 1905: 73). Greene's point in this part of the play is precisely to show prophecy to be as phantasmagorical as the events and characters he has invented. The best embodiment of the absurdity of such inventions is Belinus, who compares his fate to the wronged Saturn and seeks a prophecy from a familiar 'antichrist' figure. The audience may still have remembered Stubbes' scathing denunciation of astrologers and faith in planetary influences. To Stubbes, those believers derive their knowledge not 'out of the booke of GOD' (Stubbes [1583] 1882: 58), but out of faith in the power of God-created planets, and they thus simply make of God 'a jacke out of office' (Ibid., 60; see also 61-63). Similarly, in seeking a heathen idol for a prophecy, Belinus, like proponents of non-biblical prophecies, abandons God for the devil.

Naturally, unlike 'the gods and friendly Fates' of Alphonsus (III. 1. 56), to Belinus the 'Fates have been so false' (III. 2. 4). If the 1583 Saturn-Jupiter conjunction fulfilled none of its anticipated disasters, in the play it led to Belinus' loss of his kingdom and later his life. Ironically, pagan idolatrous Amurack received Belinus with a promise to repay 'at full/ The sundry pleasures' that Belinus extended to the Grand Turk (III. 2. 7-8). Concluding his cordial reception, Amurack now asserts, 'Belinus, do but ask and have,/ For Amurack does grant whate'er you crave' (III. 2. 9-10). Encouraged by the gratitude of

his Turkish host, Belinus — in response — presents his case and asks for aid. And Amurack obliges:

My aid, Belinus? Do you doubt of that?
 If all the men at arms of Africa,
 Of Asia likewise, will sufficient be
 To press the pomp of that usurping mate,
 Assure thyself thy kingdom shall be thine... (III. 2. 27-31)

Generous and promising as Amurack may have sounded, he still has a condition. He will fulfil his promise only,

If Mahomet say 'ay' unto the same;
 For were I sure to vanquish all our foes,
 And find such spoils in ransacking their tents
 As never any kaiser did obtain,
 Yet would I not set foot forth of this land
 If Mahomet our journey did withstand. (III. 2. 32-37)

For a Christian, and the audience, such a demand ought to have been disappointing; whatever value this prophecy may promise, it is doomed by the very deity ('mighty Mahomet') that sanctions it as a 'full repayment'.

The condition, underscoring prophecy's importance, limits Belinus' options. Echoing his host, Belinus has to oblige; he will not for the treasures of the world, 'wish Amurack to displease the gods,/ In pleasuring me in such a trifling toy' (III. 2. 39-40). This ironic response sounds congruent with the reason of his visit 'not, as erst Midas did/ To mighty Bacchus' (III. 2. 13-14) but as defeated Saturn. The Fates are justified to have been false to Belinus. To see his Naples as 'a trifling toy' in relation to Mahomet's 'displeasure' is surely a pagan piety. Belinus' reverence of Mahomet and his prophecy is equivalent to his belief in the stars. Like other characters, he invokes Jove at desperate moments, once when Aragon has attacked Naples and another when Alphonsus demands Belinus' loyalty and obedience (I. 1. 172; II. 1. 127). With such beliefs Belinus becomes proof of the folly of abandoning the living God for the trust in the stars, which Stubbes describes as the 'neerer way to withdrawe the people, not onelie from God, but also to hale them to idolatrie, and wholly to depend upon creatures as the heathen do to their eternall damnation for ever' (Stubbes [1583] 1882: 58). When Belinus later receives the false prophecy, he displays his absolute faith in the idol: 'And since we have god Mahound on our side,/ The victory must needs to us betide' (IV. 1. 86-87). The very choice of the Medieval abusive

variant ‘Mahound’ undermines the promise.⁷² As we will see, Amurack too embodies the Western prediction that ultimately Mahound’s own followers will apostatise.

To stress the absurdity of the anticipated prophecy and foreshow its outcome, Greene carefully selects its place and source, and the delegation who will receive it. The location is the idolatrous worshipping temple, the darksome grove outside the city walls; and the source of the prophecy, at this point still unseen, is an Idol, well known to the English public as an imposter and the Antichrist incarnate. The delegation also consists of infidels; in addition to Belinus (supposedly Catholic), there is Arcastus, King of the Moors and Claramount, King of the Berbers. Both individuals and their nations, to Christian Europe, are no better than their idol God. To attack and mock faith in prophecy, for Greene, no characters serve better than Eastern Turks and Moors and their religious idol. The dangers of faith in prophecy outweigh the unwarranted high hopes that blind faith in prophecy often generates.

Faced by Amurack’s condition, Belinus requests a speedy consultation with the pagan Idol. As Amurack responds, an Elizabethan audience would see exotic individuals (probably black) oddly attired and hear a blasphemous source of prophecy. ‘You counsel well. Therefore, Belinus, haste’, says Amurack,

And Claramount, go bear him company,
With King Arcastus, to the city walls.
Then bend with speed unto the darksome grove
Where Mahomet this many a hundred year
Has prophesied unto our ancestors. (III. 2. 43-48)

As the exotic delegation embark on their way to the brazen, fire-flaring ‘head’ of Mahomet, Amurack now adds to earlier ‘Africa’ the whole of the East and its powers:

You, Bajazet, go post away apace
To Syria, Scythia, and Albania,
To Babylon, with Mesopotamia,
Asia, Armenia, and all other lands
Which owe their homage to high Amurack.
Charge all their kings with expedition
To gather up the chiefest men at arms
Which now remain in their dominions;
And on the twentieth day of the same month
To come and wait on Amurack their king
At his chief city Constantinople.
Tell them, moreover, that whoso does fail,
Nought else but death from prison shall him bail. (III. 2. 58-70)

⁷² Vitkus explains, that in Medieval and Early Modern ‘popular fiction and drama, pagan Saracens and idol-worshipping Moors alike pay homage to a deity called Mahoun or Mahound, who is often part of a heathen pantheon that includes Apollin, Termagant, and other devilish idols’ (Vitkus 1999: 216).

This extensive landscape is again Greene's invention, but the named places do appear in Christian prophecies of Davy and Gildas. Amurack names them right before Medea externalises his dream which shows the outcome of the prophecy that Belinus and his companions will receive from the mysterious talking head. Medea proves herself a better source of prophecy than Mahound. Though she is not classically gifted at prophecy, Greene enlists her powers of interpreting dreams to anticipate Mahound's false ability to prophesy. This is the first of a series of references to Mahomet's calculated deception. He becomes the Medieval Mahound against whom his own followers eventually revolt and — as will be shown — confirms the Christians' common charge that the Prophet of Islam is an imposter.

Greene strategically shows the audience Mahound conspiring with his two priests to *deceive* the delegation, promising them a glorious victory only if they instantly rush to the battlefield (IV. 1. 63-65; 69-74; 78-81). Furthermore, the characteristic certainty, clarity, and directness of the prophecy given to Belinus and his companions stand in stark contrast to prophecy's inherent obscurity, which is 'the only quality the prophecies had in common' (R. Taylor 1911: 109).⁷³ Only fools will fall for such a direct prophesying. More importantly, both Amurack and Venus have already informed the audience of the prophecy's falsehood. Of the ridiculous prophecy, Venus says: 'the hearers needs must laugh for sport' (IV. Prol. 18). With this prior knowledge, Greene seems to show the motivation behind non-biblical prophecies by giving the audience access to the reasons of Mahound's fabrication. Like Saracens in Medieval times who eventually turn against their false deity, Amurack heaps insults against Mahound. Mahomet is therefore displeased (IV. 1. 26-27) and will not vaticinate anymore. In this case, the lives of his two priests are endangered, and he must save them. The three then conspire to give the delegation a false but deadly prophecy. The plan is simple; Mahomet admits:

I'll prophesy unto them for this once,
But in such wise as they shall neither boast,
Nor you be hurt in any kind of wise. (IV. 1. 35-37)

⁷³ Reverend Russell comments on and quotes eyewitness accounts of the obscurity and influence prophecies played in Kett's rebellion:

The language in which they were couched might be obscure [...] or the words might be homely and the promise contained in them be as ambiguous as those uttered by older and more famous soothsayers; still there was a charm, and mystery, a mighty power in them; and often had the rebels caused them 'to bee openly proclaimid in the markit and other placis, as matters of greate tryall', or as proofs that their enterprise must prosper; as the foundation on which they were building, and on which they would have others rest, their hope of ultimate success. (Russell 1859: 142)

Political prophecy is never innocent; it always promotes a certain cause. Were Belinus a Protestant or a careful reader, he would never have visited the ‘darksome grove’ in the first place, or he would have at least questioned the clarity of Mahomet’s prophecy.

Prophecy owes its popularity to inspiring ‘wishful hopes’ (R. Taylor 1911: 104); and Belinus is a good example of such blind faith in prophecy. His political imprudence has earlier led Alphonsus and Albinus to his Naples. Through Belinus, Greene criticises both prophecy’s wide-spread practice and the wishful hopes it engenders. Stubbes’ *Anatomy* (1583) and Howard’s *Defensative* (1583) cast doubts on the practice. Had Belinus consulted either, he would have been better informed. For instance, Howard rejects non-biblical prophecies, and denounces

whatsoever kinde of prophecie which presumeth to divine, or aim at any future accident, whose meanes are not alredie sette on worke; but meereley to come, without the knowledge of the next most naturall and moste proper causes. (Howard 1583: A4^r)

The prophecy into which Belinus puts his faith violates all these measures, as he himself violates the main idea of the play. The play shows that winners place their trust not in stars or pagan prophets but in their own power, loyal followers, and unwavering readiness to act. This is made clearest in another and early grove. In the opening scene of the play, Alphonsus rejects his father’s entreaties to forget their lost throne and persists in trying. His father, however, ‘in this silly grove/ Will spend his days with prayers and orisons/ To mighty Jove, to further thine [Alphonsus’] intent’ (I. 1. 62-64). And Alphonsus’ consequent victories in the play’s first part are proof of Howard’s rational thinking. True to this rationality, Alphonsus justifies to Albinus the ‘naturall and moste proper causes’ for anticipating the Turkish crown:

What, hear you not how that our scattered foes –
Belinus, Fabius and the Milan duke –
Are fled for succour to the Turkish Court?
And think you not that Amurack, their king,
Will, with the mightiest power of all his land,
Seek to revenge Belinus’ overthrow?
Then doubt I not but ere these broils do end,
Alphonsus shall possess the diadem
That Amurack now wears upon his head. (III. 1. 73-81)

Alphonsus here relies on no ‘wishful hopes’ or supernatural powers. He draws on what he knows of his opponents and anticipates their action. He will be ready when they come. His successes in the first part lend credibility to his sound judgement and final triumphs. His rationalisation ought to bring to mind Philip’s ambassadors who made much of the English fondness of prophecies and the divine sign of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. To be

sure, Philip II, like his father, perceived himself as the last world emperor (Parker 2002: 167-221).

Two contrasts need attention at this point: the false prophecy Belinus has received versus Amurack's Medea-induced dream, and the success of Alphonsus' army versus the defeat of Amurack's massive forces. Alphonsus' victory over Amurack and Belinus clearly discredits faith in prophecy. The prophecy and the dream of Amurack highlight irrational superstition. On examination, the prophecies that Belinus and Amurack receive are demanded, reported and staged. This seems to be Greene's way of underscoring the theme and motivation of prophecy. The failure of Belinus' prophecy is announced by Mahomet and his priests, shown in Amurack's dream, and reported in Venus' prologue to Act IV. Moreover, as Mahomet's opening speech shows, Belinus receives and obeys orders, not a prophecy. 'I needs must muse that' (IV. 1. 56), says Mahomet,

You stand still loitering in the Turkish soil.
What, know you not how that it is decreed,
By all the gods, and chiefly by myself,
That you with triumph should all crownèd be?
Make haste, kings [...]
And march you on with all the troops you have
To Naples ward, to conquer Aragon.
For if you stay, both you and all your men
Must needs be sent down straight to Limbo den. (IV. 1. 61-65; 71-74)

The second priest urges:

Assure yourselves it needs must happen so.
Therefore, make haste. Go, mount you on your steeds,
And set upon Alphonsus presently.
So shall you reap great honour for your pain,
And scape the scourge which else the Fates ordain. (IV. 1. 77-81)

Belinus obeys: 'Then, proud Alphonsus, look thou to thy crown./ Belinus comes in glittering armour clad' (IV. 1. 82-83). Claramount rejoins, 'let us haste as fast as horse can trot,/ To set upon presumptuous Aragon' (IV. 1. 89-90). We know the outcome from Amurack's dream.

In the cases of Medea and Amurack, disrespect for deities is openly pronounced. Having dreamt of the defeat of his forces and his own captivity and imprisonment, Amurack (like the Moor-Saracen followers of Mahound) renounces his God and any claim to prophecy. Amurack promises not only the punishment of Mahound, but also a mass renunciation of faith in the 'injurious God' and, with Jove's help, the destruction of the Prophet's 'groves':

And dost thou think, thou proud, injurious god,
Mahound I mean, since thy vain prophecies
Led Amurack into this doleful case,

To have his princely feet in irons clapped,
 Which erst the proudest kings were forced to kiss,
 That thou shall scape unpunished for the same?
 No, no, as soon as by the help of Jove
 I scape this bondage, down go all thy groves,
 Thy altars tumble round about the streets,
 And whereas erst we sacrificed to thee,
 Now all the Turks thy mortal foes shall be! (III. 2. 129-139)⁷⁴

In the play, this impiety is featured when a prophecy is demanded, but not when it comes unsolicited. To deny Calchas or his pagan Gods any sanctity, Medea conjures him up under every filthy name to bring her a prophecy from Pluto and Jove:

I conjure thee by Pluto's loathsome lake,
 By all the hags which harbour in the same,
 By stinking Styx and filthy Phlegethon,
 To come with speed and truly to fulfil
 That which Medea to thee straight shall will. (III. 2. 87-91)

Medea herself is described as a 'wretched witch' with no end to her 'cursèd charms' (III. 2. 92-93). Similarly, the two priests of Mahound are rebuked by their deity for their carelessness and ignorance (IV. 1. 18-21). At one point among many, Amurack calls his deity 'that cursèd god' (IV. 3. 50).

Amurack's dream raises no doubts or questions, nor calls for a test of a true 'Spirit' (I John 4. 1-6). Fausta and Iphigina take it as a fact, and Medea confirms it by advising Iphigina to accept her foreseen future marriage as an inevitability. All this takes place just as Amurack is awakened by Fausta and Iphigina who have been listening to his hallucination. Through Medea's intervention, Amurack has seen the tragic outcome of the prophecy that Mahomet and his priests have offered the 'legates from high Amurack' (IV. 1. 40). Mahomet's direct order to his visitors to go immediately to the battle, instead of returning to Amurack, makes it clear that Belinus is sent to his fate. Long before watching Mahomet's exotic head prophesy, the audience have known the outcome on three occasions. If anything, the prophecies show the follies of prophecy-seekers and the dangers of prophecies in the political sphere.

Unlike Amurack's dream, the vision of Carinus (Alphonsus' father) meets most requirements of the prophecy genre and provides a contrast to solicited prophecies and dreams. It shows some obscurity, need of interpretation, and the possibility of evil. At the approach of night, exhausted Carinus falls asleep. First, he thinks he has seen his son,

Placed in a throne all glittering clear with gold,
 Bedecked with diamonds, pearls and precious stones,

⁷⁴ This theme is common to Medieval and Early Modern works on the conception of Mohammad and Muslims. See for example John V. Tolan (1999: 109-111) and Daniel Vitkus (1999: 216).

Which shone so clear and glittered all so bright,
 'Hyperion's couch', that well be termed it might. (IV. 2. 8-11)

In contrast to the straightforward cases of Belinus and Amurack, the meaning of this dream needs deciphering. The throne and jewels signify power and prosperity. Reflecting on his son's crown, Carinus adds an elaborate image implying the many domains Alphonsus has won, and the fear his enemies feel:

Above his head a canopy was set,
 Not decked with plumes, as other princes use,
 But all beset with heads of conquered kings,
 Installed with crowns, which made a gallant show,
 And struck a terror to the viewers' hearts. (IV. 2. 12-16)

The many conquered heads of kings underscore the vast domains Alphonsus controls now, some of which we have seen in the first part. This dream is reminiscent of the play's first scene. Before going into the 'silly grove', Carinus advised Alphonsus to abandon his mission because 'A quiet life does pass an empery' (I. 1. 41). When Alphonsus refused, Carinus hoped that his son would 'soon returne unto' his father 'With such a train as Julius Caesar came/ To noble Rome, whenas he had achieved / The mighty monarch of the triple world (I. 1. 59-60). The dream of Carinus is the fulfilment of that hope.

In contrast to others, Carinus is offered his vision by Morpheus, the God of dreams, without preparation or anticipation. He sees the successes and splendid achievements of his son. At first, he sees 'strange disguisèd shapes' then hesitates to trust 'this pleasant dream' (IV. 2. 6; 29). In contrast to Belinus' naive trust and Amurack's angry reactions, Carinus simply reflects: 'Something, I know, is now foreshown by this:/ The gods forbend that aught should hap amiss' (IV. 2. 30-31). To his gratification, Milan soon confirms what Carinus has seen. Before he stabs Milan, Carinus learns from him how Alphonsus has regained the crown of Aragon and possessed that of Naples (IV. 2. 99-104). In all these visions and prophecies, the audience always already knows their reality. Marjorie Garber once wrote that prophecy is 'hindsight masquerading as foresight' (Garber 1986: 308); the case in *Alphonsus* is the exact opposite. Unlike the case of prophecies in Shakespeare's history plays, here the dramatic or real 'time' is the play's history. The audience literally awaits the past (already performed in the play itself). For *Alphonsus* the title of Garber's study, 'What's Past Is Prologue', is a literal truism. The play is an attack on prophecy, and this is one way of articulating its falsehood.

Of the exchanged prophecies and anticipations, Amurack's vision is most important. In its specific placement in the play, right after having summoned his massive forces, the dream ultimately highlights the contrast between the Turk's supposedly invincible power and the victorious army of Alphonsus. Superficially, Amurack's defeat

emphasises the inevitability of ‘fate’ against which Belinus, Fausta, Iphigina, and Amurack himself vainly fight. Greene’s use of prophecy also emphasises the conspiratorial intentions behind prophecies; the evidence for this, noted earlier, is god Mahomet and his two priests granting Belinus the fatal hope of victory.

At a deeper level, superstition underscores the difference between Alphonsus and Amurack. To stress the point, Greene first frees characters, events, and geographical space of any historical anchoring, then reinvests these with the signification he intends. Thus, Greene not only gives half of the play to Amurack and Belinus, but models Alphonsus, Amurack and Belinus after no definitely recognisable figures; invents events with no historical antecedences; devises fantastic relations; and anachronistically assigns capitals and dominions to the Turks. In so doing, Greene is able to present superstition as he chooses. Compared to Alphonsus’ effective use of power, the trust of the other characters in supernatural intervention becomes the impediment to their success. It is when Belinus has set off to the ‘darksome grove’ that Amurack, having summoned his massive forces from the world over, recognises the fraudulent prophet and falsehood of the prophecy:

See where thy viceroys grovel on the ground,
 Look where Belinus breatheth forth his ghost,
 Behold by millions how thy men do fall
 Before Alphonsus like to silly sheep.
 And canst thou stand still lazing in this sort? (III. 2. 122-126)

So much then for a superstitious faith in prophecy. Unable to ‘stand still lazing’, Amurack wages his war and loses; Iphigina, fulfilling the dictates of fate, acquiesces to marrying Alphonsus who becomes the son-in-law of Amurack and Fausta.

This final restoration of order is congruent with the genre of comedy. Its political implication is that Alphonsus, through matrimony (and war), will claim the massive lands that Amurack controls. With this final theme Greene seems to invest Alphonsus with the ambitions of Philip II. The king of Spain too has used these two (out of three) strategies to build his Empire; the third was purchasing or negotiation (Parker 2001: 10-14). Like Alphonsus, King Philip keeps war as the last resort. Alphonsus thus spends a long time courting Iphigina, negotiating long with her parents; Medea too offers her unrelenting services to convince Fausta, Amurack, and Iphigina. Carinus finally convinces the two parties. In Parker’s translation, one aphorism runs: ‘Others make war, you, happy Habsburg, marry’ (Parker 2001: 10). The catch of it all is what Alphonsus, as the Imperial Monarch of the world, offers Iphigina, the ‘virgin’:

Nay, virgin, stay, and if thou wilt vouchsafe
 To entertain Alphonsus’ simple suit,
 Thou shalt ere long be monarch of the world.

All christened kings, with all your pagan dogs,
 Shall bend their knees unto Iphigina.
 The Indian soil shall be thine at command,
 Where every step thou settest on the ground
 Shall be receivèd on the golden mines. (V. 2. 30-37)

In addition to implying his becoming world Imperial Monarch, Alphonsus' offer surely alludes also to Medieval prophecies predicting that the Turks (her 'pagan dogs') will be conquered and Christianity will dominate. Amurack taps into this idea. As he gives his daughter in marriage to Alphonsus, Amurack enhances the status of the World Monarch:

Here, brave Alphonsus, take thou at my hand
 Iphigina: I give her unto thee.
 And for her dowry, when her father die,
 Thou shalt possess the Turkish empery.
 Take her, I say, and live King Nestor's years,
 So would the Turk and all his noble peers. (V. 2. 325-330)

Soon after the demise of Mary Tudor, Philip II of Spain did propose to Queen Elizabeth without success. He exploited all his strategies of matrimony, negotiations, and war but to no avail. If we trust Mendoza's 'providential sign' he read into the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, he was as good a prophet as is Mahound.

3.3 Conclusion

The romantic conclusion has led critics to categorise the play as a romance and to see Iphigina as Greene's imitation of Marlowe's Zenocrate. Strong as the similarity may look, for Greene the marriage remains a future promise. With the play's articulation of the absurdity of prophecies, the projected marriage and its supposed consequence of world harmony cannot be anything but another 'prophecy'. Niayesh attributes the projected harmony to 'the romantic conventions of conversion and cross-cultural marriage', which is 'a classically inherited dream of assimilation, rather than one of annihilation of the Turk other' (Niayesh 2016: 63). This may be true of the romance genre; but the assimilation of Turkey into Europe, Niayesh herself admits, has remained 'a dream that has not yet come true in our own time' (Ibid., 58).⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Katherine Heavey suggests that the marriage might not be as promising as it seems. She points out that Medea's role in the marriage and Alphonsus' invocation of Jason foreshadow trouble: Jason 'has the effect of disturbing the audience's satisfaction at the ending', Heavey continues, 'leading them to conclude that, if Alphonsus really is like Jason, he may eventually come to regret the match'. She further explains that Alphonsus, 'by making Iphigina into a Medea-figure, epitomises the sense of danger that even a non-violent, helpful Medea [...] brings to comedy and to ostensibly happy endings' (Heavey 2015: 136).

Rather than generic conventions, two factors underscore the romance and the prolonged altercations of *Alphonsus*' final Act: famous and widely distributed prophecies and a Spanish claim through marriage to the crown of England. One prophecy, we must recall, anticipates that King Philip II or his son would 'force' the Turks and heretics to embrace the true faith. This conversion needs the final battle of Act V and the lengthy and eventful marriage negotiations. So too it needs Amurack's vast territories in the play (Africa, Asia, Syria, Scythia, Albania, Armenia, Babylon, Mesopotamia, Constantinople) which resemble those that, in another prophecy, Edward II subdued. The play's vast territories are too specific to be accidental or included to meet generic conventions. Greene first underscores the importance of power and then criticises faith in blatantly false prophecies.

Critics and editors, like Niayesh's argument for 'Europeanizing' the Turks, sidestep the point of traditional prophecies concerning the East. It has never been a matter of racial assimilation but always one of world Christianisation. As Vitkus notes,

prophecies of Turkish doom were popular throughout Europe during the early modern period. These texts often referred to the Book of Revelation and sometimes identified Muhammad with the Antichrist. They predicted 1) the recovery of all lands lost to the Turks, and their conversion to Christianity; or 2) they foretold the ultimate downfall of the Turks. (Vitkus 1999: 214)

Biblically, such an end is certain. In the play, however, prophecy in general is absurd and dangerous. Greene is certainly aware of the antagonistic position of Spain, the intense reaction to the execution of Mary Stuart, and the hostile Catholic sentiment in England, Scotland and Europe, along with the rumours of the Spanish preparations and actual invasion of England.⁷⁶

In his fantastical history and early battles for Aragon, Milan and Naples, Alphonsus becomes an allegorical figure of Philip of Spain who already enjoys popularity and power in Europe and North Africa, and fights the infidels in the Netherlands and other Protestant heretics, in addition to the extensive lands he colonises in the New World. His conquest of Amurack and his marriage to Iphigina fall within the tradition of the always anticipated victorious Christianity, and fulfilment of the prophecy of the eventual conversion of heathen Turks (and Muslims). In the first part of the play, Alphonsus is an admirable knight of action, a prince with faithfully loyal followers. But he is Spanish, and the relations between England and Spain are at a critical moment at the time. This is one of two problems Greene seems to have faced if Alphonsus is Philip's mask. Greene's solution

⁷⁶ For a summary on hostilities, reactions, the Armada invasion, and the year 1588, see Richard Chartres (1988: 1-11).

is interesting. He excludes Alphonsus from the second part, having him reappear at the end to look towards the eventual Christian triumph over the world, as propagated by prophecies of Imperial Monarchy or Last World Emperor. This timing agrees with the prophecies for the years of 1587 and 1588, and simultaneously underscores their falsehood. Furthermore, the exclusion of Alphonsus from the absurdities of prophecies keeps him the hero of action we meet in the play's first part. This division seems thematic. The first part addresses loyalty to the legitimate prince of a usurped or threatened throne. In the second part, dealing with prophecy and the Eastern world, Belinus and Amurack occupy the stage. In this milieu, Medea, Fausta, Iphigina, King of Barbary and King of the Moors along with the rest, are all prophecy fanatics, ridiculous, and pagans. And they all lose.

In this part Belinus among the heathen Turks becomes the representative of Christian Europe. In actions, relations and beliefs, he becomes a perfect 'antichrist' figure — after all, he arrives at the Turkish court as the cousin of Amurack. With his affinity and trust in Mahound's prophecy, Belinus becomes the Antichrist that Greene depicts in *The Spanish Masquerado*. In this post-Armada pamphlet, Greene first names the Pope himself the arch-Antichrist (Greene 1589: 7-9). He refers to both King Henry VIII and his 'mighty and famous princess Elizabeth, daughter to that renowned Henry' who, as protectors of the faith, 'gave us the light of the gospel' (Ibid., 8). In contrast, the image of Philip II is drawn after Belinus and his escorts in the Turkish lands. With his Berbers and Moors on their way to the 'darksome grove' to receive the infamous prophecy, Belinus looks like Philip II on his way to order the Church to 'dare to disagree' with him. Thus, in the second 'Motto' of Greene's pamphlet, 'Philip, King of Spain, [is] attired like an hermit, riding towards the church on his mule, attended on only with certain his slaves that are Moors' (Ibid., 5). In the Glossa's elaboration Philip is pitifully depicted as if under the spell of the Pope and his clergy. Belinus too follows Amurack's orders devotedly. Again, Philip — having shaken 'off all cares' — reappears 'riding quietly with a few Moors to hear Mass, [...] leaving the glory of his kingdom in the power of his clergy, who being enemies to the truth' (Greene 1589: 10). Belinus' reaction to Mahound at the 'darksome grove' resembles Philip's relation to the Pope. '[B]linded with the veil of ignorance by this proud Antichrist' and 'taking the Pope for Peter's successor, [Philip] suffereth himself to be led and ruled by this man of sin, holding his precepts for oracles' (Ibid., 9).

The second part of the play is a mockery of prophecy and of Philip II. The defeat of the Turk is a fantasy which both older and current prophecies promote in Europe and in Elizabethan England. Under the pretext of serving such prophecies, Philip targeted the so-called heretics and heathens of the Low Countries, England and the New World. The Turks

and their Constantinople offered a symbolic geo-political locality to these common prophecies. Greene was cognizant of their power; as I note in a different chapter, long before he had the play written, the Turks were said to be at the doors of English houses and ready to break in soon (Newton 1575: A3^v). In 1574, Sir Philip Sidney nicknamed Philip II the ‘false Hannibal’ (Pears 1845: 48). In the late 1580s, however, England’s enemy was the ‘heretic’ Catholics not the Ottomans.⁷⁷ In other works of Greene, similarities between Philip II and Belinus at the Turkish court suggest that Greene has been aping the King of Spain in the wake of the 1588 Armada. The play’s division helps the hero of the first part transform physically and spiritually into heathen Belinus, the believer in Mahound. The first part has little to do with prophecy but much with faithful loyalty to the legitimate prince, in a language redolent of the 1584 ‘Bond of Association’; the second exploits the follies of prophecy and planetary prognostications.

In the second part, out of necessity, Greene seems careful not to offend against well established prophecies that both Catholics and Protestants recognise as biblically sanctioned. To Foxe, Queen Elizabeth herself, glorious ‘Deborah’, was a prophecy come true (Foxe [1583] 1839: 678). Greene cannot mock the prophecy of the eventual conquest and Christianisation of all infidels. And the prophecies of 1563, 1587, and 1588 anticipate such an event. Yet, by the second half of 1587 the ‘Turks’ that Philip, in the prophecy, would subdue are England and Scotland, not Constantinople, Naples and Milan as they are in the fictitious ventures of Alphonsus. For Greene, the only way out was to draw on the example of the Turk/Moor, a stereotypical heathen ‘Antichrist’, acceptable as a villain to all.

⁷⁷ Burton argues that Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays reflect a more ‘friendly parle’ with the Turks (2000: 125-156).

4. 'I count religion but a childish toy': Religious Mockery in *The Jew of Malta* (1589)

In *The Jew of Malta* (1589), I will argue, Marlowe uses stock type strangers to stress two issues: the dangers foreign powers and English 'traitors' pose for England and the abuse of religion that his characters practise to obtain personal and institutional interests. He demotes these characters to the status of strangers or aliens via their faiths, Eastern ethnicity, and Machiavellianism. The Jew, Catholic Knights, Spanish vice-admiral, Turkish slave and Grand Turk are used to underscore the kinds of politico-religious and economic adversities that late Elizabethan England feared. The specificity of Malta, as well as the foreignness of the play's characters and events, creates a visibly threatening 'foreignness' that speaks to current English anxieties. In England, suspicion of foreigners had been mounting throughout the 1580s to reach its breaking point in the 1593 'Strangers Crisis'. Interestingly, the stranger now is not the Catholic, Turk, or Jew, but the fellow European Protestant, whose threats have been an issue in parliamentary debates and libellous pamphlets. The accusations levelled against this 'stranger' reflect the malleability of the term 'stranger' itself. Though the play antedates the crisis, the English had experienced earlier crises over strangers, notably the Norwich conspiracy against Dutch strangers in 1570 (Blomefield 1806: 8.277-360) and the London 'Evil May Day' riot of 1517 (Hall 1548: 586-591) — staged in *Sir Thomas More* (1594). Since the 1570s, the strangers had been a religious and socio-economic threat, incurring consequently local hostility.

As indicated in my 'Note on Certain Terms', the designation stranger/foreigner itself implies hostility. Its wide semantic field covers cultural and political references to one's race, ethnicity, and/or faith. In opposition to a 'natural' subject or citizen, Elizabethan texts use foreigner, stranger, or alien.⁷⁸ These terms invoke a sense of the unknown or unfamiliar. The *OED* defines 'stranger' [OED, n. 1a] as 'one who belongs to another country, a foreigner'.⁷⁹ Spatial distance seems essential. The 1590s economic crisis, for example, 'brought many "foreigners" (that is, native inhabitants of distant English shires) to an already crowded London in search of relief' (E. Griffin 2009: 99). The same meanings apply to nations, social groups or blood-related families. Derek

⁷⁸ In a 1594 'petition to keep a register of all strangers coming into the realm', Sir Thomas Mildmay used both 'stranger and foreigner' (Strype 1824: 4.296-301). See also 'Stranger' in Christopher Ivic's *Shakespeare and National Identity: A Dictionary* (2017: 206-208).

⁷⁹ Other *OED* definitions of 'stranger' [OED, n. 1a, 1b] include 'foreign, alien; of a country or other geographical feature: situated outside one's own land; not of one's own kin or family'. All these connotations were in use at the time of Marlowe.

Pearsall finds that 'strange' first means 'foreign, from a country not one's own', or just 'somewhere abroad'. This sense implies no 'connotation of odd or weird' (Pearsall 1997: 47). His Chaucer example, however, is 'the warriors who come from all over the Near East and the Far East to fight in the lists for Palamon or Arcite in the *Knight's Tale*' (Ibid., 47). Pearsall does not find it odd that the coming of the 'strange' soldier from elsewhere is to 'fight' in a space not his own. Even when the space is his, the 'strange' soldier is distanced as 'other'. In Shakespeare's plays, Leslie Fiedler locates the 'stranger' along the binary pole of 'hero' and 'villain'. In this 'confronting' position, the stranger 'defines the limits of the human' and is termed the 'shadow', 'other', 'alien' or 'outsider' (Fiedler 1972: 15).⁸⁰

Georg Simmel addressed the stranger's spatial position economically and sociologically. First, the stranger is the 'wanderer' whose mobility limits his occupation to trade. In relation to his host community, he occupies a dual space, remaining both outside and inside. His trade, like his products, must not originate within the group to which 'he has not belonged' but 'imports qualities [...] which do not and cannot stem from the group itself' (Simmel 1950: 402). Ironically, his position 'stands out more sharply if he settles down in the place of his activity'. And this settlement is possible only 'if he can live by intermediate trade'. Since 'economic positions are actually occupied' within original groups, the trader-stranger 'intrudes as a supernumerary'. Simmel's proof is 'the history of European Jews' where 'restriction to intermediary trade, and often (as though sublimated from it) to pure finance, gives him [the Jew] the specific character of mobility' (Ibid., 403). One characteristic of the stranger, however, is that he can never be an 'owner of soil' (Ibid., 403). As an individual the stranger may enjoy successful social relations, yet he remains 'near and far at *the same time*' (Ibid., 407; emphasis original).

Tensions between a stranger and the community arise when the non-individual element is emphasised; that is, the element of strangeness (origin, country, race, faith, etc.). Strangers become a 'particular type' for whom 'the element of distance' is as important as 'the element of nearness' (Simmel 1950: 407). As a type, the stranger loses the individual traits common to humans and, being an 'outsider', he has his 'outside' space twice confirmed. Simmel's illustrative example is the medieval Jews. Unlike Christians, Jews had to pay a flat tax irrespective of the fluctuation of the value of their property because 'the Jew had his social position as a Jew, not as the individual bearer of certain objective

⁸⁰ Othello is a particularly relevant example. Roderigo (whose Spanish name indicates his foreignness in Venice) famously finds his commander Othello 'an extravagant and wheeling stranger/ of here and everywhere' (I. 1. 135-136).

contents' (Ibid., 408). In and of himself, the stranger embodies polar binaries: inside/outside, belonging/non-belonging, near/far, and so on. Simmel concludes that though 'inorganically appended to it, the stranger is yet an organic member of the group' (Ibid., 408). This relentlessly unstable positioning of exclusion and inclusion seems to be value-driven, motivated by gains and losses, and applies to individuals as it does to groups and nations. Therefore, not only is 'confrontation' inscribed in the stranger's bipolar position but is a constant threat: 'The stranger, like the poor and like sundry "inner enemies", is an element of the group itself. His position as a full-fledged member of the group involves his being outside it and confronting it' (Ibid., 402-403). The coming of Pearsall's Eastern strangers to 'fight' and the 'confronting' position of Simmel's stranger underscore the foreigner's threat and support.

Marlowe's strangers illustrate these attributes. In Malta, they are distanced spatially, ethnically, and religiously. Barabas and his fellow Jews conform to Simmel's medieval Jewish types. They provide the much needed 'finance' to pay the tribute of the Turk; Moorish slaves are needed as 'products'; the trade and products originate outside the occupations of the natives. The confrontation that Simmel describes between strangers and natives escalates when only the Jews of the play are taxed. To relate Malta's strangers to those of London, Marlowe has Barabas dominate trade and exploit his dual space of the trader's 'supernumerary' condition and 'intermediary' status. He becomes the 'Jew' and dominant merchant of the country. Moreover, Barabas and Ithamore become a dangerous threat to the 'original' community. Similarly, London strangers are accused of breaking socio-economic conventions and of intruding into occupations belonging to English artisans. Marlowe's choice of characters and setting speaks to England's contemporary situation. He capitalises on Elizabethan cultural hostility to Jews and Turks with whom 'recusant' English Catholics and the Spaniards are often identified. This degrading identification intensified around the time of the 1588 Spanish Armada. Aggressive pamphlets disseminated what later became known as the Spanish Black Legend (addressed in the next chapter). Malta, the Knights, and the Spaniard vice-admiral del Bosco underscore the religious and political threat of Spain, and Marlowe exploits the different faiths in Malta to show that all religions are nothing but self-serving means.

When Marlowe was writing the play, 'England's anxieties about the Spanish threat increased substantially after the Armada crisis' (E. Griffin 2009: 29). Throughout the 1590s England dreaded an imminent Spanish retaliation. In her 1591 'Declaration of great troubles pretended against the realm', Queen Elizabeth expressed those anxieties and emphasised King Philip's insatiable greed and interest in England (Strype 1824: 4.78; 82-

85). In the 1592-1593 parliament, Francis Drake, George Carey and Walter Raleigh stressed Philip II's wealth, power, and evil intentions. Raleigh 'both saw and knew [...] the great strength of the King of *Spain*' who seemed to have 'possessed all the World' and whose 'malice and ill purpose was evident to this Realm', and had 'on every side [...] beleaguered us' (D'Ewes 1693: 484). Raleigh therefore warned: 'The time is now more dangerous than it was in Eighty eight':

for then the Spaniard which came from *Spain* was to pass dangerous Seas, and had no place of retreat or relief if he failed: But now he hath in Brittany great store of Shipping, a Landing place in Scotland, and Men and Horses there as good as we have any. (D'Ewes 1693: 493)

This danger is further supported by English Catholics who sought the aid of and allegedly spied for the Spanish King. Abroad and within, both powers posed immediate threats to England's security that historically, as Newton warned, pagan Turks and Saracens had posed (Newton 1575: A3^v).

Marlowe uses the Turk and the Jew to establish a parallel situation between the Knights of Malta and the pressing foreign threat of the Grand Turk against Malta. The internal danger is introduced by 'Machevil' in the Prologue and embodied literally and figuratively in Barabas whose revenge 'ought to make bar of no policy' (I. 2. 279). Barabas, Ithamore, and del Bosco are strangers within. Act II opens with the Turk's devilish 'policy' to take Malta and with the Spanish claim to 'this Isle'. To intensify the plight of Malta, Marlowe invents its tribute to the Turks and their temporary victory. He then uses Malta's strangers to allude to both domestic and foreign threats that mirror England's situation. He further exploits the three different religions to show not only that they are nothing but 'childish toys', but also that they only serve personal and institutional ends.

4.1 European Strangers and 'The Dutch Church Libel'

Spain and English Catholics were not the only threats to Elizabethan England at the time; the failing economy and the presence of European strangers were also viewed as serious problems. Here I want to focus in particular on the 1593 Dutch church libel which spoke to a number of socio-economic and religio-political anxieties.⁸¹ Hostility against the Dutch, culminating in 1592-1593, had been building since the early 1570s. Waves of European refugees (in the years 1571-1577) heightened the citizens' concern over 'the foreigners'

⁸¹ For an overview of the strangers' presence, see Lloyd Kermode (2009: 1-22), James Shapiro (1996: 181-193), and Eric Griffin (2014: 13-36).

competition for the trade of the country' (Page 1893: xxxvii). In 1577, their sizable number justified 'the discontent of the English artizans [...] for never was so large a proportion of the population alien' (xxxviii). To Simmel, both the trader and products must originate outside the domain of the native group to which he cannot belong (Simmel 1950: 402). In England, however, the strangers occupied the position and trades of the original group. Worse still was the impact the foreign merchants had on the local economy. They used to collect their money by 'Bills of Exchange' and illegally sell their goods at retail prices. Thus, while making profits, they circulated nothing of their earnings locally but 'returned their Monies by Bills of Exchange, or otherwise, abroad' (Stow [1598] 1720: 295).

In 1581 the merchants' financial and economic power was such that they had the London Exchange 'rise and fall at their pleasure, and conveyed the coin out of the country secretly, which evil daily grew' (Page 1893: xl). In 1592 Parliament, Raleigh argued that they 'eat our Profits, and supplant our own Nations'. Others argued that many strangers 'might justly be supposed to resort hither, not so much out of Zeal to Religion, or Love to the Queen, as to practise against her, and her State, and to rob the English of their Commodities to enrich themselves' (Stow [1598] 1720: 302). (As will be seen shortly, the Dutch church libel repeats these accusations). The merchants' power and bills of exchange are paralleled in Barabas' wealth and its impact on Malta's 'tribute', and in Ithamore's written extortion 'warrants' (IV. 2. 80-81).⁸² Ithamore's exaggerated claims of Barabas' uncleanness and use of Judas' old 'hat' suggest that Barabas buys nothing locally, thereby reflecting contemporary complaints about foreign merchants.⁸³

England's government had a further concern about foreigners. Prior to 1588, the Privy Council learnt that 'spies and conspirators were constantly coming from the continent' (Page 1893: xxxvii). Strong measures were taken throughout 1588 against 'spies of the King of Spain', and official records showed 'that many Netherlanders were arrested on suspicion of being either spies or emissaries, sent from Spain, to murder Elizabeth' (Page 1893: xl). The Queen's 1591 declaration addressed this issue but mentioned no 'Netherlanders'. However, in June 1589 Edward Kelly detailed a report from Bohemia on a Pope-supported conspiracy against the Queen. The English Jesuit Parkyns told Kelly in confidence of the plot and its certain success even 'if all the devils in hell thereunto say nay'. Bohemia's viceroy described Parkyns as 'the right hand, or chief man to the king of

⁸² For the Jewish bills of exchange and their finances, see Richard Wilson (2007: 131-156).

⁸³ Barabas denies that his hat was Judas'; he has received it 'for a present from the Great Cham' (IV. 4. 72-73). Towards the end of the play, Ithamore says that his master bought him nothing and he was still 'a poor Turk of ten pence' (IV. 2. 43) in his Turkish 'rags' (IV. 2. 91).

Spain and the pope, in all their treacherous enterprises against England' (Strype 1824: 4.1-2).

The Bohemian viceroy also showed Kelly a letter from a leader 'of the states of the Low Countries', soliciting the Bohemian Emperor to reconcile them with the King of Spain, and 'to send them some aid, to help them away with the English that were in those provinces'. Of the money they were willing to pay, Kelly marvelled: 'how it was possible that the strangers of the Low Countries, dwelling in England, would or could lend and send unto the emperor or king of Spain a million of gold at any time or times, to his or their helps' (Strype 1824: 4.2). This Barabas-like affluence and hostility, combined with previous arrests of Netherlander spies, must have alarmed many in England during the early 1590s.

The case of the Norwich strangers raised similar concerns and suspicions of religious deceit. Norwich had earlier invited skilled immigrants from the Low Countries to revive its collapsing economy. Local dissatisfied parties decided to attack the strangers on Market Day in May, 1570, but it was discovered. The instigators were arrested, tried, some executed and some imprisoned (Blomefield 1806: 284).⁸⁴ Such punishment is consistent in all uprisings.⁸⁵ More important, however, are the details of the strangers own internal conflict. Many generous official attempts failed to settle the matter. When patience ran thin, the presiding High Commission had to invoke 'Judas and Barabas'. On 26 October 1571, the Commission wrote to Norwich's officials:

Whear we understaunde by credible reporte of the unrestfull dissention betwixte the *straungers* themselves, the conspirators of which dissention regardinge nothing the goodness of God in this their exile, nor the Quenes Majesties great favoure towards them, and her lovinge subjectes good intertaynment, neyther considerynge the shame and sclander they worke to Chryste his *Ghospell* and *religion*, and to the perpetuall blotte of their nation, so insolente in a straunge countrye, which in sences pretendinge a defence of their consciens, and mainteynance of trewe religion, and under the cloake thereof, be rather as *Judas* and *Barabas*, amongs a Christian society [...] And seinge that diverse of them supposinge that the magistrates of this nation, having nothing elles a doo but to sarve their turnes, we require your *Lordshipp*, as we do also Mr. *Mayor* and his *Bretherne* to governe them in lesse libertye then they have hitherto used, (or rather abused) [...].
(Blomefield 1806: 287)

These new arrangements finally worked. The Commission's letter, however, showed that even the government was fed up with the strangers' ingratitude.

⁸⁴ Matthew Reynolds ties this incident to a much larger conspiracy of dethroning the queen (2005: 54).

⁸⁵ For 1517 see Hall (1548: 589-591); for 1570 see Blomefield (1806: 284-288).

Marlowe's chosen Jew (Barabas), a resister of authority, serves well the anxieties of the times. He stands as a model for dishonest strangers, Catholic recusants, and Jesuits. The word 'Jew' itself, for English Protestants, carried a 'semantic complex of infidelity, treachery, inhumanity, and rapacity' (Sanders 1968: 41). Barabas blames his fellow Jews for not rebelling with him against the Knights' tax which should save Malta, and conspires against everyone: friars, nuns, Turks, Knights, even fellow Jews. Like the Norwich dissenters, he shows his ingratitude to Malta and his deep-rooted hatred of his Christian host community. Of the many references to the status of Barabas as 'stranger', Shapiro wrote: 'these lines must surely have struck a resonant chord with theatergoers in the early 1590s aware of the ongoing tension between London's natives and alien artisans'. And by collaborating with Calymath, Barabas 'may well have confirmed the worst fears of English subjects about strangers' (Shapiro 1996: 184).

Other stranger crises had their ungrateful Jews and seditious rebels. The 'Dutch Church Libel' is particularly relevant here. The 1592-1593 parliamentary discussions of strangers were echoed in the xenophobic sentiment against the 'French'.⁸⁶ The hostility reached breaking point in May 1593 (E. Griffin 2009: 99).⁸⁷ Other libels voicing similar sentiment had been circulating since April. But this libel, noted the Privy Council, exceeded 'the rest in lewdness' (Dasent 1901: 24.222). An inquiry led to arrests that included Kyd and Marlowe.⁸⁸ Marlowe was released on 20 May, and died ten days later (Freeman 1973: 46).

Like Malta's strangers, those attacked in the libel were Machiavellian, usurer Jews, dangerous enemies of people and State, and were accused of ingratitude and feigned faith:

Your Machiavellian Marchant spoyles the state,
 Your usury doth leave us all for deade
 Your Artifex, & craftsman works our fate,
 And like the Jewes, you eate us up as bread. (5-8)⁸⁹

The libel, moreover, presents national and international religio-political concerns.

Strangers are deceitful and spy for both State and Crown but wish the fall of both: 'You are intelligencers to the state & crowne/ And in your hartes doe wish an alteracion' (15-16).

Minutes of the 1593 parliament assert 'that under colour of Merchandize and Religion,

⁸⁶ By French is meant the 'French speaking provinces' of the Netherlands; see Jonathan Harris (2004: 65).

⁸⁷ Griffin later extends the 'Crisis' treatment to Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (2014: 25-30); see also. Shapiro (1996: 184-187).

⁸⁸ The libel was signed 'Tamberlaine' and had obvious references to *The Jew of Malta*. Evidently, neither Kyd (who was tortured) nor Marlowe had anything to do with it.

⁸⁹ The quoted version of the libel is transcribed by Arthur Freeman (1973: 50-51).

many Intelligencers and Spies adventured to come hither' (Stow [1598] 1720: 303). The libel similarly charges them with religious fraud and affiliation with the King of Spain:

In counterfeiting religion for your flight
 When 't's well knowne, you are loth, for to be thrall
 your coyne, & you as countrys cause to light
 With Spanish gold, you all are infected
 And with y^t Gould our Nobles wink at feats
 Nobles said I? nay men to be rejected,
 Upstarts y^t enjoy the noblest seates
 That wound their Countries brest, for lucre's sake. (42-49)

The suspicion of strangers and English 'nobles' of harbouring loyalty to the Pope and Spanish King had been a constant issue in the 1580s and the 1590s; the threats of Spain and the conspiracies of continental seminary priests and Jesuit missionaries were very real.⁹⁰ Burghley described those 'seedmen of sedition' as having 'so warilie [...] crept into the land [...] to take armes against their lawfull queene, to invade hir realme with forren forces' (Holinshed [1587] 1808: 4.516). Suspicion of the Protestant strangers is confirmed by the treachery and hostility of the English dissenters and leads to the more serious threat of Spain.

Through the arrival of Vice-Admiral del Bosco, Marlowe's play reminds the audience of Philip II's military power, corrupting gold, and claim to Malta (which represents England). Del Bosco first notes that his 'King hath title to this isle' (II. 2. 37) and offers the governor a lucrative deal. He will send for Spanish military help and lead the Knights till Malta is free; then he throws in the appealing offer: 'be ruled by me, and keep the gold' (II. 2. 39). Like the libel's nobles, Malta's governor Ferneze, by keeping the tribute money, betrays Malta 'for lucre's sake'. Ferneze admits that his 'force is small' (II. 2. 34) but, for the 'gold', he risks the welfare of Malta. Interestingly, when he accepts the deal del Bosco reminds him of the fate of Rhodes whose knights 'fought it out, and not a man survived' (II. 2. 47-51). By keeping the 'tribute' gold, Ferneze becomes as 'covetous' and traitorous as Barabas, who leads the Turk to the city centre. The episode justifies the English fears of the influence of Spanish gold.

Again, like Barabas, who is wealthy but unwilling to contribute to Malta's tribute, the libel's strangers enjoy better housing and living, while the English 'poor souls' are sacrificed abroad in the strangers' war:

⁹⁰ For an overview of the serious threats of Papal-Spanish Catholic missions in the 1580s, see James Froude (1901: 141-175).

In Chambers, twenty in one house will lurke
[...]

Living farre better then at native home
And our pore soules, are cleane thrust out of dore
And to the warres are sent abroade to rome,
To fight it out for Fraunce & Belgia,
And dy like dogges as sacrifice for you. (28-34)

Another offensive 1593 libel advanced the same points. Belgians, Flemings and French were ‘bestly brutes’, ‘drunken drones’, ‘fainthearted’, ‘Fraudulent’, who abandoned their ‘natural countries’ to their enemies. They came to England under ‘a feigned hypocrisy and counterfeit show of religion’, and under the gracious Queen lived ‘in better case and more freedom than her own people’. It then set those foreigners an ultimatum: depart England by ‘the 9th July next’, or ‘Apprentices will rise to the number of 2336. And all the apprentices and journeymen will down with the Flemings and strangers’ (Styrye 1824: 4.234-235).

To contemporary historian William Camden, strangers were as troubling as English recusants, inhabitants of seminaries, and Jesuit missionaries. He wrote on the year 1580:

[N]ot onely these perfidious Subjects, but also Foreigners out of Holland, (a Countrey fruitfull of Hereticks,) began at this time to trouble the Peace of the Church and Commonwealth of England, who under a Shew of singular Integrity and Sanctity insinuated themselves into the Affections of the ignorant common people, and then instilled into their minds several damnable Heresies manifestly repugnant to the Christian Faith. (Styrye 1824: 4.247-248; cf. Blomefield 1806: 292; Collinson 1983: 248)

Marlowe’s Malta, with its diversified population, mirrors London in facing internal and external socio-political and economic enemies. The play’s treatment of religion underscores these threats.

4.2 Threatening Strangers: Machevil and Ithamore

Marlowe chose culturally ominous strangers: the Jew, the Spaniard, the Catholic, the Turk, and Machiavelli to populate his island. Machiavelli, the Florentine, became a byword for Roman Catholic politicking. Like the wide semantic field that the word ‘Jew’ covered, the name and policy of Machiavelli, for Elizabethans, invoked ‘rapacity, avarice, ruthlessness, craft and deceit, treachery, diabolism’ (Cole 1962: 137). Though the true Machiavelli in the play is Ferneze (Minshull 1982: 53), Barabas too enacts most of these connotations.⁹¹

⁹¹ Whether Marlowe was familiar first-or-secondhand with Machiavelli’s work is an issue much debated. The theory of secondhand familiarity draws on Innocent Gentillet’s *Contre-Machiavel* (1576). See Edward Meyer (1897) and Praz (1928: 49-97). Sidney Anglo (1966: 127-138) showed

Niccolò Machiavelli's 'work, including *The Prince*', secretly reached England in print and in manuscripts, and Machiavelli was 'known and read, whether in Italian, French, Latin or English, long before [Edward] Dacres's [1640] translation' (Petrina 2009: 1). Petrina tracks Machiavelli's works in the British Isles, Elizabethan England, and sixteenth century Scotland (Ibid., 1-46). Like Anglo (2005: 477), she too argues that Gabriel Harvey introduced Machiavelli's works 'to English writers at the University of Cambridge in 1573' (Petrina 2009: 1, 14).⁹² Critics have associated both Machiavelli and Marlowe's Machevil with the anti-Christ figure.⁹³

To Elizabethan Protestants, those different characters personify the 'Italianated English' of Roger Ascham: 'if he meddle not over-much with Christ's true religion, he shall have free liberty to embrace all religions, and become, if he lust [...] Jewish, Turkish, Papist, and devilish' (Ascham [1570] 1815: 250). Likewise, Martin Luther links together the 'Jew', 'the papacy', and the 'Turk' (Luther [1543] 2004: 133); so does Foxe in 'the christening of a certaine jew' (Foxe 1578: E3^v, N1^r). Marlowe's infamous Italian Machevil is visiting 'Britainy'. His teachings justify Ascham's warnings about dabbling in other religions, and Greene's final repentance. Greene, addressing Marlowe, emphasised the Florentine's atheism: 'Wonder not [...] that Greene, who hath said with thee, like the foole in his heart, There is no God, should now give glorie unto his greatnesse [...] why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machivilian pollicie that thou hast studied?' (Greene [1592] 1899: 367). Like Ascham, Greene noted Machiavelli's 'pestilent pollicie' as a foreign devilish and political threat. Strategically opening *The Jew of Malta* with these threats, Marlowe capitalises on what Machiavelli meant to Elizabethan Protestants. England was already corrupted by returning 'Italianated' young English 'gentlemen', who were human only 'in shape and fashion' but were 'devils in life and condition' (Ascham [1570] 1815: 243).⁹⁴

Home-grown Italianate evils were even worse. Those were generated 'by precepts of fond books' translated and 'sold in every shop in London', aiming 'not so much to

that later arguments for first-hand access are indebted to the unpublished dissertation of John Wesley Horrocks, *Machiavelli in Tudor Political Opinion and Discussion* (1908). The debate seems settled now by the recent works of Anglo (2005) and Petrina (2009).

⁹² See also Felix Raab (1964: 51-53), Nigel Bawcutt (1970: 3-49), and Stephen Lynch (2015: 109).

⁹³ On Barabas as anti-Christ, anti-Job, anti-Abraham, and anti-religion, and on 'Ithamar/Ithamore,' see Sara Deats (1988: 27-48); Hunter (1964a: 211-240). Arata Ide draws the analogy between the corrupt religion of Ferneze and the corrupt Protestantism of the Elizabethan government in the 1580s (2006: 261-262).

⁹⁴ On the history of the term 'Italianated Englishmen', see Sara Warneke (1995: 106-109) and Laura Wheeler (1998: 56-73).

corrupt honest living as they do to subvert true religion' (Ibid., 244). If such deceptive books failed to achieve their aims, 'fast enough',

then the subtle and secret Papists at home procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue, whereby over-many young wills and wits allured to wantonness do now boldly contemn all severe books that sound to honesty and godliness. (Ascham [1570] 1815: 245)

To Ascham, travel to Italy 'Italianates' the young Englishmen; they return as well-taught 'devils', ready to corrupt home from within and become self-perpetuating. Barabas is the self-perpetuating model of such corruption wherever he happens to be: ancient Jerusalem, Malta, or the slave market. Before coming to Malta, he learnt much in Machiavelli's Florence (II. 3. 20-24). At the market, he and Mathias deceived Katherine under the pretext of her son's wish to borrow the Jewish 'comment on the Maccabees' (II. 3. 158). In this deception Barabas cunningly promised Abigail to Mathias only to facilitate his death. Devilish Barabas propagates nothing but evil (just as Italian books and Italianated young English gentlemen do); the negative repercussions of this career eventually catch up with the propagators.

Ascham had good reasons to be incensed about the spread of Italian books. Those books targeted religion itself. Catholics and Italianate English men did

well agree together in three proper opinions: in open contempt of God's Word; in a secret security of sin; and in a bloody desire to have all taken away by sword or burning that be not of their faction. (Ascham [1570] 1815: 248)

Machevil's Prologue articulates these opinions. Religion is only 'a childish toy'; of 'sin', nothing counts 'but ignorance', and Machevil's detractors and followers make use of his infectious books, 'and thereby attain/ To Peter's chair' (Prol. 10-15). The threat of the foreigner corrupts spirituality, morality, and authority.

As early as the Prologue, Marlowe links Machevil to the Jew of Malta. Throughout the play, Barabas distinguishes himself by incessantly reminding the audience of his Eastern origin and Hebraic faith. He is set apart by his name, 'habit', hat, and large nose.⁹⁵ To Lisa Hopkins, Barabas 'was, in Renaissance terms, the ultimate outsider' (Hopkins 2008: 32). To Andrew Duxfield, his utter difference helps 'to establish the association with Machiavelli and to mark out Barabas as an outsider — as distinct from the multitude' (Duxfield 2016: 90). His actions confirm his malice and justify the curse of the Jews. His Machiavellianism also helps to reflect the Machiavellianism of the Knights who are as

⁹⁵ In his *A Search for Money, Or The lamentable complaint for the losse of the wandring Knight, Mounsiour l'Argent, Or Come along with me, I know thou lovest Money* (1609), William Rowley referred to: 'the artificiall Jewe of Maltae's nose [...] upon which nose, two casements were built, through which his eyes had a little ken of us' (19). See also Peter Berek (2016: 61-62).

foreign as Barabas and the Turks. Foreigners — Barabas, Ithamore, and Calymath the Turk — dominate the play's threatening action. The Knights are just as foreign, evil and Machiavellian; the threat they signify at the time is most serious. In the name of the Knights' leader, Ferneze, the Elizabethan audience must have recognised Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma and Governor of the Spanish Netherlands; he had been posted across the Channel since 1587, ready to cross to England.⁹⁶

The choice of the characters of the play seems to have been thoughtfully made. All characters represent the nonbeliever 'foreigner' (the Florentine Catholic, Jew, and the Muslim/Turk). In Ithamore, all meanings of the foreigner-stranger converge. He is born in Thrace, brought up in Arabia, and now a 'Turk' (II. 3. 132-134). He also embodies differences of race, ethnicity and a flexible faith. '[M]y profession', he tells his new master Barabas, is 'what you please' (II. 3. 171). His name combines Moorish and Jewish associations — 'Ithamar' was Aaron's youngest son in the Bible (Lupton 2014: 63). Deats traces his many biblical allusions and the parodies he enacts (Deats 1988: 29-41), and stops short of calling him a Jew: 'Ithamore becomes an appropriate rather than an incongruous heir for Barabas' (Ibid., 41).

Though critics are divided on Ithamore's original identity, they agree on his closeness to Barabas. For Mark Hutchings, Ithamore is a Christian victim of the Turkish *devshirme* policy: the 'recruiting by force [of] Christian boys from the Balkans and converting them to Islam' (Hutchings 2000: 429). Hopkins too assigns Ithamore a Muslim identity, arguing that his actions confirm Marlowe's distrust of the three 'religions of the book' (Hopkins 2008: 35). Chloe Preedy follows Hutchings' argument and adds that Ithamore is promoted 'to the rank of adopted son' of Barabas so that Marlowe can overcome the assumed 'Judaeo-Muslim' difference of faith that Barabas and Ithamore have at first maintained (Preedy 2012: 79-80). To Merry Perry, 'Barabas appears to adopt Ithamore to replace Abigail, apparently hoping that Ithamore will become the obedient son that Barabas never had'. She reads their final falling out in terms of family politics and Oedipal conflict (Perry 2016: 101).⁹⁷ Like Barabas' resourcefulness, Ithamore's versatility heightens his 'strangeness' and the evil of which he proves himself capable.

⁹⁶ In fact, all character names had historical and religious connotations (Deats 1988: 41, 48).

⁹⁷ It is possible, however, to argue that Ithamore is a Thracian 'Jew'. 'Thrace' was a place where Jews were deported since the Roman conquest (Döllinger 1862: 11-13; 38-39); it remained a habitat for Jews through the fifteenth century. Sultan Mehmed II invited the 'Thracian Jews' as soon as he conquered Constantinople and offered them generous incentives (Farnen 2017: 300; Shaw 1991: 30).

Whether Jew, Arab, Moor, Muslim or originally Christian, Ithamore is now a Turk. To Barabas, the places of his birth and upbringing seem decisive. Barabas first debates at length the slaves' prices, physical conditions, capabilities, even food intake, then rejects them all. To choose Ithamore, however, takes Barabas only one answer to one question. 'Where wast thou born?' asks Barabas. 'In Thrace; brought up in Arabia', responds Ithamore (II. 3. 132-133). Barabas decides instantly: 'So much the better; thou art for my turn'; and he pays in gold 'An hundred crown' to buy Ithamore (II. 3. 134-135). Thrace and Arabia are foreign, Eastern, and Turkish dominions, and Ithamore proves himself worthy of Barabas' choice. His evil potential is stressed while Barabas is still paying the price: '[*Aside*] this is he/ That by my help shall do much villainy' (II. 3. 137-138). For 'villainy', Machiavellian Barabas buys evil Ithamore. Religion, for Machevil of the Prologue, is 'but a toy' and, for Ithamore, whatever pleases his master (II. 3. 171). This cynicism informs the actions of all the characters.

Barabas and Ithamore soon turn the promise of 'villainy' into reality. Distinctly foreign with his Jewish hat and large nose, Barabas targets Christian moral teachings in his first lesson to his slave. 'Listen to my words', he begins:

First, be thou void of these affections:
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear.
Be moved at nothing; see thou pity none,
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan. (II. 3. 172; 174-177)⁹⁸

In this worthy lesson Ithamore finds a new deity: 'Oh, brave master, I worship your nose for this' (II. 3. 178). This comic response marks Barabas physically just as the lesson marks him morally. The comedy is soon cut short, though, by the horrible crimes both begin to recount. While walking at night, Barabas kills 'sick people groaning under walls', 'poison wells', and occasionally lets 'Christian thieves' steal some of his 'crowns' for the pleasure of watching them later arrested (II. 3. 179-185). These crimes are not new. As a doctor in his youth, practising 'first upon the Italian', Barabas 'enriched the priests with burials', keeping them busy 'digging graves and ringing dead men's knells' (II. 3. 188-190). As an engineer during the 'wars 'twixt France and Germany', Barabas 'Under pretence of helping Charles the Fifth,/ Slew friend and enemy with [his] stratagems' (II. 3. 192-94). As usurer, he proved true to his own lesson. In one year, he 'filled the jails with bankrupts' by cheating, forfeiting and extorting (II. 3. 196-198). He concludes his account by boasting 'how I am blest for plaguing them:/ I have as much coin as will buy the town' (II. 3. 204-205). All his various professions are directed against the native population where he happens to be.

⁹⁸ In Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron carries through these teachings.

Ithamore's own criminal record impresses his master. He used to set 'Christian villages on fire', and indulged in 'Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley slaves'. And as a 'hostler', Ithamore crept at night to 'travelers' chambers, and there cut their throats' (II. 3. 207-208; 211). In Jerusalem he played crippling tricks on pilgrims who, as a result, would 'Go limping home to Christendom on stilts' (II. 3. 217). For Barabas, these crimes collapse the slave-master hierarchy, and bind the strangers as friends: 'Make account of me/ As thy fellow; we are villains both./ Both circumcised, we hate Christians both' (II. 3. 218-220). The Jew and Turk are identical in corrupted faith, morality and hostility to their host community. Those were the ills English Protestants ascribed to Dutch strangers and English Catholics.

The campaign that the two launch against the supposed Christians of Malta reveals a community as deceitful and corrupt as the faithless strangers themselves. The two take Simmel's 'confronting' position of the stranger to its extreme. The play's title designates Barabas as the Merchant and the Jew *of* Malta. As such, he is 'of Malta' but is a 'Jew' — the label the governor used to justify the confiscation of his property and which triggered such tension in the play. Historically a notorious rebel, Barabas is the perfect candidate to carry out the 'confronting' of his host group.

Moreover, Malta is a suitable setting for such a confrontation, which mirrors England's anxieties.⁹⁹ Geopolitically, both London and Malta were close to foreign threats. Parma's Catholic forces in the Netherlands' French provinces were as close to London as the Turkish forces to Malta. While London had been home to many foreign immigrants, Malta reflected amalgamated faiths and ethnic races, and was now ruled by the Catholic Knights of Malta (1530–1798) who originated in Jerusalem and were identified by their different languages. *The Jew of Malta*, Constance Kuriyama asserts, owes much to Marlowe's 'daily experience in London' (Kuriyama 2010: 106). In Malta, one finds

many recognizable features of London life — cunning politicians, prosperous and often unscrupulous merchants, a multinational population, religious factionalism and bigotry, rigid social stratification and an urban jungle of cony-catchers and cutpurses, prostitutes and pimps, burglars and blackmailers. (Ibid., 107)

⁹⁹ One can say of Malta what critics said of Shakespeare's foreign settings: 'Shakespeare's plays are set in ancient Rome, medieval Britain and the cities of Italy, but they were written for a popular audience [...] The social order, the manners and customs, the human realities that Shakespeare knew intimately were Elizabethan' (Holzknecht 1950: 52). Hunter, too, wrote: 'Italy became important to the English dramatists only when "Italy" was revealed as an aspect of England' (Hunter 1960: 95).

Between Malta's image of 1565 and Marlowe's corrupt Malta only evil-doers remain, be those the malicious Jew, the threatening Turk, the wicked Machevil, or the 'legendary' Knights of the celebrated 'Great Siege'.¹⁰⁰

Marlowe pushes Malta's socio-political players to their limit. Barabas is unlike any other Jew, nor is Malta like any other island.¹⁰¹ At the limit, differences disappear; the Jew, the Turk, the Catholic become the same. Marlowe then edits the popular narrative of the Siege by adding the 'tribute', the war, and the Knights' temporary defeat which is due to Barabas' treason. So did Rhodes fall because of the treason of a single Jew spy; others blamed it on 'a plot amongst some of the Greek inhabitants and Turkish slaves' (Porter 1883: 303). Whatever the reason may have been, the stranger remains suspect of serious threats, especially in times of anxiety such as those which pervaded England since the 1580s.

Like Malta's 'tribute' and Barabas' treason, the treason of Rhodes' Jewish spy is partly fiction. Barabas' deception is a necessary invention for the plot, and it surely befits his character, underscores the strangers' threat, and reflects current English suspicions. In the case of Rhodes, Edward Hall probably had access to a French report on the treason of 'Andrew Amyral', the Knights' Chancellor whose treachery was due to his 'bare malice to the religion' because he was not chosen the Grand Master. Only too late was 'this treason [...] espyed, and the traytors taken and put to terrible execucion' (1548: 653-654).¹⁰² Marlowe's adaptation of the famous victory plays on the Catholic treasons and blurs the difference between the foreigner and the native (in Malta, all are strangers). When Marlowe was writing, the Spanish threat was real and, according to the Dutch libel, ambition or greed may influence nobles as much as Jews. Other propagandists claimed that

¹⁰⁰ In 1566, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a six-week prayer form for the Knights who heroically withstood and repelled the Turkish invasion (Strype 1821: I.462-464); Queen Elizabeth wrote the Grand Master, 'if the Turks should prevail against the Isle of Malta, it is uncertain what further peril might follow to the rest of Christendom', and called 'the Turks our universal enemy' (Pryor 2003: 39).

¹⁰¹ During the supposed time of the play, no Jew could have been wealthy or free, nor was Malta hospitable to non-Christians. See David Farley-Hills (1965: 22-28) and Carmel Cassar (2014: 169-184). Some Jews, however, were able to buy the privilege of staying for 45% of their possession (Gill 1975-76-77: 84).

¹⁰² This scandal, known in English since 1524, was publicised in Hakluyt's *Navigations* ([1589-1600] 1904: 5.40). Richard Knolles refers to exchanged arrow-shot-letters and conspiring foreigners, but names no-one (1603: 582). He cites the Chancellor's speech that urged early engagement of the Turk and the speech of an 'antient' Greek merchant whose conclusion alluded to the Knights' withstanding 'forraine enemie these six months, and deceiv[ing] the trecherie of one or two domesticall traitors' (1603: 596). This merchant is likely the Greek whose testimony convicted the Chancellor. Thomas Hannibal, 13 Jan., 1523, wrote to Wolsey, 'At Christmas, Emery Boyaulx, a French knight, came from Rhodes, and told the Pope of the treason and death of the Chancellor, a Portuguese' (Brewer 1867: 1167).

many English recusants and residents of seminaries were willing to serve King Philip II. The corruption of Malta has its counterpart among England's 'lewd Papists' (Mary Green 1872: 104).

Like later historians, Hall attacks the Knights' spiritual and material corruption at Rhodes; it was the cause of their disastrous end:

the brethren of the sayd order wer both of suche wealth and pride, and also lived after suche an ungracious and ungodly fashion, that they toke neither heede of their vow and solempne profession, nor also did foresee the thyng to come, so that the great welth of them, and their evil livyng blinded them. (1548: 653)

Much later in Malta, the Knights' 'immorality' is publicised in 1581 as the Order displayed little discipline by rising against the Grand Master for expelling Malta's prostitutes. '[F]rom that date (1581), the efficiency and renown of the Order may be said to have rapidly declined' (Sutherland 1830: 2.248). Their pursuit of wealth and immoral living led to internal conspiracies, factionalism, murder, duels, and thefts. The Pope had to intervene with Inquisitorial functionaries to quell such problems (Cassar 2010: 81-83; Buttigieg 2011: 83-87; Brogini 2017: 72).¹⁰³

The action of the play presents a 'Malta' that offers nothing other than the house of Barabas, the nunnery, the slave market, and the gallows. For its population, other than the Knights we only have the Jews, the Turk slave, the friars and nuns, and the courtesan and her male attendant 'Whose face has been a grindstone for men's swords' (IV. 3. 9). The Turks and the imminent foreign threat they pose to Malta underscore an analogous Spanish and Catholic threat that England at the time feared. These components, carefully examined, show that 'religion' is conveniently exploited to serve personal or public political and economic ends. The following analysis will focus on Marlowe's manipulation of religion in the play.¹⁰⁴ Barabas' wealth, the Turkish imposed tribute, and the corrupt religious institutions prove Machevil's view that religion is only 'a childish toy' (Prol. 14).

4.3 Religious Mockery in *The Jew of Malta*

Marlowe's emphasis of the foreign characters and setting highlights not only the threats that foreign powers and English Catholics alike pose for England, but also challenges Catholics' claim to superior spirituality and faith. The choice of Malta and its well-known characters helps Marlowe stress current hostile geopolitics and criticise religion across

¹⁰³ Whitworth Porter lists a sample of trials ranging from theft of valuables to incest and rape (1883: 551-554).

¹⁰⁴ For an informative summary and evaluation of Marlowe's controversial 'atheism', see Tom Rutter (2012: 17-22).

diverse faiths: Judaism, Islam, and Catholicism. Malta, situated midway between the ‘civilized’ faithful and the ‘savage’ heathen worlds, reflects aspects of Elizabethan England and serves as a contact point where these different worlds can — yet do not — meet positively. To both worlds, the island embodies Simmel’s vacillating ‘position’ of the ‘stranger’ and reflects this unstable position, being externally and internally threatened by Turks, Jews, and Catholic Spain. Religion becomes pivotal throughout the play.

The play opens with two culturally familiar threats: Machevil and Barabas, the wealthy trader. Then, the Turk’s ‘warlike galleys’ arrive to demand a huge tribute (I. 1. 149). Spanish Catholicism and military power soon materialise in the Spaniard Vice-Admiral del Bosco, who terminates the Maltese-Turk peace treaty and promises Malta the aid of the Spanish King (II. 2. 37-40). The converging in Malta of these theologically, ethnically and socio-politically diverse characters foreshadows the troubles already implied in Machevil’s prologue, particularly the manipulation of religion for personal and private interests.

The Prologue localises Machevil (and by extension Malta) ‘here in Britainy’ (Britain). He has come ‘from France,/ To view this land, and frolic with his friends’ (Prol. 3-4). Ascham has made this relation clear. References to France, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day, and the assassination of the Duke of Guise (Prol. 3) do add to the Spanish threats a distrust of the French.¹⁰⁵ Now, the Prologue suggests, is the time for Britain to receive the spirit of Machevil. Like Britain’s Jesuit missionaries and recusant Catholics awaiting foreign help, Machevil has both discreet friends and open detractors in England. Both will help to spread and benefit from his policy (Prol. 5, 9-11), for even his critics admire his schemes, and those who hate him most attain the most authoritative positions by reading his books. To emphasise foreign religious and political threats, Machevil reveals Barabas behind a curtain counting his massive wealth and recommends him to the English. ‘[G]race him as he deserves’, says Machevil, ‘Because he favours me’ (Prol. 33, 35).

If we take Machevil’s endorsement literally, Barabas is not only a ‘cursed’ stranger Jew and Machiavellian, but is already in ‘Britainy’, only a stage-curtain away. On his way to the slave market, Barabas admits his affinity to Machiavelli: ‘I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,/ Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog’ (II. 3. 20-24). Nor is Machevil alone in England. He is with Barabas who assumes the characteristics of a Catholic ‘Jesuit’ (Ide 2006: 261-262). His position behind the curtain symbolically reflects

¹⁰⁵ ‘In the early 1590s, the seemingly perpetual Spanish threat and religious wavering of Henri of Navarre were of paramount importance to the English government’ (Long 1989: 45).

the religious cover under which seminary priests hatch their policies to overthrow Protestantism and make the way ready for foreign invasion. In 1583 Burghley had noted their pretence of saving souls while they meant ‘to be readie secretlie to joine with any forren force that can be procured to invade the realme’ and bring it ‘not onelie into a dangerous warre against the forces of strangers [...] but into a warre domesticall and civill’ (Holinshed [1587] 1808: 4.518; cf. 458). Queen Elizabeth, in her 1591 *Declaration*, reiterated how Rome and Spain ‘secretly and by stealth conveyed’ seditious seminary priests and Jesuits ‘into our dominion, with ample authority from Rome’ (Strype 1824: 4.79). Their serious threats were addressed openly in the 1593 ‘Act against Recusants’ (Gee and Hardy 1896: 499).

Marlowe has Barabas translate these fears into reality. Just as Burghley and the Queen feared the treachery of recusants and those secretly sent by Spain and Rome, the Turk finds in Barabas a willing help. When the Turks’ first arrived for the tribute, Barabas says: ‘let ’em enter, let ’em take the town’ (I. 1. 193). Later when the Turks attacked, Barabas promised the audience that ‘by my means Calymath shall enter in’ (V. 1. 63). He draws the plan on stage with the Turk:

Now, whilst you give assault unto the walls,
I’ll lead five hundred soldiers through the vault
And rise with them i’ the middle of the town,
Open the gates for you to enter in,
And by this means the city is your own. (V. 1. 91-95)

The plan succeeds, and Calymath takes the town. Regardless of Barabas’ motivations, this detailed conspiracy stresses the serious threat of hidden enemies.

After his appearance behind the curtain, through the first scene, Barabas remains on stage showcasing his riches in which Turks, Knights and friars will soon show their interest. Then, to the dismay of the Jews, the Turks arrive for the long overdue tribute. The event illustrates Barabas’ Machiavellianism: his cunning, contempt for all (fellow Jews included), love of his treasure (the evidence of the divine privilege of the ‘chosen’), and self-centredness.¹⁰⁶ To pay the tribute, the Knights invoke religion to seize Barabas’ possessions; the loss ignites his long-admitted hatred of Christians and sets in motion his revenge against the island and its people.

¹⁰⁶ One is reminded of Greene’s Pharicles, ‘beeing in the state of his life such a mutable machavilian, as he neither regarded friend nor faith, oath nor promise, if his wavering wit perswaded him to the contrarie’ (*Mamillia* 1583 [1881-1883]: 2.205).

4.3.1 Wealth and Tribute

The central theme of material prosperity associates Barabas directly with Machevil and the East, the source of his wealth. Like Barabas and the Turks, Christian characters show a similar obsession with the Jew's wealth that challenges their claim to spirituality. A true follower of Machevil, Barabas voices his hatred of Christian teachings. Interestingly, however, Ferneze warns him of the mortal sin of 'excessive wealth' (I. 2. 27-28). Though Ferneze's sentiment concerns Christians rather than Jews, the Governor counsels Barabas as if he were a Catholic, intentionally or inadvertently equating the two faiths, an equation common in Protestant discourses. Ferneze himself, more than Barabas, should have heeded the sinfully excessive wealth. This (ab)use of religion to justify personal and institutional interests, as will be clear later, continues in relation to the 'tribute' and the friars.

Marlowe first establishes the Jew's enormous wealth. Its extended display on the stage surely evokes the socio-economic grievances of the English artisans whose hostility toward foreigners culminated in the Strangers Crisis. In the Dutch Church Libel, London's strangers were called Machiavellian, usurer Jews, enemies of people and State, and were accused of ingratitude and feigned faith. Like the strangers, Barabas enjoys better economic and living status than native inhabitants. He eats and dresses better than any in Malta (IV. 4. 60-62). Even after losing his house, Barabas bought another 'As great and fair as is the Governor's' (II. 2. 13-14). As an usurer, he himself admits having ruined many lives (II. 3. 95-98).

Marlowe is not content with Machevil's claim that he helped the Jew earn his riches (Prol. 30-32). He displays Barabas counting his wealth and obsessively detailing the exotic Eastern heaps of pure gold and precious stones:

Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedges of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell that which may maintain him all his life. (I. 1. 8-11)

He prizes most the riches of the 'Indian mines' and the 'eastern rocks' where the 'wealthy Moor [...] can pick his riches up/ And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones' (I. 1. 19-23). Of these, he names 'fiery opals, amethysts, jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds, beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds' (I. 1. 25-28). This mesmerizing exhibition emphasises not only the wealth of the stranger Jew, but the influence that wealth can have on others. If the Libel alludes to the effect of Spanish gold on strangers, English Catholics, and 'Nobles' (44-46), the play presents its importance to the Knights and friars.

To Christians, material wealth only corrupts; but Barabas and Machevil care little for religion. Nor do they mind who hates them. If some ‘cast me off’, Machevil says, they will be ‘poisoned by my climbing followers’ (Prol. 12-13). Barabas says: ‘Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus,/ Than pitied in a Christian poverty’ (I. 1. 116-117). In addition to what the audience have seen of his riches, Barabas still anticipates more when his ships will come from the East. As his second captain arrives, Barabas distances himself from any Christian spirituality and reflects on his divine privilege:

Thus trolls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus are we on every side enrich’d:
These are the blessings promised to the Jews. (I. 1. 105-107)

If the Dutch merchants in the 1580s had London’s exchange ‘rise and fall at their pleasure’ (Page 1893: xl), Barabas enjoys comparable economic power; half of his possession exceeds ‘a city’s wealth’ (I. 2. 89) and the ten-year tribute that the Turks demanded. Nor are the benefits of his riches limited to their material value; they elevate the Jew socially and (in his view) morally above all ‘Gentiles’.¹⁰⁷

The earlier display of Barabas’ wealth sets the stage for a polar opposition between the heavenly and the earthly; it becomes the basis of Marlowe’s critique of the hypocrisy of religious characters who end up valuing the material over the spiritual. Marlowe’s mockery of such duplicity shows that preachers of spirituality lose their lives for the material. To further set apart the two, Marlowe emphasises Barabas’ socio-economic recognition; his ship captains and the customs authorities confirm the Jew’s financial and social distinction and lend credibility to his boasts of excessive wealth. He is well favoured, as Machevil has requested. After all, ‘who is honored but for his wealth’ (I. 1. 115). The tariff of one arriving cargo exceeds the captain’s credit and ‘comes to more/ Than many merchants of the town are worth’ (I. 1. 64-65). But Barabas’ word is enough: ‘Go tell ’em the Jew of Malta sent thee, man./ Tush, who amongst ’em knows not Barabas?’ (I. 1. 67-68). Ironically, everyone knows Barabas the historical Jew, traitor, and rebel; now his wealth overrides any detrimental connotations his name may bring up. He has earlier told the audience that any of his precious stones ‘may ransom great kings from captivity’ (I. 1. 32). Unlike London artisans whose grievances are aired in the *Libel*, only strangers like Barabas seem to thrive. His ‘goods and ware’, we learn later, ‘Amount to

¹⁰⁷ He sees his foreign origin and Judaic faith as material and cultural assets of distinction and as proof of the strangers’ better status socially and economically, a status that would have fired hostility towards strangers. He even inverts the Christian cultural stereotypical stigma of the ‘Jewish stench’, known as ‘*foetor Judaicus*’ (II. 3. 44-47; IV. 1. 22-23). In *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Nashe has Zadoch admit: ‘I know my breath stinks so already that it is within half a degree of poison’ (1594: 59).

more than all the wealth of Malta' (I. 2. 138). In contrast to the needy friars and Knights who default on the tribute, only Barabas and his fellow Jews can bail out Malta of its tribute debt.

Barabas further exaggerates his wealth by irreverently invoking Job, the paradigm of patience and wealth. Though not as patient or as devout, Barabas claims to be wealthier, having 'As much as would have bought [Job's] beasts and him' (I. 2. 193). When the Knights confiscate his possessions, Ferneze ironically uses religious sentiment to appease the Jew's rage:

Be patient, and thy riches will increase.
Excess of wealth is cause of covetousness
And covetousness, oh, 'tis a monstrous sin. (I. 2. 125-127)

To Barabas, this pious sentiment is nothing but hypocrisy, and the confiscation of his property is a pure 'theft' (I. 2. 99); the Knights' appeal to 'scripture' only confirms their 'wrongs' and, to Barabas, shows their determination to 'Preach me [...] out of my possessions' (I. 2. 114-115). The Governor's sentiment exposes a discrepancy between the Knights' faith and greed (I. 1. 118-120). Their interest in mundane economic matters contradicts their claimed spiritual superiority. The wealth they amassed from the Jews shows the Knights to be as materially driven as the Jews, or as the strangers and English 'nobles' of the Libel.

To emphasise these points, Marlowe adds two fictional elements: the yearly tribute payable to the Turks and the temporary defeat of the Knights of Malta. Functionally, the tribute underscores the importance of material wealth to both Christians and infidels. It also defines the economic basis of relations between the Christians and the stranger Jew. Most importantly, however, it establishes, very early on, Barabas' 'infidelity' to all: Jews, his own family, and Malta itself. Coming after the display of Barabas' massive wealth, the Turkish visit disrupts Barabas' festive mood and sets him morally and intellectually apart from his peers. Their arrival only shows his antagonism to all: 'let 'em combat, conquer, and kill all,/ So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth' (I. 1. 155-156).¹⁰⁸ In this, he embodies the Libel's foreign 'intelligencers' who spy for 'crown' and 'state' but wish for the fall of both (15-16). When his fellow Jews fret about the arrival of the Turks, Barabas keeps to himself the reason for the visit, and misleads his 'countrymen' into trusting that he will address their interests at the senate when, in fact, he intends to 'look unto [him]self' (I. 1. 176).

¹⁰⁸ This initial concern for Abigail is later abandoned when she converts; he poisons her with the nuns, saying 'Ne'er shall she live to inherit aught of mine' (III. 4. 30).

Apart from enhancing Barabas' Machiavellianism, the tribute shows also his perceptive insight into the Turkish Machiavellian 'policy'. Once the concerned Jews have left his counting house, Barabas searches 'this secret out' and finds that the Turk is as cunning as Machevil. Barabas reasons:

Long to the Turk did Malta contribute;
Which tribute — all in policy, I fear —
The Turk has let increase to such a sum
As all the wealth of Malta cannot pay;
And now by that advantage thinks, belike,
To seize upon the town; ay, that he seeks.

[...]

Why, let 'em enter, let 'em take the town. (I. 1. 180-188; 193)

Barabas is right, and Marlowe keeps the 'tribute' on everyone's mind throughout the play. In the next scene, Calymath the Turk demands of Ferneze 'The ten years' tribute that remains unpaid' (I. 2. 10). As Barabas has anticipated, Ferneze admits his inability to pay and asks for a time to raise the sum (I. 2. 19). He tells Barabas that the Turk has come: 'To levy of us ten years' tribute past' (I. 2. 42). Barabas cunningly suggests that Malta should pay it, and he receives the answer he has anticipated (I. 2. 47). Insightful as Barabas is, he oddly fails to see his own ruin in this Turkish policy; he forgets the stranger's precarious dual position of being concomitantly outside and inside the hosting community. Only the Second Jew proves right in his prediction that the Turkish 'coming will afflict us all' (I. 1. 159).

The tribute brings into play the stranger's wealth, religion, and the tension between the Jew and his host community. In the ensuing debate, Barabas tries to turn his foreignness to his advantage: 'Are strangers with your tribute to be taxed' (I. 2. 61)? But the Knights outmanoeuvre him. Religion, they argue, determines who contributes to the payment. As Simmel points out, the Governor's answer turns the individual into a 'type' (Simmel 1950: 407-408): strangers are taxed as 'infidels' (I. 2. 65). The language here evokes the very charge of 'feigned' religion that the English usually level against strangers. The Knights' decree reads: 'First, the tribute-money of the Turk shall be levied amongst the Jews' (I. 2. 71-72). While Barabas tries to escape taxation via his 'stranger' status, the Governor and the Second Knight insist on limiting the tribute to the *Jew*. The justification for this is that Malta has allowed strangers 'with us to get their wealth' (I. 2. 62).¹⁰⁹ The appeal to faith, however, is fallacious. Malta is paying tribute to the infidel Turks without

¹⁰⁹ Rebecca Rist traces the idea to Peter the Venerable who decreed that since 'all Jewish wealth was the product of money-lending and therefore of theft, the property of Jews should be confiscated and the proceeds put into financing the crusades' (2016: 146).

even having leave to make any wealth in Turkey. Power, not faith, dictates who pays. This is consistent in all relations in the play, down to that of Barabas and Ithamore. It is certainly the essence of del Bosco's argument. The Knights keep the tribute and annul the treaty because he will enhance their power with Spanish aid (II. 2. 37-41). Machevil, earlier, has asserted that 'Many will talk of title to a crown', but only power entitled 'Caesar to the empire'. 'Might', he says, 'first made kings'; laws came later, 'writ in blood' (Prol. 18-21).

The confiscation of Barabas' possessions is another example of the manipulation of faith and of fallacious argument. Earlier honoured for his wealth, he is now ruined for that wealth. The First Knight declares, 'Thou art a merchant and a moneyed man,/ And 'tis thy money, Barabas, we seek' (I. 2. 54-55). With this line in mind, it makes no difference whether he pays half of his possession or accepts the alternative of conversion. Christian faith has not helped the Knights themselves; they are now collecting payment for infidel Turks. The conversion proposal ends with Barabas' adamant rejection: 'No, governor, I will be no convertite' (I. 2. 87). 'Equality' becomes a relevant point regarding whether only strangers be taxed. The Second Knight wants the Jews to contribute with the natives (I. 2. 63). A practised negotiator, Barabas takes the Knight at his word: 'How, equally?' (I. 2. 64). In Simmel's language, Barabas seems to prefer to be taxed as an individual or a Christian rather than a type. Ferneze immediately intervenes and invokes faith: 'No, Jew, like infidels'. He then makes Barabas subject to the eternal curse his name invites:

For through our sufferance of your hateful lives,
Who stand accursed in the sight of heaven,
These taxes and afflictions are befall'n. (I. 2. 62-65)

Now, the issue is no longer the stranger's covetous wealth, but a price of a perennial sin of the blood (Matthew 27. 25) noted by various characters (I. 2. 113; II. 3. 162). The tribute is a punishment for Malta's toleration of the Jews' presence. For Luther, the Jews are the 'unbearable, devilish burden' and their presence leads all Christians to 'become guilty sharers before God in the lies, the blasphemy, the defamation, and the curses which the mad Jews indulge in so freely and wantonly' (Luther [1543] 2004: 133). With that inherited stigma, nothing but a Jew's wealth can buy him residence in Malta; and his confiscated wealth will supposedly serve the worthy cause of saving the 'multitude'

[...] we take particularly thine [wealth]
To save the ruin of a multitude;
And better one want for a common good
Than many perish for a private man. (I. 2. 100-103)

This hypocritical invocation of John 11. 50 renders Ferneze the 'high priest' and the wealth of Barabas the ultimate sacrifice that saves the nation.

In taxing the Jews, the Knights assume the position of the Turks in demanding the tribute. But in keeping the tribute to themselves, the Knights save no one, and become as covetous as the Jew. Carefully manipulated, religion determines who pays as ‘infidel’ and who receives as faithful. After all, says Barabas, ‘Thus every villain ambles after wealth’ (III. 4. 52). The Bashaw soon arrives for the tribute, driven by the ‘Desire of gold’ — ‘The wind that bloweth all the world besides’ (III. 5. 3-4). Again, Ferneze demotes the Bashaw to the position of the Jews: ‘no tribute here,/ Nor the heathens live upon our spoils’ (III. 5. 11; 12-13). The withholding of the ‘tribute’ eventually leads to war, revealing that Jews, Turks, and Christian Knights share equal interest in material wealth — the aforesaid source of ‘monstrous sin’ (I. 2. 127) — and all manipulate faith to serve that end.

4.3.2 Catholicism and Machiavelli

To expose Catholic hypocrisy, Marlowe enlists the Jews and Moor/Turks to voice common Protestant charges against Rome. Right after the 1588 Armada, Greene names the Pope and King Philip II the Anti-Christ and enumerates their vices which he claims to have found in ‘annals and records’. He writes that their ‘sincerity in religion and humility were put to exile’, and they displayed ‘extreme covetousness, selling the gifts of the Holy Ghost for money; their open simony; their secret juggling in dispensation for sins; their whoredoms’ (Greene 1589: 7).

Like Greene, Marlowe critiques Catholicism’s corruption through the impious interests in material gains, here exhibited by the Knights and religious institutions. Their fraud is exposed through the similarity between culturally recognised infidels and equally familiar stereotypical Catholics. As Roma Gill notes, ‘Marlowe enjoys repeating the already nearly worn-out jokes about friars: their covetousness and lechery’ (Gill 1975-76-77: 84). David Beauregard argues that various Protestant Tudor dramatists draw on ‘the medieval tradition of antifraternal literature [which] concerned itself with satirizing the moral failures of friars, particularly their sins of the flesh and their hypocrisy’ (Beauregard 2003: 313). Beauregard finds that ‘the most effective anti-Catholic strategy in Reformation plays, then, was to identify the conventional figure of Vice with Catholic figures’ (Ibid., 314). Marlowe exploits the tradition of such ‘vice’ figures. He takes the old stereotype of the immoral Catholic friars and sets these against stereotypical villains from other religions — thereby emphasising that all religions have an equal capacity for corruption.

The Jew of Malta sets Catholicism’s supposedly privileged humility and spirituality in opposition to material wealth and power. Barabas and Machevil despise the Catholic

idea that prosperity and power spring from poverty and spirituality. Celebrating martial and material power, Machevil and Barabas prefer ‘to be envied and not pitied’ (Prol. 27). Barabas notes the disparity between the ‘profession’ and the actions of the Catholic community:

For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
Which methinks fits not their profession. (I. 1. 118-120)

Worse still, any true Christian ‘lives in beggary’ (I. 1. 122). They say Jews ‘are a scattered nation’, but Jews enjoy ‘More wealth [...] than those that brag of faith’ (I. 1. 123-125).

For Barabas, wealth proves that the Jews are divinely favoured. And in the play, any attempt to privilege the spiritual over the material always fails. The seizure of the Jews’ possessions proves the necessity of the material and would have saved Christian lives if the Knights paid the tribute. Ferneze’s preaching on excessive wealth only confirms his hypocrisy. In keeping the tribute money, the supposedly true Christians have betrayed not only their claim to superior spirituality but have also revealed their willingness to risk the realm. The collapse of the material-spiritual distinction is further demonstrated by the behaviour of the play’s religious characters: the corrupt friars and nuns.

Barabas on stage demonstrates the power of his wealth over the spiritual poverty of the friars to get away with murder. He wins; in fact, all foreign Machiavellian infidels (the Jew, his daughter, and Ithamore the Turk) consistently win against ‘the poor petty wits’ (Prol. 26) and expose the greed of the faithful. They successfully retrieve Barabas’ hidden savings, have Mathias and Lodowick kill each other, poison all the nuns, strangle Friar Bernardine, and send Friar Jacomo to the gallows. Their success over the Christians, like that of the infidel Grand Turk over Christian Europe, points, as Luther argued, to the sins of Christians: ‘To fight against the Turk is the same thing as resisting God, who visits our sin upon us with this rod’ (Luther [1529] 1997: 62). Given Luther’s logic, Ferneze — in keeping the tribute money and fighting the ‘rod’ of God — is as sinful and hypocritical as the false spirituality of the friars and the nuns.

Friar Bernardine’s change of heart, made to gain Barabas’ material wealth for his religious order, runs counter to his claimed spirituality. He overlooks Barabas’ role in the deaths of two fellow Christians, and he himself pays with his life for his greed. Furthermore, the riches of the Jew eliminate the difference between a Turkish slave and Friar Jacomo, the ‘sacred person’ (IV. 1. 201). Jacomo, ironically, remembers his sacred status only as a Turk slave and a cursed Jew drag him to the law to be hanged for the murder of Bernardine — a crime the infidels themselves committed. The incident not only shows the criminal intent of the friars, but also reminds the audience of the harms that

‘strangers’ might spread within a community that is too accommodating to such evil.¹¹⁰ Staged immediately after the poisoning of the nuns, the details of the friars’ tragic end show how ‘spirituality’ easily submits to material wealth and how similar Catholics and infidels are.

In her deathbed confession, Abigail informs Bernardine of her father’s crime against Mathias and Lodowick. Seizing the opportunity to blackmail the Jew, Bernardine (with Jacomo) seeks Barabas to ‘exclaim on him/ And make him stand in fear of me’ (III. 6. 41-43). At the Jew’s house the friars, aggressive at first, soon undergo a sea change. Barabas has resorted to his wealth: he will donate his treasure to the religious order that will baptise him. This proposal works miracles. The ‘wicked Jew’ instantly becomes ‘good Barabas’ to both friars, and each begs him to ‘come to our house’ (IV. 1. 80-81). To win his wealth, each also points to the cruel rules the other order demands. Their verbal exchange turns into fisticuffs. Barabas misleads Jacomo to believing that his order will win (rather than Bernardine’s ‘Dominican’ order). Barabas tells Jacomo: ‘I never heard of any man but [Bernardine]/ Maligned the order of the Jacobin’ (IV. 1. 106-107). For this favour and the expected donation, Jacomo assures Barabas of having Ithamore ‘the Turk’ as ‘one of [his] godfathers/ But not a word to any of [Jacomo’s] convent’ (IV. 1. 111-116). This hyperbolic touch sharpens the mockery of spirituality in the play.

The friars’ fight underscores not only their religious corruption and interest in mundane gains, but recalls also the larger political corruption in Ferneze’s earlier and instant change of heart over the tribute gold. At first, he forbids the Spaniard del Bosco to sell his captured Turks in Malta because of a longstanding peace treaty. But when del Bosco, like Barabas, puts the ‘gold’ into the bargain, Ferneze (like the friars) immediately responds:

On this condition shall thy Turks be sold.
Go, officers, and set them straight in show. [*Exeunt Officers*]
Bosco, thou shalt be Malta’s general.
We and our warlike knights will follow thee
Against these barbarous misbelieving Turks. (II. 2. 42-46)

The two examples of Christian hypocrisy mirror one another. To the friars, Barabas at first is the ‘wicked Jew’ then becomes ‘good Barabas’. Calymath’s case is just as telling; at his

¹¹⁰ Though ‘May Evil Day’ of 1517 provides better examples, the 1593 Libel asserts, ‘Your usery doth leave us all for deade/ Your Artifex, & craftsman works our fate’ (6-7). Harris sums their ill impact as ‘usurp[ing] English labor, unregistered plying of multiple trades; bribery, rent-racking and profiteering, expropriation of English bullion; and, most strikingly, usury’ (2004: 64). From 1563 through the 1590s, influential figures in parliament and Privy Council (Sir John Wolley and Sir Robert Cecil) always took the strangers’ side against native English artisans whose spokesperson seems to have been Sir Walter Raleigh (Stow [1598] 1720: 5.301-303).

first visit he is courteously received. But with the gold now part of the deal, all Turks become 'barbarous misbelieving' heathens. These examples suggest that faith and politics often submit to the power of gold. The influence of the Spanish gold had been a serious concern in England.

Other similarly exaggerated and ironic touches punctuate references to the religious institutions and the immoral activities of nuns. Marlowe's scathing mockery first targets the nunnery.¹¹¹ He then undermines the friars' claim to spiritual piety. In both cases the strangers are instrumental. Barabas' pretence of conversion unmasks the friars' false holiness, and Abigail's feigned conversion introduces the corrupt nunnery. Barabas loses his possessions and the Knights turn his house into a nunnery; both cases demonstrate Christian hypocrisy and lack of charity. The conversion of the Jew's mansion is meant to 'harbor many holy nuns' (I. 2. 133-134). This apparently pious sentiment only betrays the nuns' ungodliness. Escorted by the friars, the nuns arrive at their new dwelling and displace Abigail from her home. The Knights, she tells her father, 'mean/ To make [it] a nunnery' and, ironically, adds that 'men' are 'generally barred' (I. 2. 261-264). However, to retrieve his hidden treasure from the house, the Jew proves how easily religion is exploited. Abigail will 'feign' conversion and retrieve his gold.

Abigail therefore introduces herself to the abbess as the daughter of Barabas, 'the owner of a goodly house,/ Which they have now turned to a nunnery' (I. 2. 330-331). Earlier, Friar Jacomo has given the abbess a lively account of the 'goodly house': 'madam, this house/ And waters of this new-made nunnery/ Will much delight you' (I. 2. 321-323). These inviting references turn the trip of the 'holy nuns' from their old nunnery to the mansion of the Jew into a symbolic pilgrimage of sorts. Abigail's timely appearance at the new nunnery appropriately graces the house with her 'feigned' conversion and introduces the stereotype of the lecherous friars. Her 'spirit' kindles their desire to have her 'entertained'. For Jacomo, Abigail's sincerity 'proceedeth of the spirit'; Bernardine rejoins 'Ay, and of a moving spirit too, brother: but come,/ Let us entreat she may be entertained' (I. 2. 338-340). Both friars play on the sexual connotations of 'vital spirit' and the seduction of 'entertain' (Lynch 2009: 20). The comfortable and luxurious house that Jacomo emphasises and the sexual overtones the friars advance for the entertainment of Abigail undermine the supposed sincere atonement and moral life nuns and friars are meant to lead.

¹¹¹ 'Nunnery' [OED, n. 1a, 1b] originally meant 'a place of residence for a body or community of nuns.' In the sixteenth century it became a euphemism for a 'brothel' or 'bawdy house'. See A. L. French (1972: 79-84); Norman Blake (2006); Steven Olderr (2012); James Henke (2017).

Abigail's feigned conversion not only betrays the immoral activities of nunneries but proposes a more serious issue. Religion itself becomes 'a toy'. She agrees to play along with the conversion only as an untrue 'nun' and only when Barabas assures her that 'religion/ Hides many mischiefs from suspicion' (I. 2. 290-291). The nunnery, his argument implies, accepts only dishonest 'nuns', and religion covers their fraud. For him, there is no true religion nor any true Christians. When she finally converts honestly, Abigail soon dies and escapes the promiscuous reputation of the nunnery.

In retrospect, the friars' enthusiasm for Abigail's 'entertainment' becomes an early indication of the corruption of the nuns and nunneries. When the nuns have been poisoned, Friar Bernardine seems piously sad that the abbess 'sent for me to be confessed:/ O, what a sad confession will there be!' Friar Giacomo similarly echoes: 'And so did fair Maria send for me' (III. 6. 3-5). Abigail too asks for confession, but her concern is at odds with that of her confessor. She wants him to 'witness that I die a Christian'; Bernardine responds: 'Ay, and a virgin too; that grieves me most' (III. 6. 40-41). Like the 'tribute', the ironic emphasis on the nunnery and nuns keeps the corruption motif alive throughout the play. When Abigail resolves to convert the second time, Friar Giacomo reminds her that he earlier 'did labor [her] admission' (III. 3. 59-60). A stranger in faith and ethnicity, thus a perfect candidate for 'conversion', Abigail is recruited to expose the ease of abusing religion and the corruption of religious institutions.

Barabas and Ithamore are similarly employed. The Jew frustrates the friars' expectations of Abigail's feigned conversion; he informs the audience, 'They hoped my daughter would ha' been a nun,/ But she's at home' (II. 3. 11-12). He knows well the corruption of the supposedly chaste religious nuns. He even brings it up in the slave market, where he irreverently tells Lodowick that his father the Governor, 'made my house a place for nuns most chaste'. Avoiding the insinuation Lodowick, like his father, preaches: 'your soul shall reap the fruit of it' (II. 3. 80-81). And Barabas responds:

And yet I know the prayers of the nuns
 And holy friars, having money for their pains
 Are wondrous — [*aside*] and indeed do no man good —
 And seeing they are not idle, but still doing,
 'Tis likely they in time may reap some fruit
 I mean, in fullness of perfection. (II. 3. 83-88)

Lodowick recognises the slanderous sexual implication and begs Barabas to 'glance not at our holy nuns'. Barabas, mockingly, insists he is doing so 'through a burning zeal' (II. 3. 89-90). Ithamore too has 'a very feeling question' to ask Abigail when she finally decides to convert: 'have not the nuns fine sport with the friars now and then?' (III. 3. 35-36). 'Sirrah sauce', she scoffs (III. 3. 37). These exchanges among different characters (Jew,

Catholic, Turk) heighten the disparity between the sacred and the profane and emphasise that characters of all faiths have the capacity for corruption.

Nuns and the nunnery keep coming up until the nuns are poisoned. In celebrating the music of their death knells, Barabas uses 'swell' (with its connotations of pregnancy) to reiterate the earlier image of the nuns' fruitful 'fullness of perfection' (II. 3. 88). Now, to counter their 'not idle doing', his own poison has 'wrought' their end:

How sweet the bells ring, now the nuns are dead
That sound at other times like tinkers' pans!
I was afraid the poison had not wrought,
Or, though it wrought, it would have done no good,
For every year they swell, and yet they live:
Now all are dead, not one remains alive. (IV. 1. 2-7)

The body usually swells in response to poison or pregnancy. Barabas is now joyful because the nuns will no longer live after they swell. Ithamore gets carried away over the success of the mass-poisoning; he suggests to poison the monks of one 'royal monastery hard by', but Barabas dissuades him: 'thou shalt not need, for now the nuns are dead,/ They'll die with grief' (IV. 1. 14-17). Ithamore's mention of the 'royal monastery' most likely refers to the scandal of the Knights' rebellion against and imprisonment of their Grandmaster for his eviction of Malta's prostitutes (Sutherland 1830: 2.248-51; Porter 1883: 500).¹¹² Whether or not Marlowe was aware of the incident, he exaggerates the carnality of the nuns and friars to match Malta's reputation for hosting courtesans of various foreign ethnicities. In the play, Marlowe ties the theme of sexual immorality to Catholic religious institutions, but it is part of his broader critique of all religions.

The Jew of Malta thus depicts a corrupt society where infidel strangers and Catholic figures are equally fraudulent. Their vices include hypocrisy, selfishness, avarice, and lust. Their claims to spirituality are shown to be enmeshed in worldly vices. Barabas' interest in material wealth ties him to Machevil of the Prologue, to his own alien Levantine ethnicity and inevitably to his heretic faith. Yet, the Catholic Governor, friars and nuns prove the hypocrisy of their own claims to live virtuously.

These failings may be said to pertain to individuals or local religious institutions. But Machiavelli finds such corruption germane to Roman Catholicism and finds its seeds

¹¹² Other than Gill, no critic of the play has related this line to the plight of the Grand Master. She alone uses it to advance a 'conjecture' in rebuttal of Farley-Hills' conclusion that Marlowe had not enough knowledge of Malta, and that the striking similarities between the play and Malta were perhaps the result of a 'spiritual coincidence' (1975-76-77: 85). Gill uses the line to suggest that Marlowe might have known more than all the books can teach: 'I can hardly believe that such a scandal would not have been known — and rejoiced over — in Elizabeth's England, and especially by such spirits as Marlowe' (Ibid., 86). Works Gill did not refer to suggest strong possibilities the incident was known in England (Vella 1970; 1975-76-77; Mallia-Milanes 1975).

in the privilege of humility and poverty. 'Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative more than active men', he wrote.

It has then placed the highest good in humility, abjectness, and contempt of things human; the other placed it in greatness of spirit, strength of body, and all other things capable of making men very strong. And if our religion asks that you have strength in yourself, it wishes you to be capable more of suffering than of doing something strong. This mode of life thus seems to have rendered the world weak and given it in prey to criminal men, who can manage it securely, seeing that the collectivity of men, so as to go to paradise, think more of enduring their beatings than of avenging them. (Machiavelli [1531] 2009: 131)

The consolations the play's Christians offer Barabas over his losses reflect this reductive view of Machiavelli's. Lodowick tells him he will earn the prayers of the nuns and save his soul (II. 3. 81). The Governor advises Barabas to be patient and reminds him of the great sin that attends excessive wealth (I. 2. 126-128). Such consolation is at best disappointing, promoting only the endurance of suffering; at worst, it is completely deceptive and hypocritical.

Friar Giacomo's unperturbed strength in bearing his tragic end illustrates the conclusion of Machiavelli's quotation. He is, in Machiavelli's words, literally 'given in prey to criminal men'. A victim of both poverty and his greed to win wealth for his religious order, and a victim of the machinations of evil strangers, Friar Giacomo endures his fate as if he were 'to go to paradise'. Like Aaron the Moor who comments on the 'popish tricks' in *Titus Andronicus* of Shakespeare (V. 1. 76), here Ithamore the Turk sarcastically describes the Friar's fortitude:

I never knew a man take his death so patiently as this friar; he was ready to leap off ere the halter was about his neck; and, when the hangman had put on his hempen tippet, he made such haste to his prayers, as if he had had another cure to serve. Well, go whither he will, I'll be none of his followers in haste. (IV. 2. 25-30)

The undignified ends of both friars exemplify not only the absurdity of such passivity, but also the greed that mars a supposedly admirable Christian spirituality, and which has indirectly led them to their deaths. More ironic perhaps is Ithamore's own end. Though promising to 'be none of [Jacomo's] followers in haste', he rushes to the courtesan's house, betrays and blackmails Barabas, and is murdered. While the stranger exposes the corruption of the natives, he himself is just as corrupt. This lumping together of corrupt strangers and natives is not Marlowe's alone; as shown earlier, Ascham, Luther and Foxe made similar claims. Marlowe, like Machevil, is mocking Catholicism as much as any other faith.

4.4 Conclusion

Marlowe demonstrates, through the corrupt actions of culturally suspect strangers and Catholics, the ease of manipulating religion to attain personal and institutional ends. This cynical view underscores the practice of all characters. Marlowe first distances his diverse strangers in setting, ethnicity, heretic faiths, and Machiavellianism. Their congregating in Malta makes visible a dangerous ‘foreignness’ that speaks to the current politico-religious and cultural anxieties of England. With its diverse and divided population, Malta becomes the ideal site where material and immoral evil breeds.

The English audience would likely understand such threats of foreign Machiavellian infection and Catholic corruption. Nor would they miss the implication of the Spaniard Vice-Admiral’s claim: ‘My lord and king hath title to this isle’ (II. 2. 37). Malta was Spanish and England an ‘Isle’. Moreover, Malta’s corruption mirrors the political, economic, and moral ills strangers were thought to inflict on England during the last two decades of the Elizabethan reign. The charitable reception in England of their persecuted fellow ‘strangers’ had been challenged in parliament, libels, and literary works on economic, religious and national security grounds. Those strangers had been suspected of treachery, ‘feigned’ faith, trade fraud, and ingratitude to the Queen’s hospitality.

To Farley-Hills, the play is ‘as much about a society as a single man’ (Farley-Hills 1965: 22). This society is the uniquely diverse community of Malta where we have the ambitious Spaniard; the Catholic Knights who follow del Bosco’s advice to keep the large tribute to themselves even if it means breaking a treaty and jeopardizing the realm; the dissembling Turk who, for reasons of policy, allows the tribute to become so large that Malta cannot pay; the venal friars who, for material gains, are willing to overlook murder and bend religious tenets to meet the wishes of the Jew; the immoral ‘holy nuns’; and finally the prostitutes and whoremongers. On the side of the ‘single man’, we have Barabas, the criminal rebel, who is as evil as all other characters (Abigail excepted). Whether the play is about society or a single man, both are presented as corrupt.

The English audience not only would recognise the foreign infection and corruption, popularly perceived as Machiavellianism, but would also see in England similar evils, which Ascham had outlined. The play’s characters, in falling for the wealth of Barabas, remind the audience of England’s strangers who, under the spell of Spanish gold, were charged with spying for Catholic Rome and Spain.

The two friars demonstrate Machevil’s statement that institutional religion is only ‘a toy’. Their immoral resolve to win the conversion of Barabas betrays how far the

(ab)use of religion may go. As the wealth of Barabas has led to his ruin, so too the friars' interest in his wealth led to theirs. For interest in the Jew's wealth, the same fate befalls not only Ithamore, but also Bellamira and Pilia-Borza. In the pursuit of material wealth, all become like Barabas. Similarly, the Knights' interest in keeping the tribute leads to the devastating defeat of Malta and victory of the Turk. The Turks, too, finally lose because their ambitious policy allows the tribute to grow beyond the Knights' financial ability and thus becomes an excuse to overtake Malta itself. True, the Knights have won at the end, but only at a bloody price.

To keep the sense of threat alive, Marlowe not only begins with Machevil's dark Prologue, but offers the audience a Machiavellian ending. Instead of executing Calymath at the end, the Governor holds the Turk for a 'ransom'. This final twist augments the continuous interest in material wealth, underscores Marlowe's Machiavellian thinking, and supports Minshull's argument that the play's 'true' Machiavelli is not Barabas but Ferneze (Minshull 1982: 35-53). Roger Ascham asserted that only a Machiavelli or 'a lusty Italian priest' could think of such a final twist. While in Germany, Ascham and other foreign diplomats were one day discussing the fallout between Emperor Charles V and Duke Maurice of Saxony.¹¹³ The Duke patiently pursued all peaceful possibilities to settle the conflict. Only when all efforts failed did the Duke wage war and succeed in having his father-in-law released. Maurice then departed without doing any harm to the Emperor. Ascham then relates how 'many wise heads' commended the Duke's behaviour. Only 'a lusty Italian priest' said: 'I cannot much praise his wit, which might have had the Emperor in his hands and would not'. 'Lo', Ascham reacts, 'such be these Machiavel's heads, who think no man have so much wit as he should, except he do more mischief than he need' (Ascham [1570] 1815: 43-44).

Ascham's Italian priest would surely commend Ferneze's final Machiavellian turn. To hold Calymath captive at the end for a ransom emphasises the importance of material wealth, brings back Machevil's take on religion, the bragging Barabas of his wealth and that of the Jews though they are 'scattered', and Machiavelli's critique of the passive endurance that Roman Catholicism stresses. These underline Marlowe's sceptic cynicism. Thus, unlike Duke Maurice, but like all other characters of the play, the true Machiavellian Governor will not let slip this opportunity without using it to enrich himself. In the play, the Catholic and Machiavellian corruption underscores the actions of the strangers and natives alike. Ascham was concerned about the doing needlessly of 'more mischief', but

¹¹³ Maurice (March 1521-July 1553) was Duke of Saxony (1541-1547) and later Elector of Saxony until his death.

‘more mischief’ was what Elizabethan England had been expecting from strangers, recusant Catholics and Spain since the marriage of Queen Mary and Philip II of Spain.

5. *Titus Andronicus* (1594) and the Spanish Black Legend

O Turkes, O Scithians, O Tartarians, rejoyce yee now, sithence at this day there is found in Christendome a Nation, which by their wicked and detestable deeds, go about to burie that hatred which is borne to your barbarous crueltie. (Ashley 1589: 23)

These lines appear in a 1588 anonymous French anti-Spanish pamphlet translated into English by Robert Ashley.¹¹⁴ Its Catholic author warns France against a league with Spain and favours one with England. The Spaniards' supposed devious nature and hegemonic politics should caution others against any alliance with Spain, the new Rome. The author seems to exaggerate how Spanish atrocities have obscured the cruelties of the Muslim Turks. In a clear case of what I call 'abuse' (see A Note on Certain Terms), the pamphleteer transforms the Spaniard into a Moor to prove his point.

Since I will be reading *Titus Andronicus* through the lenses of the Black Legend, arguing that the play's Rome allegorically represents Imperial Spain rather than England, a few relevant points are in order. In the previous chapters, the centrality of Spain on the Elizabethan stage has been noted and will now be emphasised. My argument draws on the Elizabethans' general perception of the Spanish Empire, the play's ruthless characters and action, and the close ties between Spain and Rome throughout the sixteenth century. With these high points in mind, along with additional others I articulate in my reading, England cannot be the Rome of the late sixteenth century, whereas Spain had been long recognised as the 'New Rome' and the 'Holy Roman Empire'. Elizabethan writers and advocates of England's emulation and rivalry of the Spanish Empire appeared only during the late 1570s through the 1590s. And even then, the English envisioned, in theory at least, an 'Empire' differing markedly from anything Spanish or anything like the play's Rome and Romans.

The antagonistic relation of Elizabethan England to Spain had its political, religious, and economic reasons; and literary critics and historians anticipated the confrontation between the two nations. 'England had to confront Spain', wrote Irene Silverblatt (2008: 99); and the two nations exchanged, in Europe and England, sporadic hostilities throughout the Elizabethan period that intensified in the late 1580s (the 1588 Spanish Armada and the armed campaign of 1589). Rome too was no stranger to this antagonism since the 1530s. The language in which Elizabethan and modern writers couch

¹¹⁴ Ashley was an Elizabethan man of letters who also translated works from Italian, French, and Spanish. He is recognised 'as the founder of the library of the Middle Temple' in London (Heltzel 1947: 349; see also John Ferris 2004: 5 paras).

their depiction of Spain seems as applicable to their immediate topics as it does to the play. For example, Silverblatt's contribution to a collection of studies — *Rereading the Black Legend* — opens with a descriptive statement that can serve as a valid response to *Titus Andronicus*: 'In most American imaginations Spain, and particularly the Spanish Inquisition, represent the opposite of modernity: examples of horrors, barbaric irrationalities, cruelty, and ruthlessness people were forced to endure before our modern way of life claimed victory over the planet' (Silverblatt 2008: 99).

Although England and Spain can equally claim ancestral affinities to ancient Rome, nothing in the play, Lucius included, seems remotely supportive of England's claim. The same goes for England's ambition to become an empire. Writers addressing the development of the British vision of their empire believe that Elizabethans' conception diverged from that of Spain. Carefully tracing these differences through a reading of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, David Read notes that not only was the 'word' Empire 'an uncommon one in the Elizabethan vocabulary', but '[w]hen it appeared in the promotional literature of the time, it usually referred to the Holy Roman Empire, and by extension to the Spanish line of the Habsburg dynasty, which under Philip II was a far more imperialist line than its Austrian counterpart' (2000: 28). In England, when the word was used, it related to issues of sovereignty of the king in his own realm as King Henry VIII announced in 1533: 'This Realm of England is an Empire'. '[T]he king's notion of empire', Read explains, 'was distinctly insular. Through an appeal to Roman law he attempted to distance the realm from the universal claims of the papacy and its nominal protector, Charles V, thus promoting the new order of state and church in England' (Read 2000: 28). If Spenser's epic underscores the theme of an Empire, it advocates allegorically all the moral, religious, and political virtues that the Spaniards' empire lacked (see Knight 1970: 267-294). Allegory — especially political or imperial allegory — was a 'common' word and a familiar tradition in the works of Elizabethan writers: Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare, among many others (see respectively Beach 1971: 365-389 and Stump 1991: 81-105).

To literary critics and writers, by the end of the Elizabethan period, Rome as Spain seems to have been a commonly recognised setting. It should surprise no one that, as late as 1631, when Philip Massinger's *Believe as You List* was censored for its possible upsetting of the Anglo-Spanish relations, the play's setting was changed to ancient Rome and the characters were changed to easterners and Romans. Critics and certainly the play's audience read Rome as Spain and Bithynia as England. Frederick, the dispossessed Elector Palatine, became the Seleucid king Antioch. Both reminded the audience of Sebastian of

Portugal (Publicover 2017: 87-88).¹¹⁵ In his *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700* Thomas J. Dandeleet wrote, ‘Rome was transformed as it was drawn into the orbit of Spain. It became Spanish Rome’ as well as ‘the center of Spain’s Italian diplomacy and international imperial politics’. Even its ‘Catholic Reformation of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries [...] took on a Spanish face’ (2001: 6). In *World Without End: Spain, Philip II, and the First Global Empire*, the Spaniards of the New World, wrote Hugh Thomas, ‘were determined to give the conquered inhabitants their own, distinctly Spanish, institutions, language, religion, and culture. In this, as in so many other ways, Spain conceived herself as the heir of Rome’ (2014: 286). Rather than the geographically and religiously distant Moors or Turks, the Elizabethan politicians, intellectuals, literary writers, and pamphleteers were more concerned about the more insidious danger that Catholic Spain posed.

To the English, Spain’s European and Christian standing had allowed it to operate freely among other Christian nations despite its Moorish and Jewish mixed heritage — the alleged source of Spanish barbarity. European views of Spain’s oriental ancestry as an attractive exoticism (‘Mauraphilia’) started to shift in the mid-to-late sixteenth century. Fuchs notes that ‘Spain’s enemies abroad ruthlessly exploited its Moorish past to construct the nation as a racial and religious other’ (Fuchs 2009: 116). This timing is crucial, not only because of Spain’s becoming the ‘racial and religious other’, but because the relation between papal Rome and Spain, having been building since 1492, reached the prime of their political and spiritual alliance. It is ‘by the middle of the sixteenth century’ that ‘the Spanish monarchs looked upon [Rome] almost as part of their own state’ (Bandelet 2001: 6).

Since the 1550s, the Spaniards’ supposed atrocities were described heatedly in anti-Spanish discourses, now known collectively as the Spanish Black Legend.¹¹⁶ Those anti-Spanish attacks reached the zenith around the 1588 Spanish Armada (Sanchez 2004: 59). Whether addressing the Spanish presence in Europe or the New World, the Black Legend pamphlets emphasised the Spaniards’ Moorish-Jewish ‘contaminated’ lineage, sexual transgression, demonic disposition, mass murders, and motiveless cruelty. In *Titus*

¹¹⁵ For the play’s anti-Spanish politics, see Streete (2017: 122-163).

¹¹⁶ Julián Juderías coined the term in his *La leyenda negra* (1912). The legend is rooted in Columbus’ discoveries of the New World and the Bulls of Donation Pope Alexander VI issued in 1493, granting Spain the right to colonise unclaimed lands (Orford 2011: 143-149). In England the legend dates to the Elizabethan reign (Mignolo 2008: 313).

Andronicus (1594), Shakespeare and Peele¹¹⁷ presented villainies, brutalities and corruptions similar to those the Spaniards allegedly committed in Europe and the New World. Such features converged in Aaron, a black Moor and a Jew epitomised in one.¹¹⁸ He was a visible reminder of the Moorish ancestors of the early modern Spaniards, a bloodline used to undermine their claim to the true faith of Roman Catholicism.

The Black Legend pamphlets, moreover, help us to better understand some of the disturbing features that critics have often noted in the play. These include the presence of Moors and Goths in what Kewes calls ‘Bogus Rome’ (2016), the play’s invented events and characters, its shocking cruelty, licentious sexuality, and ‘anachronistic’ echoes of paganism and Christianity.¹¹⁹ In featuring these fictional elements, *Titus* merges Visigoths, Moors, and Jews with contemporary representations found in widely circulated anti-Spaniard pamphlets. This amalgam accords well with Elizabethan distrust of Spain’s imperial interests and threats to England.

The first part of this chapter shows how these pamphlets trade in the so-called Black Legend that associates early modern Spain and Spaniards with rape, miscegenation, devilish behaviour, vicious brutality, false faith, and a Moorish-Jewish ancestry. The second part offers a reading of *Titus* through the lens of the Spanish Black Legend. Shakespeare and Peele engage with anti-Spanish tropes in which the black Moor speaks to current anti-Spaniard sentiment and highlights the charge of blood impurity. The Roman setting is used to reflect an Anglo-centric construction of Spain. Both Rome and Aaron have troubled critics; Rome is found un-Roman or ‘bogus’; Aaron is said to be out of place

¹¹⁷ Brian Vickers discusses the collaboration at length (2004: 142-243); Alan Dessen and Friedman provide a good summary (2013: 274-284). William Weber challenges Vickers’ attribution of Act IV. 1 to Peele (2014: 69-84). See also *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (G. Taylor et al. 2016: 58, 182-186). The ‘fly scene’ (III. 2) is now believed to have been posthumously added by Thomas Middleton (G. Taylor and Duhaime 2017: 67-91). I will mainly refer to Shakespeare and Peele except when citing critics who only discuss Shakespeare.

¹¹⁸ Fiedler first suggests Aaron’s relation to the ‘Jewish tradition’ (1972: 178), a line of argument best developed by Ian Smith (2009: 125-131) and Ken Jackson (2005: 145-167). Nicholas Moschovakis notes a ‘Hebraic connotation’ in Aaron’s ‘name, that of Israel’s first priest’ (Moschovakis 2002: 481), but the Abrahamic figure is Titus, because ‘child sacrifice’ is nowhere in Shakespeare’s corpus ‘more pronounced than’ in *Titus* (Ibid., 468). He traces the play’s Jewish echoes through Titus Vespasian’s conquest of Jerusalem and the Temple’s destruction, and the Jewish significance of the Clown’s pigeons (Ibid., 468-480).

¹¹⁹ Moschovakis thoroughly articulates the play’s pagan, Jewish and Christian references (2002: 460-486). He defines anachronism ‘as a deliberate artistic device’ that ‘enjoins the reevaluation in present terms of subjects otherwise regarded as past. It transforms “the Then” [...] into “a Now that urgently must be dealt with”’ (Ibid., 461). In *Titus*, pagan Romans and Goths are used to raise Elizabethan Christian ideas (Ibid., 462-473). Robert Miola points to the irrelevance of anachronism’s accuracy: ‘English classicism came to be ahistorical and eclectic in character, little concerned with understanding the past on its own terms. Shakespeare’s anachronisms are to the point here, evidencing the age’s disregard for historical accuracy, at least as we understand the concept’ (Miola 2004: 9-10).

or redundant and unnecessary to the plot. But when both are studied within the context of the Black Legend, they reveal important aspects of Elizabethan anti-Spanish prejudice.

Titus' Rome is surely 'un-Roman' because it is allegorically Spain rather than England. So is Aaron, the infecting legacy of the Moorish conquest of Spain. In the play, Rome experiences a moment of miscegenation just as Spain had in the past. As successors to the Western Roman Empire, the Visigoths of Spain (418-c. 721) were allegedly contaminated by Moorish conquerors. *Titus*' Goths, in Rome, have their blood mixed with that of Aaron, a black Moor with implied Jewish heritage who enjoys a prominent position in Rome (i.e. Spain) alongside the Goths. Rome as Spain is further enhanced by the Goths' increase in Rome, first as prisoners then as conquerors just as the Moors increased in Spain.

Politically, *Titus* taps into the real threat that the expanding Spanish empire posed to Europe, especially Protestant England, in the late sixteenth-century. Shakespeare and the staunch Protestant and patriot Peele were well aware of England's precarious situation. Written in 'late 1589 or early 1590' (G. Taylor et al. 2016: 186), *Titus* dovetails with the memories of the 1588 Spanish Armada and the publicly celebrated launch of the 1589 military campaign that Peele commemorates in 'A Farewell to Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake'. The campaign failed, and the sense of looming Spanish peril persisted throughout the 1590s, so much so that it was officially specified in Queen Elizabeth's 1591 'declaration of great troubles pretended against the realm' (Strype 1824: 4.78-85). Recently, Eric Griffin and Noémie Ndiaye have noted the play's relation to the Spanish threat and to the Black Legend; both, however, see Rome as a representation of England, and Aaron's racial origin and colour as a reflection of English anxieties over the presence of 'blacks' in England (Ndiaye 2016: 59). Acknowledging the relevance of the Black Legend to the play, Ndiaye limits her study to a possible source for Shakespeare's Aaron; namely, 'Matteo Bandello's twenty-first *novella* (Part three)' (Ibid., 60). Though the Black Legend is the major line in Griffin's earlier work, the play's title appears only once, in reference to Francesca Royster's study on 'ultra-whiteness' as a 'racial' marker (E. Griffin 2009: 188). In a later article, Griffin gives the play five pages, emphasising England's fears of the presence of 'strangers' (E. Griffin 2014: 25-30). David Goldstein has explicitly related the play's 'cannibalism' to the Aztec cannibalism in the New World (Goldstein 2009: 99-133).¹²⁰ My argument contends that Rome stands for Spain and the play's salient

¹²⁰ Goldstein refers to a 'conference paper' by Hillary Nunn on the cannibalism of the Brazilian 'Tupinamba' he had read in 2002 (Goldstein 2009: 127n6). The paper does not seem to have been published.

issues make visible, on the early modern stage, the Spaniards' 'wicked and detestable deeds' emphasised above by the French Catholic pamphleteer.

Shakespeare's works show his familiarity with the Black Legend. Nor is he alone among his peers in voicing the anti-Spaniard sentiment. Critics have noted that his villains (Moors, Turks, or Jews) are often given Spanish names and/or origins. Paula Blank argues that these villains often appear together 'in Renaissance conceptualizations of race'. With the Moor, Spaniard, and Turk, the 'Jew is so often found, throughout Renaissance texts, in the same semantic field' (Blank 2006: 100; see also E. Griffin 2009: 168-205; Everett 1982: 101-112). In his various studies of Europe-New World relations and the inception of the Black Legend, Jonathan Hart concludes that Las Casas — a Spanish Dominican Friar, and author of *The Spanish Colonie* (printed 1552) — 'was not the only source for the Black Legend [...] the Italians, as well as the Dutch, French, and English, fed this legend' (Hart 2015: 57). The chronological development of the legend, Hart adds, shows that 'Shakespeare was born, lived, and died amid this textual web that included traumatic events from the expansion of Western Europe' (Ibid., 57). He further notes, '[t]he trauma of the Spanish invasion of the New World was very much part of the discourse of the age of Shakespeare's youth and maturity' (Ibid., 58).¹²¹ Hart, however, limits his treatment of this trauma to Shakespeare's romances. Though *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* present 'violence and trauma [...] in ways that warrant close reading', Hart chooses instead other works 'to concentrate most on moments of trauma' (Ibid., 62). Among other features of the Black Legend, 'violence and trauma' are certainly key to understanding *Titus*, as I will show.

5.1 Pamphlets of the Black Legend

The Black Legend pamphlets widely exploited Spain's Moorish and Jewish lineage to stress an inherent Spanish evil. In the play and the pamphlets, the Moorish colour seems to owe much to the biblical 'curse of Ham'. This much disputed myth concerns what happened on the Ark of Noah during the Flood. Theologians still debate the nature of Ham's offence (Whitford 2009: 19-42; Rodriguez 2008: 37-38; Brichto 1998: 167-176). In 1578, the explorer George Best (c. 1555–1584) grounded his version on Ham's 'envy'. Noah prohibited sexual acts on the Ark. To get a first-born son who

¹²¹ According to Everett: 'By the beginning of the sixteenth century Spain had assumed the image it was to carry in Shakespeare's own lifetime' (1982: 105).

(by right and Lawe of nature) should inherit and possesse all the dominions of the earth, [Ham] contrary to his father's commandement while they were yet in the Arke, used company with his wife, and craftily went about thereby to dis-inherite the off-spring of his other two brethren. (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 7.263-264)

For that sexual transgression, Ham's son 'Chus' (or Canaan) was born black and so were all his descendants. Best argued that African blackness was not the result of prolonged exposure to the sun, as the Prince of Morocco claims (*Merchant of Venice* II. 1. 1-2). It was a divine imprint signifying an intrinsic evil that Ham bequeathed to his offspring. To prove the point, Best cited the case of the Ethiopian and his 'faire English' wife:

I my selfe have seene an Ethiopian as blacke as a cole brought into England, who taking a faire English woman to wife, begat a sonne in all respects as blacke as the father was, although England were his native countrey, and an English woman his mother: whereby it seemeth this blacknes proceedeth rather of some natural infection of that man, whiche was so strong, that neither the nature of the Clime, neither the good complexion of the mother concurring, coulde any thing alter, and therefore, we cannot impute it to the nature of the Clime. (Hakluyt [1589-1600] 1904: 7.263)

'[T]he cause of the Ethiopians blacknesse', Best concludes, 'is the curse and naturall infection of blood, and not the distemperature of the Climate'. This atavistic evil is contagious. Ham disobeyed the sacred commandment to help his son inherit the earth (Ibid., 7.264). Likewise, in *Titus* black Aaron begets a black son and undertakes a grand plan to have a racially mixed Moor inherit Rome (IV. 2. 154-160).

The emphasis the pamphlets laid on the alleged Spaniards' black Moorish and Jewish lineage was widely acknowledged. William, Prince of Orange asserts that 'the greatest parte of the Spanyardes, and especially those, that counte themselves Noble men, are of the blood of the Moores and Jewes' (Orange 1581: O2^v). More than a century earlier, Fernán Díaz (Relator of King Juan II) reportedly warned against the strict application of the blood 'purity' system; it could prove that 'there was scarcely a noble house in Spain that had no *converso* in its family tree. If Jewishness were attached to blood [...] the nobility of Iberia would be destroyed' (Nirenberg 2009: 260). A French Catholic inveighed, 'shal those Marranos, yea, those impious Atheiests raigne over us as Kings and Princes? Shall the Countrie of France become servile to the commandement of the Spaniard [...] this demie Moore, demie Jew, yea demie Saracine?' (Munday 1590: 9). The 'demi Moore' is King Philip II who is also, 'this newe upstart, this new come Christian, whom not yet long since we have drawn from the Alcoran, and from Paganisme (who had not we bene, should yet be a Saracen, a Barbarian, a Jew)' (Munday 21).

The 'mixed blood' concern refers to the eight hundred years of cohabitation between Moors and Visigoths since the 711 Moorish conquest of Spain until their

expulsion in 1492. The long cohabitation, involving eventual ‘miscegenation’, underscores the alleged inbred evil and tainted blood of the ‘barbaric’ Goths. In *A View of the Present State of Ireland* Spenser states that, despite the efforts of ‘*Ferdinando of Arraggon* and Elizabeth his wiffe’ in expelling the Moors, the Spaniards had not one ‘dropp’ of pure blood (Spenser [1596] 1949: 91). Charles V’s historian, Anthonie of Guevara, lamented the Moors’ sweeping conquest and the centuries the Spanish *Reconquista* took (Guevara 1577: 227). Edward Daunce was quick to point to the inevitable miscegenation that followed: ‘we must not thinke that the *Negros* sent for women out of *Aphrick*’ (Daunce 1590: 31).

To Elizabethans, then, Spain’s experience of successive races (Goths, Vandals, Huns, Scythians, Saracens, Moors) created the Spanish mingled race that inherited the evil blood of the barbaric conquerors. One pamphlet itemises the composite evils: ‘the Gothes and Vandales, are counted cruell, the Moores perfidious and revengefull, the Saracens proud, and villanous in their manner of living’ (Ashley 1589: 19). The Spanish themselves discriminated between ‘old Christians’ and new Jewish and Moorish converts. ‘*Limpieza de sangre*’ (‘cleanliness of blood’) was authorised by Royal and theological statutes; it was essential for office holding, access to education, and acceptance into the class of nobility. In 1573, the evidence of blood purity required that genealogies were traced back to ‘the four quarters, that is the four grandparents’ (Lea 2017: 124). To mirror the Spanish mixed past, Shakespeare and Peele seem to have deliberately made Aaron a ‘coal-black Moor’ (III. 2. 78; IV. 2. 99; V.1. 32) and named him after the first Jewish priest.

To Protestants of the late sixteenth century, the Spaniards — pure or not — remained the brutal Goths, ‘contaminated’ by Moorish and Jewish blood. Spenser affirmed, ‘of all nacions under heaven I suppose the Spaniarde is the moste mingled, and moste uncertaine and moste bastardlie’ (Spenser [1596] 1949: 91). To Daunce, one’s ‘nature’ is either ‘simple’ (good), or ‘compound’ (contaminated). ‘The naturall Spaniard’, even if ‘simple’ is ‘of a confuse and beastly conceipt’, ‘but mixed with the *Gothes* and *Vandals*, given to theevery and drunkennes: mingled with the *Mores* cruell and full of trecherie: and consequently, tasting of everie one, a spring of all filthinesse’ (Daunce 1590: 36). Contaminated blood accounts for the Spaniards’ supposed barbaric disposition and the unparalleled atrocities and massacres they allegedly committed.

One of the Black Legend’s first sources is *The Spanish Colonie*, a shorthand title of a 1542 eye-witness report by the Spanish Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, a colonist. The *Colonie* details the alleged atrocities Spaniards committed against the indigenous people in the New World. It was published in 1552 and soon translated into

most European languages (Rawlings 2018: 37-52). Like other pamphleteers, Las Casas reports on the number of the massacred indigenous population in the New World over a period of forty years. He puts it at ‘more then fiftene Millions of soules’ (Las Casas 1583: A3^v). In his account, the Prince of Orange raises the toll to ‘more than twentie millions of people’, all killed ‘with such horrible excesses and ryottes, that all the barbarousnesses, cruelties, and tyrannies, whiche have ever bin committed, are but sport’ (Orange 1581: F4^r). James Aligrodo, the *Colonie*’s sixteenth-century translator, used his opening address to the reader as a document of racial history and a statement on the supposed vicious disposition of the character of the Spaniards. The Indians they killed in unimaginably barbaric ways, he writes, exceed the number the ‘spaniardes procreated into this worlde since their firste fathers the Gothes inhabited their Countries, either since their second progenitors the Sarazens expelled and murdered the most part of the Gothes’ (Las Casas 1583: ¶2^v).

Even private reports echoed such charges. To placate the concerns of prospective English investors in Ireland, Robert Payne wrote that most Irish ‘doe deadly hate the Spaniardes’ because the Irish

have read of their monstrous cruelties in the west Indians, where they most tiranously have murdered many millions more of those simple creaturs then now live in Ireland, *even such as sought their favours by offering unto them all that they had*, never resisting nor offering them any harme. (Payne 1589: 5, emphasis mine)

Payne emphasises the Spaniards’ barbarity against the harmless and obedient Indians, a point the *Colonie* never tires of making. Las Casas wrote, ‘Indiens throughout all the Indes never wrought any displeasure unto the Spaniardes: but rather that they reputed them as come from heaven’ (Las Casas 1583: A4^r). Even when received as heavenly or ‘angelic’ visitors, Spaniards always ended the cordial reception by enslaving, kidnapping, and slaughtering their native hosts. A typical case took place in 1510 (Ibid., H1^r-H2^r). Some sixty or seventy Spaniards arrived in the Isle of ‘Trinitie’, and cunningly

published among the Indians by proclamations, and other publike so[m]mons, that they should come and dwell and live with them in that Ile. The Indians received them as their owne bowels and babes: and as well the Lordes as subjects served them with exceeding readines, bringing them to eate from day to day, as much as might suffice to feede, as manie more people. For this is the liberality of all these Indians of the new world, to bestow on the Spaniards of al that they have in great abundance. (Ibid., H2^v)

The Spaniards suggested the building of a large house where the Indians would live together. In good time, the Spaniards, swords in hand, tied up those who were inside, ‘And those which fled they hewed them in peeces’ (Las Casas 1583: H2^v). Those taken alive were sold in other Islands (Ibid., K3^v).

Titus never directly refers to Spain; however, the atrocious cruelties and crimes it presents certainly approximate most of the widely circulated accusations and offers a visual engagement with issues presented in the anti-Spaniard tracts. Drawing on written and iconographic scenes that portray New World cannibals hewing bodies, Goldstein first traces these images to ‘American exploration narratives’ and then ties them to three central visual episodes in the play: Alarbus’ sacrifice, Lavinia’s mutilation, and the graphically detailed end of Demetrius and Chiron. Goldstein asserts, when analysed ‘in an American context’, *Titus* ‘shows us a play organised around misuses of cooking and eating with roots not only in classical literature but in the behaviors of Iberian, Brazilian, and Aztec warriors’ (Goldstein 2009: 99). Unlike conventional cannibalism, the cannibalism in *Titus* ‘produces neither sustenance nor regeneration for eater or eaten. In such a world, the collapse of the self/other boundary that eating necessitates does not liberate, but rather degrades all parties. In *Titus*, the heuristic of consumption is the uncovering of one’s inhumanity’ (Ibid., 99-100). To add Goldstein’s negative findings to the presence in Rome of the victorious army of Goths, the Spaniard-like punishment of Aaron, the treatment of Tamora’s body, and the deliberate uncertainty of the future of Aaron’s baby, one can conclude that Rome’s final restoration is, at best, unpromising.

In addition to motiveless atrocities and mass murders, anti-Spaniard pamphlets regularly stressed the Spaniards’ ‘rape’ of women. In *Hispaniola*, Las Casas dwells on one ‘so great an hazarde and desperatenes’: ‘a Spanishe Captaine durst adventure to ravish forcibly the wife of the greatest king and Lord of this Ile’ (Las Casas 1583: A3^r; cf. B1^v). In Guatemala, another ‘undid whole housholdes, by taking from the men their wives and daughters: the which afterwardees hee dispersed in gyftes to his marriners and souldiers to please them withal [...] How many adulteries, whoredoms and rapes, hath he been the cause of’ (Ibid., F1^v-F1^r). Like English pamphleteers (as will be seen), Las Casas is deeply concerned over these transgressions.

In his report’s conclusion, Las Casas looks back at the tyranny and harsh treatment the Indians suffered. No race, he thought, deserved these kinds of atrocities but ‘the verie Moors, being the cruellest of all others, for all the damage that they have done to the Christians: where the Indians are more treatable, curteous gentle, and obedient, then any other nation in the worlde’ (Las Casas 1583: P2^r). Further on, he perceives the Moors and Turks as ‘rods’ of God’s wrath, a likely allusion to King Rodrigo’s legendary rape of the daughter of Julian, the King’s governor of Ceuta, in north Africa (this alleged rape was crucial to the Moors’ conquest of Spain). The tyranny of the Spaniards’ against the Indians, Las Casas warns, augurs ill for Spain itself:

The kingdome of Spaine is in great danger to bee lost, robbed, oppressed and made desolate by forraigne nations, namely by the Turks and Moores, because that God who is the most just, true, and soveraigne king over all the worlde, is wrath [*sic*] for the great sinnes and offences that the Spaniardes have committed throughout the Indies. (Ibid., Q1^v)

As we will see, *Titus* presents similar injustices and tyrannies: the maltreatment of Titus, the Gothic brothers' sudden sexual interest in Lavinia, and their eventual forceful rape and mutilation of her, the unjust execution of Titus' two sons, the barbaric cruelty of pagan rituals, and the evils of Saturninus and all other characters. The final conquest of Rome by the army of Goths proves the ultimate punishment.

Anti-Spanish sentiment increased during the 1580s, and Protestant pamphleteers enumerated the Spaniards' ferocious brutalities. G. D.'s *A Briefe Discoverie of Doctor Allens Seditious Drifts* (1588) foregrounds the points of Spanish cruelty to make a case against Cardinal William Allen's *Admonition* (1588).¹²² The Cardinal has urged England's Catholics to aid the Spaniards during their invasion of England; as Catholics, they will be treated favourably. G. D.'s rebuttal points to the experiences of those who have suffered the Spanish presence in their countries. His picture of the Spaniard soldier foreshadows the portrayal of Demetrius and Chiron in the play:

what favour can *English Catholikes* then expect of a forreine army? especially of the *Spanish* souldjour, who in the opinion and report of those nations which have felt his furie, and endured his yoake, is very hardly thought of, and almost infamous for his pride, insolence, crueltie, ravishments, and such like kindes of violence. (G. D. 1588: 82)

Even Catholics of other nationalities concur with G. D.'s characterisation of the Spanish. In 1588, the Catholic French pamphleteer wonders: 'I pray you what humanitie, what faith, what courtesie, what modestie, and civilitie, may wee thinke to finde amongst this scumme of Barbarians' (Ashley 1589: 19).

Because critics commonly approach *Titus Andronicus* without taking into account the Black Legend framework, they often raise various complaints, especially about the inauthenticity of the play's Rome and Romans (Spencer 1957: 32; Miola 1983: 42-44) and the difficulties of associating Rome with England (Giddens 2010-11: 2-4 of 35 paras).¹²³

¹²² G. D.'s *Briefe* was officially distributed throughout the realm; G. D. is believed to be the pseudonym of John Stubbes (Sanchez 2004: 176-177).

¹²³ Eugene Giddens acknowledges the similarities between the Romans, Goths, and Moors. He accounts for this discrepancy culturally. Focusing on 'the play's paradoxical locations of culture through their intersections with early modern gender ideologies', Giddens accounts for 'the longstanding tendency to identify Romans as crypto-Elizabethans' by showing 'how associations between cultures might be complicated by emergent Elizabethan categories of difference and gender, especially masculinity' (Giddens 2010-11: 4 of 35 paras). That is, masculinity becomes the means of 'otherness' and 'alterity' (Ibid., 35 of 35 paras).

Critics have also read into the play various late Elizabethan political and socio-cultural concerns without linking these to Spain.¹²⁴ Even the play's 'incoherence' has recently become the subject of a critical collection, edited by Stanavage and Hehmeyer. The editors argue that 'the disintegration of Rome and Roman values, literalized in the play's broken and mutilated bodies' makes it difficult to approach the play as a unified whole. They propose to focus on 'the text as inherently dissonant' (Stanavage and Hehmeyer 2012: 2, 4).

Titus' relation to other works and authors has long been recognised. Its 'most famous scenes of violence', Reginald Foakes argued, are Shakespeare's deliberate 'outdoing' of 'the effects other dramatists had created' (Foakes 2003: 54). Jonathan Bate asserts that Aaron's 'delight in his own villainy is shamelessly pillaged from Barabas' and Ithamore's boasting in the same vein in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*' (Bate 2011: 3). Harold Bloom expands the similarities to find *Titus* nothing but a farcical parody of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (Bloom 1998: 77-86, and *passim*). These similarities are obvious; however, given the well-known cruelties that the Spanish reportedly committed, it is just as likely that these similarities between *Titus* and the *Jew of Malta* are the result of Shakespeare and Peele's familiarity with anti-Spaniard publications as they are imitations of Marlowe. After all, Shakespeare and Peele invented these ahistorical bloody events, played out in a 'Bogus Rome' by racially mixed characters, at a time when Spain's threat to England was at its height. The language in which critics couch their analysis and reading of the play approximates closely the language of the Spanish Black Legend.

Goldstein sensitively reads the play's opening sacrifice as an illustration of the cannibals' brutal hewing of bodies in the New World and matches the jokes about Lavinia's severed hands with similar instances from Las Casas' *Colonie*. '[C]utting off' the hands of some Indians 'as neere as might bee, and so letting them hang', the Spaniards said: 'Get you with these letters, to carry tydinges to those [Indians] which are fled by the mountaines' (Goldstein 2009: 114). The 'hanging' hands — a form of writing on the body — become the message, much like Lavinia's 'stumps' that reveal what has happened to her, or Titus' 'hand' becoming the ransom for his sons. Goldstein says little of Aaron. But the Moor has his own physical and violent writing. To perpetuate his victims' pain, Aaron

¹²⁴ These include crown succession and hereditary-elective monarchy theories (Kewes 2016: 551-570; Mansky 2016: 293-318); England's national and religious imperial themes (Yates 1947: 72); English global expansion, English conceptions of race, colour, gender, African physiology and humours (Bartels 2008: 88-94, 1990: 442-447; Giddens 2010-11: 1-35 paras; Deroux 2010: 86-101; Jones 1963: 178-179); and even English forestry (Scott 2011: 276-289). The 'visibility' of whiteness as a racial marker is addressed by Royster (2000: 432-455) and Kunat (2019: 89-110).

says ‘And on their skins, as on a bark of trees,/ Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,/ “Let not your sorrow die though I am dead”’ (V. 1. 138-140). More obvious, perhaps, is Aaron’s racial inscription of his colour on his son. As the nurse brings the baby, everyone recognises Aaron’s ‘stamp’ and ‘seal’ on the child (IV. 2. 125). Again, the Moor’s memorably visual punishment at the end could have been borrowed from anti-Spanish pamphlets. Lucius orders: ‘Set him breast-deep in earth, and famish him./ There let him stand and rave and cry for food’ (V. 3. 178-179). Edward Daunce describes the ‘diet’ Spaniards offer their slaves for the slightest assumed fault. Denied food, beaten and whipped, showered with ‘boyling pitch or oile’, then washed over with saltwater, the slaves finally ‘were buried all night in earth to the necke, as a present remedie for their stripes’ (Daunce 1590: 21).

When he is considered in the light of the Black Legend framework, moreover, Aaron — in race, colour, name and actions — visually signifies the Spaniard’s contaminated ancestry. This point is enhanced by the play’s offstage Goth-Moorish community, and by the representation of miscegenation, mixed births, and the final conquest of Rome by the army of Goths. Reading the play in the light of the Black Legend also helps explain the equation of Rome with Spain, the presence of the Goths, and the invocation of Catholicism.

To see Rome in the play as a representation of Spain answers for the supposed inauthenticity of the Romans and their ‘Rome’, and for Aaron’s presence amongst the Goths. Spain, at the time, was already seen as a ‘new Rome’, inheriting its political and religious power; Charles V had been the Holy Roman Emperor from 1519 to 1556, and Philip II eagerly sought the title of the ‘Last World Emperor’ (E. Griffin 2009: 76; Parry 2011: 32; Streete 2017: 62). The short section Griffin allocates to *Titus* in his 2014 chapter best illustrates the difficulty of associating Rome with England. Critics have invoked the legend in reading the play. Noting the English anxieties that Marlowe’s Jew underscores, Griffin asserts that ‘Shakespeare’s Moor exhaled yet more fully the alarmist airs of the 1590s’ (E. Griffin 2014: 26). Though he insists on the England-Rome association, Griffin mainly dwells on the Goths and the Black Legend. The Goths reflect Spain’s ‘fictive ethnicity’, through which the Black Legend ‘quite literally “blackened” Spain by insisting upon the nation’s Moorish or African roots — a rhetorical strategy that becomes a fixture of anti-Spanish polemic’ (Ibid., 28n32). Aaron’s crimes ‘recall the “Spanish abuses” marshalled in *A Fig for the Spaniard*’, and the ‘miscegenation’ fears recall the 711 Moorish conquest of Spain (E. Griffin 2014: 26-28). Despite these markers, Griffin reads Rome as England. To maintain this relation, Griffin transforms the Goths into ‘strangers’

to stress the danger they pose to England at the time. The fall of ancient Rome shows the strangers' ruinous influence. Now, because strangers are wielding a similar harmful influence on Spain, England must be heedful: '*Titus Andronicus* thus signifies quite as suggestively in relation to both England and its present rival, imperial Spain, as it does in reference to the Roman historical precedence' (Ibid., 27).

Although the argument affirms Rome's relation to Spain, Griffin accords more strength to its 'suggestive' relation to England. He even transfers to England the 'miscegenation fears' reflected by the play when all pamphlets trace miscegenation to Spain's Visigoths (now in Rome): 'These miscegenation fears were in turn injected into early modern English society by focusing a dichotomizing "it can happen here" formula on England's former political and dynastic ally' (Ibid., 28). As far as England is concerned, though, this 'suggestive' link looks more like a lesson about imperial powers than a representation of England, and the more Griffin insists on Rome's relation to England, the closer he brings *Titus*' Rome to Spain. Griffin's formula argues that strangers and miscegenation brought down the Roman Empire; now Spain shows similar signs of strangers' influence. England will eventually undergo the same fate. The characteristics of the play, however, seem to cast doubt on the formula's relevance for the Rome-England relation:

This is not to say that the cultural and historical amalgam staged in *Titus* presents a coherent picture of any Roman, Spanish, or English past, or of a precisely analogous present. Rather, in its incoherence the play offers a veritable stew of contemporary anxieties, which it expresses in an only apparently (or typologically) historical, and thus a *transhistorical* setting. (E. Griffin 2014: 28, emphasis original)¹²⁵

The quotation's first sentence denies any coherent picture of Rome, Spain, England, 'or of a precisely analogous present'. And the 'veritable stew of anxieties' expressed by the play's incoherence is 'only apparently (or typologically) historical' that becomes 'transhistorical'.

The 'anxieties', however, become contemporary 'English' because Griffin opens his short reading (5 pages) with an anti-Spanish pamphlet. At the time, England surely feared strangers not because of a local Gothic brutality or miscegenation anxieties, but because of an imminent invasion by 'Roman' and Gothic-Moorish mingled Spaniards. In

¹²⁵ Griffin appeals to the 1596 deportation edict as evidence of English anxiety about strangers. But 1596 is too late a date to influence the play; the edict was a special case of personal and politico-economic interests, concerning a particularly 'select number', 89 blackamoors that the Dutch merchant Casper van Senden would take in recompense for his delivering English prisoners from the New World to England. And the Queen's efforts eventually failed: slaves' masters refused to comply (Bartels 2008: 100-117).

this sense, the play's 'incoherence' points to an association between Rome and Spain. For two decades England and English authors had been aware of this hostile association, especially Shakespeare's collaborator Peele and Walsingham's spy Marlowe. As shown in the previous chapter Robert Greene, in his anti-Spanish pamphlet *The Spanish Masquerado*, uncovers twelve masked Antichrists, beginning with the Pope and Philip II, masquerading as pious Spaniard and Romish figures (Greene 1589: 7-9). Their grouping together underscores their heretic faith and their strong political ties. And Griffin's triadic association inclines more towards Spain. He concedes, '[t]his is not to say that "Rome" [...] allegorically signifies "Spain"; however, the play's Roman focus should underscore the fact that contemporary religio-political discourses often project the Rome-Spain association analogically' (E. Griffin 2014: 29). Earlier, for Griffin, Aaron's presence in 'this Roman setting also suggests that, typologically speaking, the playwright's staging of Roman history draws upon a more recent historical exemplum, early modernity's "New Rome," the Spanish Empire' (Ibid., 28). Griffin wants Rome to represent Spain and to maintain the conventional England-Rome association. The play's 'veritable stew' makes more sense, though, if corrupt Rome is read as Spain and the Goths and Romans as the Spaniards that anti-Spanish pamphlets depict. Given the 'un-Romanness' of the play's Rome and Romans, the emphasis on miscegenation, and the final accumulation of Goths in Rome, the Spain-Rome link becomes not one of association but of threat to England. Griffin himself writes, 'With Habsburg Spain at once self-identifying and finding itself constructed by other nations (for good or for ill) as a type of "Rome", the Spanish example must surely have been relevant both to Shakespeare's representation and to his audience's reception' (E. Griffin 2014: 29). *Titus*, a Spanish example, becomes another pamphlet; all anti-Spaniard pamphlets serve as warning 'examples' that point to or shed light on a problem. In the pamphlets, however, Spain and Rome are the problem, and Griffin's reading of *Titus* as exemplum confirms the association. Insistence on a Rome-England association leads to similar difficulties with Aaron, his presence in Rome, and his intimate relation to the Goths.

5.2 Miscegenation and Roman Catholicism in *Titus Andronicus*

The Black Legend theme of mixed blood is introduced early on and sustained until the end of the play. Throughout, Aaron's colour and (Jewish) name are as carefully emphasised as

his deeds. The visibility of his 'blackness' is emphasised by all characters.¹²⁶ *Titus* opens with the 'ultrawhite' Goths and the 'ultrablack' Aaron (Royster 2000: 432). Though silent for the first act, Aaron's colour and presence foreshadow the miscegenation to come. He is the Goths' cultural and religious signifier of inherited evil, which is also hidden under their Queen's colour. 'The play makes us aware that Tamora is always a Goth', Royster notes, and her 'hue' 'alludes to her Germanic paleness' (Ibid., 433). But when Aaron first speaks, we learn that Rome's new hyper-white empress is his spellbound mistress (II. 1. 20-21). He reveals the racial and political threat that awaits the highest order of 'new' Rome; his mistress Tamora 'This siren', 'will charm Rome's Saturnine,/ And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's' (II. 1. 23-24). Aaron is as integral to the play's events as sexual aggressions are to the Black Legend. In 'Rome' he epitomises all the adverse characteristics of the European Catholic and the Spaniard 'other'. Religio-politically and culturally, his colour and relation to the Queen of Goths underscore his African origin, Ham's original sexual transgression, and the Moors' conquest of Spain.

Miscegenation undertones (together with misogynist overtones) are also apparent in the Gothic brothers' quarrel over their interest in attacking Lavinia sexually (II. 1. 26-136). This event precedes the crucial meeting between Tamora and Aaron in the forest (II. 3. 20-26). Lavinia and Bassianus arrive in time to see Aaron steal away from Tamora. Unaware of the fateful moment, Bassianus and Lavinia openly reprove Tamora for her illicit relationship. Lavinia points to the Queen's crossbreeding 'experiments'; Bassianus adds, 'your swarth Cimmerian/ Doth make your honour of his body's hue' (II. 3. 68-69; 72-73). Demetrius and Chiron arrive, kill Bassianus, and use his body as a pillow on which they rape Lavinia, before mutilating her body. She remains as a reminder of the treacherous collaboration and brutality of the Goths and their black Moor till the end of the play. The murder of Bassianus, the treacherous plan to implicate Titus' two sons, and the brutalisation of Lavinia reflect the common practices that the Black Legend pamphlets emphasise.

Miscegenation in the play culminates in the birth of the two racially mixed children. Shortly after Lavinia's ordeal and right before Aaron's 'devil' is born, Aaron reminds the now ennobled Goth prisoners of their 'happy star':

And now, young lords, was't not a happy star
Led us to Rome, strangers, and more than so,
Captives, to be advanced to this height? (IV. 2. 32-34)

¹²⁶ See Aaron (III. 1. 204; IV. 2. 101); Lavinia and Bassianus (II. 3. 71-72, 77, 83); Titus and Marcus (III. 2. 66-68; 78); and the Second Goth's report to Lucius of finding Aaron and his son in the 'ruinous monastery' (V. 1. 27-32).

Though having been led as captives to Rome, they have been advanced to prominence since Saturninus married Tamora in the opening scene of the play. Ironically, the incident that prompts Aaron's reminder is Titus' gift of weapons wrapped in a threatening Horatian note, delivered to the lords after Lavinia has identified her offenders.¹²⁷ Chiron recognises the line but not its wider significance (Burrow 2013: 24-25; Kolin 2015b: 253-255). Aaron alone appreciates the dangerous message; the brothers, conversely, start boasting of the 'good' their new position has earned them. Demetrius is flattered 'to see so great a lord/ Basely insinuate and send us gifts'. Aaron keeps them in the dark, noting 'what a thing it is to be an ass!' (IV. 2. 25). Instead of alerting them to the danger, he reawakens memories of Lavinia's 'rape', while ostensibly agreeing that Titus flatters the Goth princes: 'Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius?/ Did you not use his daughter very friendly?' Demetrius brags: 'I would we had a thousand Roman dames/ At such a bay, by turn to serve our lust'. Chiron responds, 'A charitable wish, and full of love' (IV. 2. 37-43). In Act II. 1, the Goth brothers seem to be interested in Roman Lavinia alone, but now a wider cross-racial sexual violence seems to be the high point of their wishes.

Shortly afterwards, the Queen is in labour; the young lords pray for their mother's well-being. Aaron suggests they better 'Pray to the devils; the gods have given us over' (IV. 2. 48). This aside is a reminder that the lords are as evil as is Aaron. Soon the Nurse, a bundle in her arms, is seeking 'gentle Aaron' to inform him that God 'hath sent' the Queen 'A devil' (IV. 2. 65-66). The Gothic lords are shocked, but Aaron joyfully declares, 'this [is] myself,/ The vigour and picture of my youth' (IV. 2. 109-110). The fruit of miscegenation the play has highlighted is made visible on stage. From this moment on, the word 'devil' permeates the text. Like Catholic Spaniards (a mingled race of Moors and Jews), the Goths and Moors are now at home in Rome. And in Rome, 'the black Devil was, symbolically and concretely speaking, identified with *The English Black Legend of Spain* (cruel and unusual) and the Roman Catholic Beast (the pope)' (Washington 1984: xii, italics original). For Protestants, moreover, Rome symbolised Babylon, and the Whore of Babylon was the Antichrist (the Pope), 'whose agent was the King of Spain' (Johnson 2017: 25). As a setting where corrupt and captive enemies are advanced so high, Rome invests the black Moor with metaphoric or symbolic significance.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Horace's lines are: '*Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,/ Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu*' (IV. 2. 20-21) [The man of upright life and free from crime does not need the javelins or bows of the Moor].

¹²⁸ A likely model for the advancement of the Goths and Aaron is the infamous Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo de Borgia, originally a Spaniard) who had set the Black Legend in motion in his 1493 Bull *Inter Caetera* (for the English translation, see Jennifer Reid [2015: 15-18]). The Bull regulated

In Act IV, the child is called ‘devil’ by the nurse, his mother, his half-brothers, and by his elated father; in Act V, Lucius too joins in (V. 1. 43, 45, 48). The nurse brings Aaron his child, designated as Aaron’s ‘stamp’ and ‘seal’, quite distinct from ‘the fairest breeders of our clime’ (IV. 2. 70-71). Aaron himself, celebrating the child’s ‘blackness’, reminds the audience that ‘all the water in the ocean/ Can never turn the swan’s black legs to white’ (IV. 2. 103-104). Shocked at first, ‘fair’ Demetrius and Chiron finally acquiesce because the baby is their ‘brother by the surer side,/ Of that self blood that first gave life to [them]’, even though Aaron’s ‘seal be stamped in his face’ (IV. 2. 123-129). George Best’s theory of the infectious nature of Ham’s ‘sin’ seems at work here.

Aaron now reveals his plan to replace his son with that of Muly, another Moor. Both babies are racially mixed with Gothic mothers and Moorish fathers. However, Aaron’s son is visibly black like his father while Muly’s son is as ‘fair’ as Gothic Tamora’s sons:

Not far, one Muly lives, my countryman:
 His wife but yesternight was brought to bed;
 His child is like to her, fair as you are.
 Go pack with him and give the mother gold,
 And tell them both the circumstance of all,
 And how by this their child shall be advanced
 And be received for the emperor’s heir,
 And substituted in the place of mine,
 To calm this tempest whirling in the court;
 And let the emperor dandle him for his own. (IV. 2. 154-163)

The dissimilar colours of the racially mixed babies further emphasise the blackness of Aaron and his son. Moors are either black or ‘whyte’ (Boorde [1555] 1870: 212), a fact that blurred the distinction between races for Spanish advocates of racial purity, and now lends credibility to Aaron’s plan to implant Muly’s fair son as an imperial ‘heir’.

In *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron’s race and colour may be crucial, but Catholicism is just as important; and so are other issues that the pamphlets also emphasise, especially Spain’s territorial expansion under the pretext of defending the faith. Both are alarming enough to trigger English anxieties. Shakespeare and Peele used the Moorish-Jewish black Aaron and the Goths to enhance the association between Rome and Spain and to expose Spain’s deceitful faith. Bate lists many of the play’s references to Catholicism: Lavinia’s presentation as a ‘martyr’ (III. 1. 82), the ‘ruinous monastery’ (V. 1. 21), Aaron’s ‘popish tricks and ceremonies’ (V. 1. 76), and ‘the cannibalistic feast’ (V. II. 192) at the end (‘a

‘relations between Portugal and Spain in newly discovered lands by establishing the Line of Demarcation’. This sanction gave Spain the right to colonise and claim new territories (Anderson and Schreier 1999: 10; Williams 1992: 80-81).

parody of the Catholic Eucharist') (Bate 1995: 19-21). For Bate, these provide the play with 'a Reformation context' (Ibid., 19). Thomas Rist points further to the ritual 'sacrifice', 'commemoration', 'mourning', 'idolatry', 'tears' and 'remembrance of the dead' as important Catholic rituals. After all, in the Roman plays of Shakespeare, Rome is 'a city of memorials' (Rist 2016: 45). Rist even finds another monastic image in Titus' line: 'perfect/ As begging hermits in their holy prayers' (Ibid., 44). Such references to Catholicism render Rome more Romish and Spanish than they would signify Protestant England. It is strange, therefore, that Bate claims: '[t]he Goths who accompany Lucius [...] are there to secure the Protestant succession' which preserves 'the Protestant nation against the possibility of another counter-Reformation, like that of Mary, which, it was thought, would inevitably lead to subjugation to the Catholic power of Spain' (Bate 1995: 20). Bate thus associates a restored Rome with England, although he notes the threat that Spain poses (specifically because of its Catholicism).

Jennifer Waldron concentrates on Alarbus' sacrifice which, to Titus, is justified 'religiously', but to Tamora, the sacrifice is an 'irreligious piety'. Waldron sides with Tamora's position (Waldron 2013: 149-178). Echoing the language of pamphlets on Spanish cruelties, she argues that Alarbus' 'sacrifice' renders Rome 'a barbarous, lawless land masquerading as the paragon of civilization' (Ibid., 156). This masquerading paragon surely represents the New World of the Spaniards; otherwise, England becomes as barbarous as Shakespeare's Rome. This 'confusion of the civilized and the barbarous', Waldron explains, results from 'the inability to fully distinguish between rituals that are divinely ordained and those that are mere human inventions' (Ibid., 156). Undermining the possibility of associating Rome and England, Waldron asserts that *Titus* does not represent 'a disguised or displaced version of forbidden modes of Catholic worship':

the point of Shakespeare's anthropology of sacrifice is the way it exploits the connections forged in Protestant polemic among various kinds of religious others, including Jews, Romans, Goths, and Moors. With Protestant condemnations of the Mass as the essence of pagan idolatry and/or a 'legal sacrifice' such as those performed under Jewish law, the central ritual that had served to knit together the Christian community quite abruptly appeared to be an act that tore it apart, denying the very presence and power of Christ that it was supposed to assert. (Waldron 2013: 157)

Here, we are among Jews, (Babylonian) Romans, Goths, and Moors; this Rome resembles the Spanish New World. Rome's religion and characters are as devilish as is Aaron or the New World's Spaniards. Waldron's conclusion negates Bate's claim that the Goths' assistance to Lucius is meant to 'secure the Protestant succession' of England (Bate 1995: 20). Significantly, only barbarous characters point to the religious flaws. Tamora, Aaron,

and Titus show us a Rome degenerating into barbarism and paganism. Titus' killing of Livinia is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but pagan, motivated by a desire to relieve her of 'shame' and himself of 'sorrows': 'Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee [*he kills her*]/ And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die!' (V. 3. 45-46).

The discovery of Aaron with his child (now another Moorish stage presence) extends the miscegenation issue beyond the end of the play, reflecting its prevalence among the Spanish classes as the Prince of Orange earlier stated. The Gothic soldier appropriately discovers Aaron and his son, devising further evil, in the 'ruinous monastery'. When he 'earnestly did fix [his] eye/ Upon the wasted building', he discovered two black devils (V. 1. 21-22). Monasteries hide corrupt pagans and devils. In relation to England, 'ruinous monasteries' signify the severing of ties between the true faith of Reformed Protestantism and the Catholicism of 'new Rome'. The soldier who discovered the Moors overhears Aaron's intended designs and learns of his corrupt intimacy with Tamora (V. 1. 27-36). The episode thus not only keeps Aaron's evil and the Moor's presence staged throughout the play, but also enhances the link between blackness and Catholicism. When Aaron (with his son) is brought from the monastery, Lucius first refers to him as 'the incarnate devil', a common label of the Pope in anti-Roman and Spanish pamphlets. For miscegenation, Lucius also calls Aaron 'the pearl that pleased [the Gothic] empress' eye' (V. 1. 40, 42). The Moor's constant display thus verifies the contamination of the Goths' blood and the dissociation between England and Rome.

The labels also continue in Lucius' reception of the child; he is 'the base fruit' of Aaron's 'burning lust', the 'growing image of his fiend-like face', and the 'fruit of bastardy' (V. 1. 43, 45, 48). In terms of socio-political classes, the child 'is of royal blood', Aaron emphasises (V. 1. 49). This distinction becomes crucial for the child's survival which involves an 'oath' that Lucius must take if Aaron is to reveal the evils he has committed. By what God Lucius 'swears' is immaterial; Aaron knows that Lucius is 'religious',

And hast a thing within thee called conscience,
With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies
Which I have seen thee careful to observe. (V. 1. 75-77)

Aaron is careful to qualify the 'oath' with 'popish tricks' to play the Reformist against Lucius' Catholic 'tricks and ceremonies', and the rituals and vows the Andronici value throughout the play. Coming from a villainous black 'devil', this critique of Catholicism is worthless (Lukas Erne 2000: 144-146; Rist 2016: 45-47). To Miola, Aaron is specific in his mockery; he echoes 'Article Nineteen of the original Protestant Thirty-Nine'. The

ceremony for Protestants indicates ‘the superstitious beliefs and practices of Catholics’; and in

demanding an oath from the ‘popish’ Roman Lucius, Aaron enacts another cultural paradigm from the later wars of religion. Throughout the period reformist authorities required oaths of allegiance and Catholics [...] struggled with their consciences and divided loyalties. (Miola 2002: 198)

Aaron’s reference to article ‘XIX’ underscores England’s distance from Catholic Rome. So does the disparity between faith and observance of one’s ‘oath’ where, Aaron notes, ‘An idiot holds his bauble for a god,/ and keeps the oath which by that god he swears’ (V. 1. 79-80). His use of the word ‘idiot’ underscores both Catholic idolatry and Protestant distrust of Catholicism. John Kerrigan notes, ‘Shakespeare gives Aaron a radical answer’, and ‘ironizes the assent of the audience by associating this Machiavellian judgement with an anti-papistical bias widely held by ordinary Elizabethans against trusting the words of Catholics who were held to deceive Protestants with oaths’ (Kerrigan 2016: 62). Like the idiot, Lucius swears by his god (V. 1. 86). Though the details Aaron reveals are known to the audience and repeated often, his exchange with Lucius reinforces the play’s main themes and the ubiquitous presence of the evil Moor-Goth in a corrupt Roman Catholic setting. Little Aaron, meanwhile, remains an iconic reminder of his father’s evil which the audience has just seen. He is the physical evidence of the Moorish-Goths racial miscegenation in Spain (now Rome) and the cruelties sixteenth-century Catholic Spaniards have allegedly practised in Europe and the New World.

Marcus’ final attempt to reconcile Rome to itself speaks more convincingly to a connection between Rome and Spain than to one between Rome and England. Only a true faith and legal sacrifice can ‘knit’ Christians into ‘one body’ (Waldron 2013: 157). Addressing the ‘sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome’, Marcus says: ‘O let me teach you how to knit again/ This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,/ These broken limbs again into one body’ (V. 3. 66; 69–71). With Rome flooded by an army of Goths, his proposal seems to have come a little late, and it chimes with the end of the mutilated characters (Alarbus, Lavinia, Titus, the Goth brothers). Tamora earlier wanted to kill Lavinia, but Demetrius wanted to ‘First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw’ (II. 3. 123). In the play, all characters with ‘broken limbs’ never get knitted ‘into one body’. To Marcus, it is now Rome that has its ‘limbs’ broken beyond repair. As such, it is unlikely that Shakespeare and Peele would have Rome represent England.

Blood contamination, corrupt faith, and ethnicity are all encoded in the Moor’s name. In the play, names seem to signify thematically. Virgil’s famous Lavinia is not the Lavinia of *Titus*. Her rape underscores the violations that Spaniards, in pamphlets,

commonly commit against women. Nor is Lucius the first Christian King who established Britain. Titus too is not the renowned General and Emperor. More revealing are the implications of Aaron's long recognised Jewish name.¹²⁹ Whether Aaron or Harun, he is not by chance named after the Jewish high priest and redundantly designated coal-black Moor — in Spanish, 'Moor' is 'blackamoor' or 'black'. So is the case with Tamora; her name echoes Tamar (Judah's daughter-in-law) and is heard in Spanish as '*esta mora*' (lit. 'that Moorish woman' [Ndiaye 2016: 63]). Tamora, like Aaron, may take her name from more than one source, combining Tamar and a Moorish woman. Such indicative attributes accord well with anti-Spanish pamphlets that merge Moors, Jews and Spaniards (Munday 1590: 9, 21, 28, 35).

References to Catholicism, Judaism and paganism emphasise the deviance of the Moorish Spaniards and Catholicism. It makes no difference whether Aaron is Moses' brother or the Muslim Caliph, 'Harun al-Rashid'. Jew or Moor, *Titus*' Aaron is either way a black Moor. To pamphleteers, the Jew and the Muslim are infidels, and reflect the blood contamination of the Spanish mingled race. Aaron's pronounced colour invokes the inherited 'curse of Ham'. Because Fiedler and Eric Griffin see no relation between the play and the Black Legend, they neglect the rich implications of the name. In *Titus* Shakespeare and Peele used Aaron, an exaggerated Moor-Jew villain, to reify the Jewish-Moorish lineage of the Spaniards and to undermine the claim of Roman Catholics to true faith. In this view, *Titus Andronicus* articulates common political and cultural anxieties of Protestant England in the late Elizabethan reign.

5.3 Brutality, Rape, and Revenge

The play opens at the end of a bloody war in which Titus has lost twenty-one sons. Following Roman tradition, Alarbus (Tamora's oldest son) is sacrificed to their memory. A new war starts at home in which Titus kills one son and loses another two. Brutality is emphasised between brothers and between father and sons (Jaynes 1994: 134; Ndiaye

¹²⁹ Benjamin Griffin reviewed critics' association of Aaron with the biblical priest. Griffin suggests the possibility of 'Aaron/ Harun' al-Rashid, the fifth Abbasid caliph, whom 16th century Elizabethans would have known from 'Newton's *Notable Historie of the Saracens* (1575)', a translation of 'the work of Celio Augustino Curione', a known source of Greene's *Selimus* and possibly of *Tamburlaine* (2017: 297). Jackson attempts 'to show how Shakespeare's interest in Abraham and children sacrificing explains the imaginary religious "encounter" between east and west that is *Titus Andronicus*' (2005: 145-167).

2016: 69; Cantor 2017: 5). The sacrifice exemplifies best this brutality which will be repeated against Lavinia and the Goth brothers, her rapists.

The sacrifice of Alarbus could have been extracted from Las Casas' *Colonie*. Lucius demands 'the proudest prisoner of the Goths,/ That we may hew his limbs and on a pile/ [...] sacrifice his flesh' to the spirits of the Andronici brothers recently interred (I. 1. 99-101). At this pagan ritual, Lucius orders:

Away with him, and make a fire straight,
And with our swords, upon a pile of wood
Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed. (I. 1. 130-132)

Once this demand is met, Lucius graphically details the performance to Titus:

See, lord and father, how we have performed
Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopped,
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,
Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky. (I. 1. 145-148)

Not accidentally, it seems, when burial and sacrificial rituals are concluded, marriage proposals are exchanged. 'Rape' immediately becomes the issue in the first exchange between Saturninus and Bassianus as they compete for Lavinia (I. 1. 408-413). Aided by Lavinia's own Andronici brothers, Bassianus kidnaps her. The new Emperor threatens them:

Traitor, if Rome have law or we have power,
Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape. (I. 1. 406-408)

At this early moment, the word 'rape' raises no concerns; everyone has seen what it is, a theft or abduction.¹³⁰ Bassianus explains that Lavinia is his wife and her brothers testify to the fact. The rivalry between the imperial brothers not only stresses their competition for the Roman crown with which the first Act opens, but also anticipates the contention of the two Goth brothers for Lavinia. Romans and Goths seem almost identical. The competitions for Rome and 'Rome's rich ornament' enhance Lavinia's significance as the image of Rome (I. 1. 55).

Once empress of Rome, Tamora instructs Emperor Saturninus on how to act politically, while she herself will 'find a day to massacre them all [the Andronici]' (I. 1. 455) to avenge the sacrifice of her son. Demetrius has earlier advised his mother to 'stand resolved', to 'hope withal', like the Queen of Troy, the gods 'May favour Tamora, the queen of Goths/ (When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen)/ To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes' (I. 1. 138-143). If her 'hue' emphasises the 'hyper whiteness' of the Goths (Royster 2000: 432), this early call to revenge anticipates the brutalisation of

¹³⁰ Donatella Pallotti surveys the various meanings of 'rape', including 'elopement for the purpose of marriage, sometimes with the consent of both partners' (2013: 215).

Lavinia. In *Titus* and the Black Legend pamphlets, revenge and motiveless evil spring from the Spaniards' mixed heritage of Goths, Moors, and Jews. Under her racially marked 'hue' lies a subtle, vengeful evil that will topple the empire, significantly voiced first by Aaron in his first speech (II. 1. 23-24).

Act II prolongs the issue of marriage and rape. The Gothic brothers are fighting over Bassianus' wife. Rome has become so corrupted that not only is a violent rape discussed openly in the street next to the imperial palace, but is also plotted, endorsed, and successfully accomplished by the Goths whom Saturninus has raised to prominence. Aaron, skilful in evil deeds, solves the scandalous quarrel between Chiron and Demetrius. Instead of fighting over who should court Lavinia, they had better unite and with 'some certain snatch or so/ Would serve [their] turns' (II. 1. 96-97). The Empress too, Aaron urges, should add her villainous touches to this plan:

Come, come, our empress, with her sacred wit
To villainy and vengeance consecrate,
Will we acquaint with all what we intend,
And she shall file our engines with advice
That will not suffer you to square yourselves,
But to your wishes' height advance you both. (II. 1. 121-126)

Tamora does not disappoint. To Aaron she is a 'Semiramis' who intends to wreck the empire; so is she to Lavinia in the forest, though this name is soon retracted: 'Ay, come, Semiramis — nay, barbarous Tamora —/ For no name fits thy nature but thy own' (II. 3. 118-119).

To Lavinia, interestingly, 'barbarous Tamora' is uniquely a class of her own. The Queen's cruel and vengeful nature has been affirmed in relation to classical and contemporary female figures.¹³¹ Her extreme ruthlessness materialises in her role in Lavinia's rape, which underscores further the violent image of the Moorish contaminated Goths (i.e., the Spaniards). The cruelty and vengeance of Tamora and her sons are inherited from the different races that ruled over Spain. These evils unite against Lavinia in the forest. To Lavinia, Tamora bears 'a woman's face' (II. 3. 136) but embodies the worst traits of those races. She breast-feeds villainous cruelty to her sons; their inbred evil materialises in the execution of Aaron's rape plan. As Lavinia tearfully begs to be heard, Demetrius asks his mother to listen but be 'As unrelenting flint to drops of rain' (II. 3. 141). In response, Lavinia notes his 'breast-fed' brutality:

¹³¹ Dorothea Kehler treats her as a model of a widow's excessive sexuality (2015: 317-332) and ties her to Semiramis (Ibid., 321-322). Jo Carney ties Tamora to Catherine de Medici (Carney 2014: 415-435), and Jane Grogan relates her to Persian 'Tomyris' of Herodotus and to Queen Elizabeth (Grogan 2013: 30-61).

When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?
 O, do not learn her wrath: she taught it thee.
 The milk thou suckst from her did turn to marble;
 Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.
 Yet every mother breeds not sons alike: (II. 3. 142-146)

Though Lavinia invokes the classical and Elizabethan idea of the influence of nursing on the child, she entertains the possibility that brothers may not be necessarily alike, and turns to Chiron, pleading: 'Do thou entreat her show a woman's pity'. His response, however, proves Lavinia wrong: 'What, wouldst thou have me prove myself a bastard!' (II. 3. 147-148).¹³² 'Goths and Vandales', pamphlets assert, are 'of good right counted cruell' (Ashley 1589: 19); the Goths' responses to Lavinia's pleading prove the point. When Chiron rejects her appeal for mercy, Lavinia concedes: 'the raven doth not hatch a lark' (II. 3. 149). Tamora herself admits that Lavinia 'in person ne'er offended me' (II. 3. 161); yet, for Titus' cruelty, she must suffer. If in the opening scene Alarbus seemed innocent and his fate undeserved, Shakespeare makes sure the Goths receive no sympathy after the rape of Lavinia. The behaviour of Tamora and the living brothers who have inherited her cruelty renders it doubtful that Alarbus, had he lived, would have acted differently. This realisation is all important for Alarbus and the future of little Aaron, whose colour and birth anticipate his evil.

Titus tragically proves Lavinia's point by alluding to the raven and the lark. Aaron brings Titus the false promise of the Emperor, instructing Titus 'Chop off your hand' as ransom for the lives of his two sons, falsely accused of murdering Bassianus (III. 1. 154-156). Titus elatedly declares, 'Did ever raven sing so like a lark/ That gives sweet tidings of the sun's uprise?' (III. 1. 159-160). He sends his hand and receives back his son's two severed heads with his hand. The raven neither hatches nor sings like a lark. And Lucius will have to decide whether little Aaron's survival will be an end to, or a rebirth of, a Moorish-Goth evil.

Lavinia's first rape-kidnap sets the play in motion and leads to the upheavals of Rome and the tragedy of the Andronici family. Lucretia's case led to change in Rome's political institutions. Lavinia's rapes, like King Rodrigo's alleged rape of 'la Cava', led Lucius to befriend and lead the Goths, his traditional enemies, to conquer Rome. Preparing

¹³² In the *View*, Spenser subscribes to this idea and attacks the corrupting influence of Irish wet nursing on the English children in language and character disposition (Zurcher 2017: 662). Sir Thomas Elyot, on the education of the Governour, wrote, 'oftentimes the child sucketh the vice of his nurse, with the milk of her pap' (1564: 21). Nor is Lavinia alone in voicing this idea. Aaron will have his child nurse from a goat, the Elizabethan symbol of the devil (IV. 2. 78), to grow evil, strong, and fierce. On the 'goat's milk, see Feerick (2010: 59).

his Gothic army to storm Rome, Lucius, like a deadly enemy, urges them: ‘be as your titles witness’,

Imperious, and impatient of your wrongs,
And wherein Rome hath done you any scath
Let him make treble satisfaction. (V. 1. 5-8)

Despite Lucius’ election, at the end of the play Rome is fully at the mercy of the barbaric, racially polluted Goths, who have been given licence to behave as they please by their new Emperor.

Rape and contaminating sexual transgression of the Spaniards tie the Visigoths to the Moors and recall a number of historical cases. To pamphleteers, the truth of such tales is irrelevant. For instance, the fall of Rodrigo I’s kingdom to African Moors-Saracens was a fact. For pamphleteers, however, the cause was the ‘legend’ of Rodrigo’s rape of the daughter of Julian who, in revenge, assisted the Moors’ entry into Spain (Ashley 1589: 19).¹³³ *Titus* invokes cases of rape with similarly serious consequences.¹³⁴ The rape of Lucretia (III. 1. 299; IV. 1. 64), for example, ended the Roman monarchy and instituted Roman Republicanism. Lavinia is raped twice to effect a similar change, first figuratively by Bassianus, then by the Gothic brothers. To Hadfield, the rape of Lavinia is symptomatic of barbarism and violence: ‘[i]n the world of *Titus*, the body politic has degenerated so much that Lavinia cannot be granted the dignified exit of Lucrece, and her abuse only fuels a further cycle of violence’ (Hadfield 2005: 156). His statement best describes the common violations of women detailed by both Catholics and Protestants in anti-Spaniard discourses. Pamphleteers had stressed this danger since the 1550s. In Munday’s translation of the *Coppie*, its French Catholic writer laments: ‘have we not seen our wives and children ravished before our eyes’ (Munday 1590: 13; see also 8, 27-28). Daunce reports that: ‘At Insul a towne in Flaunders, three of these gallants entered a citizens house wholly of their faction; where two of them held the husband, whilst the third ravished his wife in his presence’ (Daunce 1590: 15). In the early 1550s, long before these pamphlets, the marriage of Mary Tudor and Prince Philip triggered a rebellion in England. According to a diarist, ‘Resident in the Tower of London’, the Queen sent ‘Bret’, the captain of London’s Militia to quell the insurgence. He, however, switched sides, warning his company to:

¹³³ James Fogelquist discusses the truth and history of this legend (2007: 1-76). Elizabeth Drayson traces the legend ‘in historical, literary, and musical forms from the middle ages to the present, within both Spain and Latin America, and in other European countries’ (Drayson 2007: 2).

¹³⁴ Pallotti’s study of ‘rape’ relates *Titus Andronicus* to ‘*The Rape of Lucrece*’; though interested in rape’s legal status in England, she highlights the similar political consequences of Lavinia’s and Lucrece’s rapes (Pallotti 2013: 220-225).

knowe right well, that yf we should be under ther [the Spaniards'] subjection they wolde, as slaves and villaynes, spoyle us of our goodes and landes, ravishe our wyfes before our faces, and deflowre our daughters in our presence. (Nichols 1850: 38)¹³⁵

More than three decades later, at the height of anti-Spaniard sentiment, G. D. invokes the same issues in his response to Allen's *Admonition*. Allen, it must be recalled, promised the English Catholics the favours and courtesy of the invading Spanish soldiers. G. D. wrote in refutation,

Small favour or curtesie (God wot) is an *Englishman* to hope for at a *Spaniards* hand, be he never so *Catholike*. The *Spanish* souldiour, where he is lord, never useth to aske (or to heare) whose wife is this? whose daughter, whose sister, whose house or goods these are: A *Catholikes* wife, daughter, house, and goods, are as sweete to him, as another mans. And what pleasure would this be to an *English man*, whatsoever his religion be, to see his wife forced, his sisters ravished, his daughters deflowred, his house sacked, his goods pilled and spoyled by a stranger before his face? (G. D. 1588: 82-83)

In this answer G. D. aims to stoke English alarm about the possible behaviour of Spanish soldiers, and the eloquence of his reply moved the Privy Council to have it distributed throughout England (Sanchez 2004: 176).

Las Casas portrays the natives of the New World as generous, submissive, and obedient to the Spaniards. Yet, the terrible atrocities they endured were inhumanely brutal. In *Titus*, the captive Moorish-Goths are well treated and advanced to prominence. The result of this treatment is best described by Marcus when he finds Lavinia in the forest:

Speak, gentle niece: what stern ungentle hands
Hath lopped, and hewed, and made thy body bare
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments

[...]

But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee,
And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.
Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame. (II. 4. 16-18; 26-28)

Revenge and rape are two carefully braided motifs that interweave violence throughout the play. Both reveal the similarities between the Moor-polluted Goths of the play and the Spanish Moor-polluted race that pamphleteers describe.

Tamora's impersonating the figure of Revenge in Act V chimes with her true character; her feigning personifies the evil dissembling roles she plays to eventually 'shipwreck' Rome and take revenge on Titus for the sacrifice of Alarbus. Tamora's marked 'ultrawhite' hue conceals a treacherous vengeance and corruption. In Act V. 2, Tamora appears at night in the figure of Revenge to deceive 'mad' Titus. He is mad over the

¹³⁵ Holinshed details the rebellion and mentions Bret's switching loyalty ([1587] 1808: 4.13), but not his speech.

violation of Lavinia (the image of Rome), which has entailed further injustices. 'I am Revenge' from 'the infernal kingdom', Tamora identifies herself. Titus should 'Confer with [her] of murder and of death'. Now 'bloody murder or detested rape', Tamora promises, 'Can couch for fear but I will find them out' (V. 2. 30; 34; 37-38). She is almost quoting Aaron's enticement to Lucius to spare the child: 'For I must talk of murders, rapes, and massacres' (V. 1. 63). Ironically, the Queen, her sons and lover are the culprits she is promising 'to find out'. Titus and the audience know her heinous part in devising Lavinia's violent rape and in wickedly framing Titus' two sons for the murder of Bassianus. During this scene Tamora, as 'Revenge' and as the Goth-Roman empress, is present in her double person. So too are her two rapist and murderous sons. Despite her intention, Tamora is fulfilling her promise; she is delivering all Lavinia's oppressors to Titus. Though Aaron is physically absent, Titus keeps bringing him up in comically sarcastic comments. Titus soon says:

Well are you fitted, had you but a Moor:
 Could not all hell afford you such a devil?
 For well I wot the empress never wags
 But in her company there is a Moor (V. 2. 85-88)

Such repeated references to Aaron remind the audience of Tamora's illicit relation with the Moor and of the role he played in Lavinia's (Rome's) rape and the miseries of Titus. In characters and motifs, the scene looks back to the central event, Lavinia's rape and mutilation.

While the scene of rape capitalises on the Goths' natural brutality, it looks back to the opening sacrifice of Alarbus and forward to the feigned image of Revenge and the 'tasteless' banquet at the end. Along this horrific course, Goths, Moors and Romans merge in their cruelty and paganism. The sacrifice of Alarbus, despite his mother's protest and tearful pleading, is as gruesome as the brutalities Lavinia suffered. Both anticipate the grisly fate of Demetrius and Chiron at the hands of Titus and Lavinia (V. 2. 186-192). Such events, in details and execution, look like scenes from the *Colonie*. For instance, one scene described by Las Casas (among many horrifying others) gives a sense of the inhuman horrors the *Colonie* depicts. A Spaniard in 'Yucatan', to feed his hungry dogs,

tooke a little sweet Babie which hee bereaved the mother of, and cutting off from him the armes, and the legges, chopped them in small gobbettes, giving to every dog his livery or part there of, by and by after these morsels thus dispatched, hee cast also the rest of the body or the carkase to all the kenell together. (Las Casas 1583: G1^v)

Another would burn Indians 'alive, and casting some unto the dogges, cutting off their feete, handes, head, and tongue' (Ibid., F3^v). To evoke anti-Spaniard sentiment,

Shakespeare exploits pagan rituals and cultural commonplaces associated with race, colour, and faith. Here, we have the hyper-white Goths, victorious Romans and the black Moor Aaron, the ‘Ham’ icon of sexual transgression and blood contamination. They all, at one time or another, indulge in violence that recalls Spanish atrocities the pamphlets describe.

5.4 Aaron: ‘What’s in a name’?

Aaron’s case warrants further discussion. He is at once a coal-black Moor with a Jewish name, a callous murderer, lover of the Queen of Goths and empress of Rome, who fathers her black child, and the tutor of her Gothic sons, Demetrius and Chiron. From Aaron they have learnt their ‘bloody mind’ (V. 1. 101), a reminder that he and their Gothic mother have planned the rape and mutilation of Lavinia. To many critics, Aaron is ‘vice’, ‘villain’, ‘Moor stereotype’, or ‘conventional Machiavelli’ (Champion 2012: 20n12). To Eric Griffin, Aaron is the villain working to undermine the Roman Empire, ‘the quintessential embodiment of the era’s anti-immigration paranoia’ and of ‘fears of miscegenation’ (E. Griffin 2014: 26; 28).

These adverse designations bring Aaron closer to the Moorish-mixed Goths the play and the anti-Spanish pamphlets portray. His presence with the Goths in Rome-(Spain) points to the cross-racial miscegenation which allegedly tainted the blood of early modern Spaniards. Anti-Spaniard publications regularly claimed that Spain’s Visigoths were Moor-Jew ‘contaminated’. Citing XXII Genesis (1-18) Moschovakis, noted earlier, relates ‘the scene of a child’s death by a paternal hand’ to the Jewish tradition ‘of Abraham and Isaac’, and points to the Jewish echoes of Aaron’s name. Moschovakis disregards the Moor’s connection to IX Genesis (20-27) which also would account for Aaron’s ‘blackness’ and servitude. To align Aaron with the Spaniard of the pamphlets, Peele and Shakespeare demonise him spiritually and racially by merging the Moor and Jew in one and coalescing his sexual transgression with the ‘curse of Ham’.

Most troubling to critics is Aaron’s function in the plot and the motiveless evils he takes pride in having committed. At the end of the play and of his life, instead of repenting his crimes, Aaron laments not having ‘done a thousand more’, reciting a wish-list of evil deeds (V. 1. 124, 130-137) that only a Barabas can feasibly perpetrate. One wish in particular reminds the audience of Lavinia and the common accusation of Spaniards’ sexual offences: Aaron is now unable to ‘[r]avish a maid, or plot the way to do it’ (V. 1. 129). His main concern is not his certain death but his inability to do more harms: ‘nothing

grieves me heartily indeed/ But that I cannot do ten thousand more' (V. 1. 143-144). Yet, he finds solace in having committed 'a thousand dreadful things/ As willingly as one would kill a fly' (V. 1. 141-142). This reference to the 'fly' prompts the audience to recall Titus and Marcus taking turns striking black flies because they look like Aaron, the 'black' devil — Beelzebub (III. 2. 53-79).¹³⁶ Aaron's 'fly'-like diligence in planning atrocities approximates a 'Spaniard' image out of the *Colonie*. Enumerating the devilish deeds of the Spaniards in the New World, Las Casas quotes a letter another 'Byshoppe' wrote a year earlier to the King of Spain explaining: 'your Maiestie shal understand moreover, that in those regions, there are not any Christians but divels, that there are no servantes of God'. The Indians, the letter adds,

have nothing in more hatred and horror, then the name of christians, the which in al these countreys they cal in their language, *yares*, that is to say, divels. For the acts which they committed here, are neither of christians, nor of men which have the use of reason: but of divels. (Las Casas 1583: G4^r, emphasis mine)

Such Spanish evils accord with the behaviour of Aaron and the Goths in new Rome and closely echo the prayer (IV. 2. 48) Aaron suggests to the Queen's sons when she was in labour with his black child.

In addition to Aaron's motiveless evil, critics are puzzled by his mysterious presence in 'new Rome' (or the 'New World'). Having no origin or history but the play itself Aaron, to Emily Bartels, becomes a Goth-created enigma; to Brian Boyd, an unnecessary addition to the plot; and to John Kunat, Aaron and his son underline the necessity of a new position for a multiracial subject. Reading *Titus* outside the Black Legend's frame, Bartels faces difficulties with Aaron's presence in Rome. Here, in 1990 she finds Aaron 'on the outside, literally and figuratively', reflecting and promoting 'the darkest vision of the stereotype' which is 'the one reliable measure of difference, the one stable and unambiguous sign of Otherness'. This is Othello's case; Aaron 'enforces that difference (and far less subtly than Hakluyt, Africanus, or Pory)' (Bartels 1990: 442). This parenthetical exception is fleshed out in her later work where Aaron's presence and intimacy with the Queen of Goths become crucial. The presence is now a side effect of the empire's 'inevitable cross-cultural connections' (Bartels 2008: 75; 79). This is possible if Rome were the Roman Empire, 'defined not by exclusion but by inclusion' (Ibid., 79). Such an 'inclusion', however, would not extend to the body of the Empress. Only in a Moorish colonised Spain, pamphlets claim, would that kind of inclusion be emphasised. Bartels makes the same point in relation to 'incorporation'.

¹³⁶ On the fly's Hebraic and 'Anti-Christ' significance see Edward Topsell ([1607] 1658: 932), Philip Armstrong (2019: 69-87), and David Jeffrey (1992: 81).

To Bartels, incorporation applies only to Tamora and her sons, but not to Aaron. His incorporation ‘may be as close as we can come in the play’s own vocabulary to describing Aaron’s place within Gothic society’ (Ibid., 81). Aaron to the Goths is what the Goths are to the Romans. The Moor is thus particularly Gothic: ‘From the start, Aaron figures as a Moor without a country, his history inextricably entwined with that of the Goths’. He has ‘no competing place or story of origins to explain [his] presence in a European culture that is ostensibly not his own’ (Bartels 2008: 81). Aaron is thus neither native nor fully stranger. No Moor meets these identifying characteristics but a European Spanish one. Bartels’ language becomes enigmatically suggestive: ‘The starting point of Aaron’s story is not an unstated precolonial, pre-Goth past but an explicit, open-ended “uniting” into the “one body” of Goths, with whom he is literally and figuratively embedded’ (Ibid., 81). Aaron is thus essentially a Goth-born black spirit or Moor. In evil, he is not unlike the Romans. The actions and agendas of both Saturninus and Aaron ‘merge’ in the treatment of the Andronici (Ibid., 85).

If pamphlets accuse the Visigoth-Spaniards of Moorish-Jewish contamination, Bartels finds Aaron tied to the Queen’s body:

In thus assigning the Moor a history which already, inextricably, and inexplicably merged with that of the Goths, the play insists on the openness not only of Gothic society but also of Aaron’s cultural place and past, and it establishes a crucial precedent for his present and presence in Rome. Despite his declared dependence on Rome’s ‘new-made empress’, Aaron’s insinuation into the Roman body politic does not stop with the Gothic queen’s body. (Bartels 2008: 82)

Rather than invoking the Black Legend, Bartels finds this ‘crucial precedent’ essential to his unusual place as a precolonial past. His free movement ranges from the inner circles of the imperial court to ‘Rome’s unsettled outskirts’ (Ibid., 83). Her insistence on Aaron’s ‘inextricable’ relation to the Goths in Rome implies that this embedded relation exceeds the ‘dark vision of the stereotype’. Aaron’s ‘present and presence’ seem a crucial genesis of sorts. His life begins and ends in the play. If we think of the Goths as Moor-mixed Spaniards and Rome as Spain, Aaron would then symbolise the Goths’ inter-racial breeding, just as his son with Tamora reflects his colour. Bartels herself argues that Aaron shapes the plot and influences all characters (Bartels 1990: 442; 2008: 80-88), a reading that acknowledges the Moor’s strong position in the play, which in turn alludes to the idea of the Spaniards’ contaminated blood and to their current predatory expansion in Europe and the New World. Bartels herself wonders why ‘does the discovery of the “black” baby [...] provide the climax for the Moor’s undoing?’ Her answer is ‘miscegenation’, which ‘tests and establishes the limit’ (Bartels 2008: 88). For her, this is a discrepancy betraying a

prejudice in a culture of ‘conquest’ where intermixing is the predictable result (Ibid., 68; 92).

Moreover, for Bartels, Aaron’s colour signifies racial coding; his ‘blackness encodes not villainy but race, understood as family line’; and his son ‘explicitly raises the connection between lineage and color, in a way that it does not in the case of either the Romans [...] or the Goths’ (Ibid., 91). This position seems somewhat extreme. As Aaron reflects on his villainy of having Titus chop his hand: ‘Aaron will have his soul black like his face’ (III. 1. 204; cf. *Alcazar* I. Prol. 16). Bartels’ claim that racial ‘coding’ denotes a family line makes Aaron more Gothic. That this coding does not apply to Romans and Goths is expected. In the play, children are only born to interracial mixed Goths and Moors. And as Moorish contaminated Spaniards, the Goths are increasing in Rome at the end of the play. With her careful dwelling on the negative consequences of the child’s colour for the Goths’ ambitions (Ibid., 91-93), Bartels could have related Aaron’s colour and villainy to the Black Legend. Within anti-Spaniard discourses, colour and evil acts are hereditary; that is why pamphlets demonise the Goth-Spaniards. After all, for Bartels, ‘Aaron figures as the consummate villain’ (Bartels 1990: 435); and his inextricable ties to the open society of Goths ‘establishes a crucial precedent for his present and presence in Rome’ (Bartels 2008: 82). And surely Rome has now experienced his evil and contaminating presence, which Elizabethans relate either to the ‘curse of Ham’ or to a host of barbaric races that conquered Spain, most prominent among those were the Moors.

Unlike Bartels, who recognises Aaron’s significance to the play, Boyd maintains that Shakespeare ‘added’ this ‘character that his plot did not need’, and Aaron plays no ‘necessary part in the plot of *Titus*’ (Boyd 2004: 58-59). However, like Bartels, Boyd too assigns Aaron a Shakespearean precedence. The Moor

is the first of a long line of Shakespearean contrast characters I call his ‘versos’, whom [Shakespeare] invents as a key to play after play, as a contrast to the main characters his story requires, and a focus for the ideas that had made him dramatize one story rather than another. (Boyd 2004: 52)

Aaron is a new birth, a first black villain in an early Shakespearean play. The verso-theory works well in *Titus*, and Boyd argues that the ‘verso’ becomes better integrated into the plots of later plays (Ibid., 63). Aaron’s contrast to other characters is interestingly limited to his colour and villainy, two malign elements of the Spaniards in Black Legend pamphlets to which Boyd does not refer. Boyd also notes Aaron’s Jewishness (Ibid., 59).

These three classifying attributes — his colour, his villainy, and his Jewishness — would surely render the black Moor a first progeny of ‘Ham’, as well as a villainous progenitor of the Shakespearean versos. Though Aaron is Shakespeare’s first black villain,

Boyd still searches for Aaron's black ancestors. If hostile publications assign the Spaniards a Goth-defiled ancestry of Moors and Jews, Boyd too finds Aaron drawing theatrical bloodlines from a Jew and a 'black' Moor:

If Aaron owes his existence to the energy of evil in Barabas, he owes his *color* and probably his name to Barabas's buoyantly villainous accomplice, the *Moor* Ithamore, for in naming his own *Moor*, Shakespeare's imagination seems to [have] been primed by the recollection that the Bible's Ithamar is 'son to Aaron the priest'. (Boyd 2004: 59, emphasis mine)

Boyd seems influenced by a desire to find some literary lineage for this first Shakespearean black Moor. As shown previously, however, Marlowe's Ithamore was called a 'Turk' but never a 'Moor'; nor was his colour ever an issue (Hutchings 2000: 429). If a theatrical ancestor is necessary, critics have associated Aaron with Peele's Muly Hamet (Jones 1965: 49; Barthelemy 1987: 97; Bartels 1990: 403-404).

Traditionally, critics see Aaron standing apart from the play's other characters; but this stance overlooks the alarming roles he plays in interaction with Tamora, Demetrius, Chiron, Quintus, Martius, and Titus (II. 3. 192-194; III. 1. 151-206). Owing to Boyd's verso theory, Aaron's racial colour becomes crucial for heightening contrasts. 'As Moor', Boyd writes, 'Aaron can stand even more strikingly aside from those around him' (Boyd 2004: 59), and as an 'out-and-out villain' (Ibid., 58), Aaron perfects himself in his own colour: 'Aaron, precisely because he is black, visibly stands on his own, unconnected by blood with anyone else in the play' (Ibid., 63). This statement is difficult to fully accept. Other than his 'colour', Aaron is no exception in the play; the Romans are as cruel and barbaric as the Goths. And the suggestion that Aaron is not connected 'by blood with anyone else' downplays the birth of his racially mixed son. Bartels finds the Moor 'literally and figuratively embedded' into 'the one body of the Goths', and the pamphlets regularly accuse Goth-Spaniards of miscegenation, which the play stresses in Aaron and Tamora's black son and in Muly's fathering of the 'fair' child with his Gothic wife. Far from representing Aaron as an absolute outsider, and separate from everyone else, Shakespeare makes him a character who is all the more threatening, because he is insidiously and disturbingly enmeshed in the Gothic ruling family, and is similar to both Goths and Romans in villainy — just as Gothic and Moorish bloodlines allegedly became integrated with early modern Spaniards.

'Contrast', Boyd's basis for Aaron's function, presupposes separation rather than connection. Boyd can therefore see no blood relation between Aaron and other characters, or feel a need to explain why the villain must be a black Moor closely tied to hyper-white Goths and 'doing' the Queen of Goths and new empress of Rome (IV. 2. 76). Boyd's

extraction of the ‘Moor’ from the tightly knitted context of the play to provide ‘contrast’ means overlooking Aaron’s symbolic and physical relation to the Goths, the inherited skin colour of his new-born child, his influence on Goths and Roman Andronici, and how at the end Rome swarms with supposedly Moorish-polluted Goths.

Kunat, like Boyd, underplays the importance of Aaron and his son, the Goths’ mixed race, and the political interest of Spain (and Rome) in England at the time. His treatment of the racially mixed births (Kunat 2019: 96-98) focuses more on Muly’s ‘fair’ son. To Kunat, colour, discrimination, and miscegenation relate not to the Moorish-Jewish Goths, but to England’s ‘others’, the Irish and Scots. In the early 1590s, when the play ‘was written’, ‘the English were occupied with the outbreak of the Nine Years’ War in Ireland and the possibility of a Scottish succession’; thus ‘[t]he “others” pressing most closely on the kingdom were fair-skinned and Christians like the English themselves’ (Ibid., 89). With the presence of such ‘others’, miscegenation becomes a ‘contingency of racial and ethnic identity through the various transpositions of Romans, Goths, and Africans’ (Ibid., 98). ‘Transpositions’ is interesting; Kunat himself transposes into Irish and Scots the Goths that Lucius leads to conquer Rome. Thus, the white Christian ‘others’ become, in the play, the army of Goths whose presence eventuates a multiracial population to which a multiracial system of government must respond to accommodate multiracial subjects. Once Rome is conquered and criminals are ‘excised’, Lucius cannot ‘eradicate difference’, and ‘the suggestion seems to be that these others [the Goth army] will have to be accommodated if Rome is to survive’ (102). The survival of Rome and Aaron’s black son suggests that the State’s ‘future may depend on multiracialism and the creation of new subject positions that do not fit with either the old patterns or a newly reconfigured whiteness’ (102-103).

Kunat does not dwell long on this ending, assuming, I think, that the Irish and Scots — under the guise of the Goth army — are tolerable white Christians. Little Aaron, still a child, poses no threat. Such a conclusion accords well with Rome as England. But the demand for adjustment to accommodate the Goths (the newly made friends of Rome) brings them home to ‘new Rome’. We should remember that the Spaniards were essential players in the Nine Years’ War, and the Irish and Scots claimed mythical descent not only from the Spanish race, but also from the Scythians and Egyptians (Floyd-Wilson 2003: 123-124; Covington Jr. 1924: 21-24). The black Moor and driving force of the play arrived with no Irish or Scots; Aaron arrived with Goths, the deadly barbarian enemies of Rome, to whom he seemed intimately united physically and morally. At the time, England and Protestant Europe, would not accept the Gothic-Moorish contaminated Spaniards. In the

end, Lucius and his new allies (the Goths) won because Shakespeare's Rome most likely represented New Rome or Spain, not England, and the Moor and Goths had already penetrated and ruined Rome just as those races had historically invaded Spain. The miscegenation of Kunat's 'fair-skinned others' is limited to Moors and Goths, as represented by the adultery of the Queen and Aaron, Muly's marriage to his off-stage Gothic or Roman wife, and the Gothic brothers' violent 'rape' of Lavinia in the planning of which 'Aaron plays the part of the *servus* to perfection' (Kunat 94). Given the pamphlets' emphasis on sexual transgressions, this focus on Moorish-Gothic sexual relations cannot be coincidental; it underlines Rome's similarity to Spain.

5.5 Shakespeare and Peele

Before concluding this chapter and because Peele is now recognised as Shakespeare's co-author of *Titus Andronicus*, a few remarks on their two plays are in order. Like other playwrights of the late Elizabethan period, Peele and Shakespeare, individually or in cooperation, show similar interest in the 'blackamoor' and the two topical issues of lawful succession and Spanish threat to Protestant England. At the time, the latter two had been the pressing concerns of English statemen, playwrights, and the public at large. All four plays of my thesis underscore the Spanish threat; and three of them open with succession concerns: *Alphonsus*, *Alcazar*, and *Titus*. The common practice of co-authorship among playwrights — well documented in the period by Brian Vickers (2002: 3-43) — tells us that not only had the dramatists known one another but had also been engaged in active personal conversation. The thematic similarities between *Alcazar* and *Titus* are most clear in their respective treatments of succession and group vows of loyalty to the legitimate prince and commitment to defend or avenge his/her right, reflecting thereby the famous 1584 Bond of Association.

The contentious dispute over the rightful successor, with which *Titus Andronicus* opens, underscores the Elizabethan pressing concern of succession. As an issue raised in *Titus* after the natural death of the emperor, the play would have brought the issue home to Elizabethan audiences to think of their own future monarch. Queen Elizabeth was already some sixty years old and James I had always been a controversial candidate since his birth.¹³⁷ Peele, to which the opening scene of *Titus* is attributed, seems still preoccupied

¹³⁷ Receiving the first few elite well-wishers after James' birth, Mary Queen of Scots turned to Sir William Stanley to say: '[t]his is the son whom, I hope, shall first unite the two kingdoms of

with the threat to the throne, the issue he dramatised in the Presenter's prologue to *Alcazar*. Nor is the opening scene the only attribution or reflection of similarities. To Peele, scholars have also added II. 1, II. 2, and IV. 1 (Boyd 2004: 51-52). Whether or not these parts of *Titus* are accurately attributed, they show thematic similarities to Peele's *Alcazar*. *Titus*' II. 1 reveals the devilish nature of the silent Moor of I. 1 and the evil intent of his and Tamora's heinous agenda for Rome.

Titus' Aaron is nothing less than *Alcazar*'s Muly Hamet who is 'black in his look and bloody in his deeds' (I. Prol. 16). In terms of succession, the similarities and relation between Aaron and the Queen of Goths — exposed early in the play — anticipate not only the Moor-Goth contaminating pollution, but also the collapse of the Roman order and the massacre at the end of play. By the opening Prologue of *Alcazar*, Muly Hamet had long achieved what Aaron and Tamora are now beginning to hatch in *Titus*. Miscegenation is logically not a Moorish issue in *Alcazar*; the Moors are in their natural habitat, and the wives and women of the contending 'fair' and 'black' Moors are loyal and committed to the cause of their respective Lords. Yet, unlike *Alcazar*, *Titus* in structure and themes fits nicely the tenets of 'tragedy' and the intruding 'barbarian' that John Gillies advances in his *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (1994: 1-39). (Gillies refers neither to *Alcazar* nor to Peele as co-author of *Titus*).

In brief, Gillies lucidly traces the concept of the 'barbarian' to the birth of tragedy in ancient Athens and Rome wherein incest/miscegenation defines 'the barbarian other':

the ancient other is constructed in terms of an idiom which recapitulates geographic 'exorbitance' as moral transgressiveness. Literally 'uneconomised' by the geographic structure of the *oikumene* (the Herodotean discourse of teratology), the other is a force for 'confusion', whether at the biological level [...] or at the most intimate level of social structure (the discourse of incest and miscegenation) (Gillies 1994: 18).

Oikumene (having the sense of home and world) is the geographic limits of the Greeks or Romans; the rest of the world is the home of the unknown or barbarian. Gillies makes the transition to the 'Moor' through the biblical discourse on Ham and the Elizabethan stage. In the Renaissance the 'biblical discourse' with the 'Aristotlean discourse of the barbarian' are used 'to define the Renaissance other (African and American) as outlandish, transgressive, and slavish "by nature"' (Ibid., 19). Through this long spatio-temporal course, Gillies finds Shakespeare not 'our contemporary', but the contemporary of his

Scotland and England' (Stewart 2004: 14). This prediction angered Queen Elizabeth. In a published book in 1566 Patrick Adamson (minister of Ceres in Fife) praised the birth of the 'most serene and noble prince of Scotland, England and Ireland'. Infuriated, Queen Elizabeth demanded that Adamson be punished (Ibid., 19). Both the prince and his mother were a living problem until James I/VI succeeded to the throne in 1603.

fellow Elizabethan writers and the ancient Greek and Roman tragedians (Euripides, Seneca, and Plutarch) (Ibid., 25). This finding provides ‘us with a conceptual purchase on the construction of otherness in Shakespeare that is completely independent of the anachronistic terminology of “race”, “colour”, and “prejudice”’ (Ibid., 25). Gillies’ depiction of the role of the barbarian-moor in Shakespeare’s tragedies is persuasively detailed. Like the outlandish barbarian of tragedy in the ancient world of Athens and Rome,

all Shakespearean moors combine a generic exoticism or exteriority with inherent transgressiveness. Their transgressiveness is less a matter of immorality (most Shakespearean moors depart, in any case, from villainous Elizabethan stage stereotype) than of structure. What this means is that all are imagined in terms of polluting sexual contact with European partners [...]— all are posed in terms of a scenario of miscegenation. (1994: 25)

Related ‘intimately to this scenario’, Gillies suggests, is the Elizabethans’ take on the ‘blackness or tawny of the moor’ as ‘the enduring mark of God’s displeasure at the sexual transgression of “Cham”’ (1994: 25). These main characteristics apply to all the moors of Shakespeare: Aaron, Othello, Morocco (including ‘the female moor impregnated by Gobbo’), the African King of Tunis, and Cleopatra.

According to this theory, intrusion and sexual pollution surely apply to *Titus*. The Moor and Goths are ‘intruders’, and the sexual relation of Aaron and Tamora underscores contamination. It would have been interesting, however, had Gillies referred to *Alcazar*, to see what he would have thought of the intruding Europeans into the space of Barbary and the Moors. Thematically, this intrusion reminds the English audience of Spain’s takeover of Portugal, presence in the Netherlands, and the unsuccessful attempt against England in 1588. To Protestant Europe, it was the intrusion of the ‘barbarian’, and so did anti-Spanish pamphlets depict the Spaniard. However, Europeans’ intrusion into Barbary would have been counted helpful and charitable, rather than ruinous to the barbarian-moor. The history of western colonialism and ‘Eurocentrism’ are beyond the scope of my thesis, and Gillies does refer to Edward W. Said’s 1978 *Orientalism* (1994: 4; and *passim*).

Unlike the issue of miscegenation, that of colour seems less pronounced in *Alcazar*. It is worth noting that only the Presenter (supposedly Portuguese, if not Peele himself) who refers to the Moor as ‘negro’ and to his ‘black look’. In *Titus*, almost every character emphasises Aaron’s colour, and the colour of his son incurs scandal and murders. Like Muly Hamet, Aaron is proud, brutal, and diabolical. Against biased detractors of his colour, Aaron defends the superiority of his blackness. To the nurse’s reference to his child’s colour, Aaron lashes: ‘Zounds, ye whore! Is black so base a hue?’ (IV. 2. 71). Later, he attacks the pale colours of the Goth brothers: ‘Coal-black is better than another

hue/ In that it scorns to bear another hue' (IV. 2. 99-100). Contrary to Gillies' designation of the 'moor' as 'slavish', Muly Hamet and Aaron are anything but 'slavish'.

The differences between the two plays notwithstanding, 'fair' Abdelmelec is still '[T]his brave Barbarian Lord', says the Presenter (I. Prol. 12). In *Alcazar*, 'Barbarian' or 'Barbarie' always designates the people and the land, perfectly unifying the geography and the people. Both European invaders and Moorish defenders use either term repeatedly throughout the play, but never 'barbaric'. In 'Barbary' the distance between the 'signifier' and its reference or 'signified' seems to collapse. Only when referring *specifically* to the 'Moors' do antagonist characters use 'barbarous'; this qualifier is used no less than six times in the play, three by the Presenter, and the rest by the Turkish Bashaw referring to the faction of Muly Hamet as 'rebels', Muly Hamet himself, and lastly Stukeley, all are intruders in one way or another.¹³⁸

In *Titus*, succession and pledges of fealty, as Richard Stacey has argued, are more relevant not only to the Bond of Association, but also to the English political, cultural, and legal milieu of the Elizabethan period (2017: 60-72). In *Alcazar*, succession and fealty are closer to those of Greene's *Alphonsus*, where succession is underscored after the usurpation of the throne. In all three plays, however, the language and sincere loyalty to the lawful prince approximate the language and persistent commitment to pursuing aggressors against the Queen's person and the crown which the 1584 Bond of Association makes clear. Such similarities, treatment of topical issues, and collaborations common among playwrights show the authors' active engagement in the socio-political concerns of their time.

5.6 Conclusion

John Kunat's multiracial solution recognises the increase of races in Rome but sidesteps the fact that it is only an increase of Goths and Moors. This increase casts doubt on Rome's restoration which, to James Calderwood and Michael Hattaway, demands Aaron's punishment. The recovery of Rome, Calderwood believes, requires 'the purging of the state, which means that as much evil as possible must be funneled into Aaron so that Rome can be cleansed by his death' (Calderwood 1971: 45-46). This punishment, however, leaves Aaron's 'Ham-cursed' son centre-stage among a multitude of Goths. Hattaway puts

¹³⁸ See *Alcazar*, Presenter, (I Prol. 6; 2. Prol. 31); Calsepius, the Turkish Bashaw (I. 1. 127); Muly Hamet (IV. 2. 79); and Stukeley (V. 1. 123).

Rome's restoration and survival within a context of 'invasion' that takes Aaron as its scapegoat: 'Aaron has become what the Goths needed in order to legitimize their invasion, a black devil, a stage villain' (Hattaway 1982: 205). Hattaway's statement is accurate. Rome is indeed Goth-invaded rather than recovered; its future seems rather compromised than secured by this new Gothic presence. Thematically, excising Aaron solves nothing; Rome now has more Goths and little Aaron. Kunat's multiracial solution looks, at best, bi-racial: Goths and Moors, even if England's 'others' were Irish and Scots. Those two themselves insist on their ethnic descent from the same races that constituted the Spanish ethnicity (Spenser [1596] 1949: 91-92; Covington Jr. 1924: 21-24; Floyd-Wilson 2003: 123-124;).

Most significant is Aaron's final exchange with Lucius; first, he is 'no baby' who would, 'with base prayers [...], repent the evils [he has] done' (V. 3. 184-185). He then insists, in the presence of all, on his evil: 'If one good deed in all my life I did/ I do repent it from my very soul' (V. 3. 188-189). His 'baby' son is on stage during this final speech, underscoring for the audience what to expect when the child is a grown mixed blackamoor. Little Aaron is now watching silently, echoing his father's long silent presence in the opening Act. And now the child's presence underscores miscegenation and regeneration; the child's promised survival perpetuates the Moorish father's line and adumbrates the villainous and perfidious nature of the Moors which the Goths-(Spaniards) inherited. Within Daunce's theory of the Spanish mixed nature, little Aaron cannot escape growing as capable of evil as his Gothic half-brothers or becoming 'a spring of all filthinesse' (Daunce 1590: 36). Rome itself (i.e. Spain) most likely fares no better.

Lucius too is his father's son. Though he accepts the crown, Lucius brings the army of Goths as conquerors. Titus' vital error is traced to the handing over of his Goth prisoners to Saturninus and their eventual 'integration [...] into the ruling class' (Tempera 2011: 110). By comparison, Lucius' final act is surely a new rape of Rome (just as Lavinia, representative of Rome, was raped by the Goths).¹³⁹ Critics are divided on the political prudence of Lucius (Kolin 2015a: 34-37). His past and present credentials fall short of those required of a political leader. Before leading the enemy army into Rome, all Lucius did was the brutal hewing and burning of Alarbus' body for pagan rituals. Nor was his sparing of Aaron's baby a sign of mercy or justice, but the result of a deal Aaron wrested from the future emperor. Lucius' crowning may momentarily stabilise a new Rome after Tamora and Aaron wrecked it. But the new revival that Lucius promises Rome under the

¹³⁹ 'On one level, [Lavinia's] mutilated body is a living metaphor of the ruin of the Roman body politic, damaged beyond repair' (Tempera 2011: 110).

gaze of an army of Goths (and the offspring of Aaron, who may inherit his father's evil) is hardly reassuring. At best, it recalls the 1527 Ransack of Rome by Charles V's Imperial Army of the Holy Roman Emperor. That invasion cemented Spain's influence on Italy's politics. 'One thing seemed clear to all Italian observers', Judith Hook writes: 'the sack of Rome and the subsequent disasters had left the emperor supreme in Italy' (Hook 2004: 288). To be sure, since the sack of 1527, Spanish Rome was never fully independent. Dandeleit wrote, 'with tens of thousands of Spanish soldiers serving in the presidios of Naples and Milan in the years to come, their potential threat to Rome was always real: in 1557 Spanish troops under the duke of Alba massed on the Neapolitan borders during the brief war between Philip II and Paul IV; and in the late 1580s and the 1630s Spanish military action against Rome was once more a possibility' (2001: 4). In *Titus*, despite the sense of restored order, Rome is transformed into a Goth state. The immediate political situation of England at the time witnessed the 1588 Spanish invasion, the failure of the 1589 campaign, and the threatening Roman-Spanish activities that Queen Elizabeth publicised in her 1591 Declaration. Within this context, the play's audience can hardly miss the pressing threat of a Spanish-Roman re-invasion similar to that of Lucius' army of Goths.

In retrospect, Rome's final transformation seems anticipated by the stormy events of *Titus*' opening Act, long before we learn of the Moor-Goth community and before the army of Goths conquers Rome. This transformation is integrated thematically and structurally into the plot. The mixed community of the play offers Aaron a 'countryman', Muly, and Aaron seeks to exchange his mixed son for Muly's equally racially mixed child but is fortunately as 'fair' as Tamora's Gothic sons. Ironically, these coincidences and Aaron's careful planning come to nothing, but he leaves Rome a Moor-Goth mixed legacy who is visibly his son.¹⁴⁰ This failure is essential; the continued presence of Aaron's black son, rather than the fair substitute, serves the issues of racial ethnicity and miscegenation which are the dangers associated with Catholicism and the cruelty of the Spaniards.

Titus significantly ends with as much fear-inspiring carnage as that with which it begins; between the two acts a bloody trajectory is mapped along which racially mixed Goths ascend from prisoners to conquerors. The opening act is marked by as cruel killings as the last. Aaron's silence turns into a diabolical eloquence. The play's symmetrical coincidences and characteristic reversals support this reading. Saturninus first promised Tamora and her sons honour and respect, but they soon concocted plots, rape, and revenge.

¹⁴⁰ Kunat speculates that Chiron and Demetrius may have carried out Aaron's plan of planting Muly's fair baby as the future imperial heir of Rome (105).

Little Aaron first appears in the Nurse's arms as a 'devil'; now he is promised life and good care and, since his discovery with Aaron, is carried around in the arms of a Goth soldier. Titus first brings in the Goths and their Moorish-Jewish stigma; they soon become part of the royal court. Likewise, Lucius leads into Rome an army of Goths with little Aaron, a material verification of the Spaniards' sexual transgression which hostile Elizabethan pamphlets alleged. While still celebrating Rome's victory in Act I, Titus soon loses the favour of the new Emperor whose election Titus himself has just secured. Similarly, Lavinia loses (perhaps abdicates) the seat of Rome's 'empress' to Tamora, the Queen of Goths. Lavinia, critics agree, is the image of Rome (Aebischer 2002: 137; Tempera 2011: 110; Willbern 2015: 164). As such, Rome's fate seems sealed in this opening scene. The ensuing violence after Bassianus' abduction-rape of Lavinia presages her violent 'rape' and mutilation by the Gothic brothers. Tamora promises to massacre the Andronici, the defenders of Rome. Without them, Rome becomes defenceless. At the end, Lucius and Marcus are 'The poor remainder of Andronici' (V. 3. 130). Tamora also fulfils her promise to Titus to find out Lavinia's oppressors. Lavinia (and by extension Rome) is eventually raped and brutalised; in order to save her (Rome), banished Lucius has to lead Rome's enemies into the city. Treachery and devilish intentions are supposedly natural to the Moor and Moorish-infected Spaniards. The shipwreck of Saturninus' commonweal materialises in Lavinia's rape and mutilation and in the conquest of Rome by the army of Goths; Aaron's intimacy with Tamora results in his racially mixed baby and ambitious plan of advancing a mixed Moor to the Roman throne.

Internally and externally, *Titus* taps into the Black Legend discourses at the level of plot and characters. The political environment of Europe and the national sense of existential threat speak to the immediate context of the late 1580s and early 1590s. At this time, the Black Legend discourses peaked, championed by the works of well-known English figures close to Court, such as Anthony Marten's *Exhortation* (1588), G. D.'s *Briefe* (1588), and Queen Elizabeth's 1591 *Declaration*, among others. Blackamoor Aaron and his mixed son bring to life the allegations of the pamphlets and the play; they embody the charges of the Spaniards' Moorish-Jewish ancestry as well as their barbarity, miscegenation, and association with both Catholicism and the Devil (the Pope).

General Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that Elizabethan playwrights used Eastern characters to explore English domestic socio-cultural, political and religious issues. The Moors of Peele's *Alcazar* articulate the Elizabethan issue of succession. Greene too emphasises this issue in the first part of *Alphonsus*. In the second part, however, Greene uses Amurack the Turk and the Asian and African Moors to attack faith in astrological prognostications and prophecies, especially the prophecy of the Last World Emperor. In Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* the Turks, Barabas, and Ithamore underscore English anxieties over the presence of strangers and their economic and political impact on England. These themes, in turn, are woven into the larger, longstanding threat of Spain which Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* presents within the denigrating claim — common at the time in anti-Spanish pamphlets — that the Spaniards are descendants of Moorish and Jewish ancestries.

In these plays, the black Moor owes much to the medieval tradition in which the Moor is the evil barbarian, damned morally and spiritually. His false faith (Islam) enables Protestants to equate Islam and Catholicism as heretic religions and to attack England's political and religious enemies — Catholic Rome and imperial Spain. This hostility is surely one way of answering Anthony Barthelemy's question as to why Peele, in *Alcazar*, revived the waning medieval image of the Moor:

By 1589, even black-faced devils had virtually disappeared from the stage; the mystery plays, performed irregularly from the start of the Elizabeth's reign, were by that time long since dead in most places. Why then does Muly Mahamet, the first Moor of any dramatic significance on the popular stage, seem to follow in the footsteps of his ancient ancestors? (Barthelemy 1987: 76)

Barthelemy's justification is argued on artistic grounds which merge the black character with the Vice tradition without lapsing into the tradition's pure allegorising (Ibid., 76-79); that is, the 'villain' evolved 'into a more visibly human character' and, thus, facilitated the 'evolving sense of theatrical naturalism' (Barthelemy 1987: 75). Barthelemy limits this devilish image to the play's African setting and Moorish succession, without investigating the echoes that the Moors' succession had for contemporary English and Spanish relations and for the Elizabethans' pressing concern over their own succession. In these plays, I have argued, the Moor was used/abused to comment on timely Elizabethan issues, be those the precarious relations England maintained with the leading spiritual and material powers in Europe, or England's own internal politics.

Those particular groups of Moors and Turks appeared more than a decade after the launching of public theatres in England in 1576; and the four plays featuring those

characters appeared over a short period (1587-1592), a most troubled time in England's religio-political history. Obviously, Peele, Greene, Marlowe and Shakespeare used those stereotypically evil characters not because of the dramatists' interest in the diversity of their respective easterners, but because those characters helped express local English issues and, at times, bypass imposed bans on public discussions of important Elizabethan concerns (succession was one important concern).

Were it not for time constriction, a transitional Elizabethan play to the Jacobean period would have been Thomas Dekker's *Lust Dominion* (1600). It highlights the same Moorish themes, evils, and Spanish religious and moral corruption. Set in the Spanish royal court, it openly brings corruption to the highest Spanish ruling family. The prince of Fes Eleazar is not only the black image of Muly Hamet of *Alcazar*, but is biblically the Jewish brother of Ithamar (Ithamore) and son of Aaron, the high Jewish priest. In naming and blackening his princely protagonist, Dekker seems to be in communication with Marlowe, Peele, and Shakespeare.

With the accession of James I and the signing of the peace 'Treaty of London' with Spain in August 1604, the political scene changed. However, the Moor or Turk not only remained the villain of the stage but underwent a noticeable shift in gender and function. Below I draw some tentative observations about the Moor/Turk on the immediate Jacobean stage. A distinct literary criterion between which plays are Elizabethan or Jacobean remains untenable, and the theatrical identity of the Moor/Turk remains debatable. Literary critics, like historians, are still in disagreement on whether the stage, after 1603, is Elizabethan or Jacobean. Both acknowledge the continuity between the two reigns. Pauline Croft argues that the Jacobean period is a prolongation of the Elizabethan age, even

The treaty of London is better seen as the last chapter of Elizabethan foreign policy rather than the first Jacobean peace initiative, and that chapter was largely written by the leading Elizabethan politician in James's privy council, Robert Cecil later earl of Salisbury, who after March 1603 continued as secretary of state. (Croft 2006: 140)

To be sure, not only are the politicians a legacy of the Elizabethan reign, but so too are the leading literary figures: Shakespeare, Jonson, Heywood, Webster, Rowley, Marston, Munday, among many others. Fredson Bowers underscores this continuity in the title of his *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642* (1940). T. B. Tomlinson uses 'the term "Jacobean" to refer very roughly to a chronological division (viz., to plays written after 1602)'. However, he also uses the term 'to distinguish some plays which, though written in the Jacobean period (1603-1625), are predominantly Elizabethan in feeling and tone' (1964: 215). Pascale Aebischer calls for limiting this long Elizabethan tradition to the plays

written and/or staged before the reign of James I. 'Putting the spotlight on the Jacobean period', she writes, 'brings out the distinctiveness of its theatrical world' (2010: 2).

Aebischer, nevertheless, acknowledges the difficulty of finding where and when one period ends or the other begins: 'the beginning of the "Jacobean" period can be difficult to pinpoint'. While some critics have chosen the year 1597 or 1599-1600, she chooses 1603 because it has seen 'not only the accession of James I and a corresponding change in the political and cultural environment, but, crucially, the conferring of royal patronage upon all the London playing companies' (Aebischer 2010: 2). These factors, as far as the Moor/Turk or stranger is concerned, are historical facts rather than literary developments or conceptual socio-racial changes. It is true that the tense Elizabethan political concerns of hostile foreign powers were replaced by a short-lived tranquil political scene; and such tranquillity and royal patronage of London playing companies led to a thriving theatre.¹⁴¹ Critics have noted distinct new geographic, local socio-cultural, and economic themes of the Jacobean stage.¹⁴² Whatever these changes may have been, the Moor/Turk remains a regular exotic foreigner in public plays, courtly Masques, and Lord Mayors' Pageants, serving still domestic socio-cultural and religio-political themes. Concluding his chapter on Pageants, Barthelemy writes, '[a]lthough this chapter discusses material which covers nearly a hundred years [1585-1692], the common themes remain constant. The pageant writers always portray blacks as inferior, either cultural or spiritual. Their aspirations, or alleged lack thereof, remove them from the realm of normally ambitious men' (Barthelemy 1987: 70-71). This is a re-writing of his conclusion to his chapter on Masques; there, 'blacks are consistently assigned the role of the Other.[...] In the world of the masque, to be black is to be denied everything that the learned tradition has canonized' (Ibid., 41). For Colin Chambers, three signs identify the 'Other' before the Restoration. First and foremost is religion; then clothing, rank and manners; and finally,

¹⁴¹ Historians believe that the political stability was short lived; troubles began with the European Thirty Years' War which broke in 1618 (Scott 1996: 28, 38; McCoy 1996: 133).

¹⁴² For Eileen Allman, 'the genre [tragedy] altered in the political climate of James's absolutism'; this is 'strongly suggested by Jacobean plays' habitual and steady portrayal of the rulers as self-authorizing tyrants. [...] Jacobean revenge tragedy, however, demonstrates a particular and consistent strategy for handling the political issue of absolute monarchy. It focuses on the political through the familial and sexual, translating a matter of state into a competition between men' (1999: 37). For Rudolph Stoeckel and Nabil Matar, James I's 'accession in 1603 completely changed Britain's Mediterranean strategy and scuttled the pro-Moroccan policy'. James took an antagonistic stance against the Turks and would not have tolerated watching *Othello* if it were not 'displaying a Moor fighting against the Turks'. And Shakespeare's last two moors ('tawny' Cleopatra and 'darksome' Caliban) 'are not Moors in the sense that Othello and Aaron are', but are still enervating 'African outsiders who are intent on destroying the characteristically European institutions of marriage and political society' (2004: 239).

physical attributes of which colour is not necessarily ‘a sign of the Other or of racism’. Chambers, however, seems to cede this exception in the case of the ‘stock black character’, because

there was an accumulation of negative notions ascribed to the colour black that increasingly yoked an array of anxieties to it. Amid the plethora of stage images of the infidel Turk and the merciless Moor that link lust and irreligion to darker skins can be found deep unease concerning a range of meanings: honour, virtue, morality, sex and its progeny, religion, status, class, conquest, national identity, gender, and governance and its legitimacy. (Chambers 2011: 14)

The Moor, thus, seems to signify negatively various socio-cultural and religio-political issues by his/her material and moral attributes. Chambers enthrones Muly Mahamet of *Alcazar* at the head of this tradition which goes back to the ‘black Satan’ and extends ‘into later centuries’ (Chambers 2011: 14). In recent Cultural Studies, Chambers’ ‘array of anxieties’ are those that underscore gender interests (Munns and Richards ‘Introduction’ (2014: 1-6).

The Moor continued to be part of the Jacobean stage, underscoring not only political anxieties but also similar socio-ideological gender concerns. These are best illustrated by the treatment of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. Othello, unlike Aaron, is an important Christian of Venice. While able to defend Venice against the heathen Turks, this black hero remains a threat to white ethnic purity just as Aaron in *Titus* would leave his black stamp on his and Tamora’s child. Both black Moors covertly flout established socio-cultural norms. With Shakespeare, it seems, there is a steady gradation from Tamora’s stark adultery to Desdemona’s elopement for marriage, to finally Claribel’s father-blessed and celebrated marriage in *The Tempest* (1610-11). The African King of Tunis no longer seems the ominous and devilish Moor, and the formality of the alliance seems to mark a strong shift from the hostile reactions of Tamora’s Gothic sons and Desdemona’s father. Yet, to the other characters of *The Tempest*, the interracial miscegenation is not that different. We soon learn that Claribel’s marriage is forced by her father Alonso (Duke of Naples) and that everyone, including Claribel, is disturbed by the alliance. Claribel, unlike Desdemona and Tamora, has accepted the ‘loathsome’ alliance only in obedience to her father’s will. Her uncle Sebastian, in blaming Alonso, brings up the traditional sentiment against the African King:

Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
But rather loose her to an African. (II. 1. 124-126)

The words ‘loss’ and ‘loose’ underscore the bestial nature of this forced marriage. ‘Loose’ means to ‘mate her with’, usually confined to the sexual acts of non-humans; and in

‘loose’/‘mate’, Richard Jacobs finds a ‘brutal image [...] of the mechanics of animal breeding’ (Jacobs 2020: 31).¹⁴³

In the Elizabethan plays, the daughters of Barabas and Titus play the obedient females. For Barabas, religion becomes the factor of whom Abigail marries; she is forbidden to marry a Christian. Titus kills one son when Lavinia elopes with Bassianus, disobeying the wishes of the patriarchs: Saturninus and Titus. Both daughters are sacrificed by their patriarchal father-figures. Tamora, like Eugena of *Lust Dominion*, rebels against and breaks all social, religious, and institutional norms by having her honour blackened by her sexual intimacy with Aaron. Not only is she killed for her sexual and unfeminine behaviour, but is also denied burial — her contaminated body is thrown outside the walls of civilisation. In *Alcazar*, Stukeley is the embodiment of masculinity; and in the plays of the period the Queen herself represents the female monarch who ‘affected and influenced the gender identity and performance of the men engaged in empire building’ (Jowitt 2003: 61). At that time, the ‘ideals of masculine and feminine were contested, debated and often contradictory’ (Ibid., 61). Jowitt’s rich treatment of Stukeley and Muly Mahamet is valuable for gender’s ideals in the Renaissance (2003: 68-103).

Jacobean plays seem to ground European and Moorish contacts on sexuality and corruption. Such motifs seem to owe much to socio-cultural conceptions of the Moor/Turk inherited from earlier times. To both Jacobeans and Elizabethans, the Moor (male or female) accentuates the continuity not only of the Moor’s lustful and cruel disposition, but also of his/her devilish nature. In Rowley’s *All’s Lost by Lust* (1618-20, published in 1633) Jacinta, daughter of Jullianus, unlike Claribel, chooses to die than to accept the interracial marriage proposal of the Moorish King, Mulymumen (Rowley 1633: B4^r). In John Fletcher, Nathan Field, and Philip Massinger’s *The Knight of Malta* (1617) Gomera, a Spanish Knight, and his virtuous wife Oriana do not undergo the same brutal fate, despite the serious intrigues of the black Moor Zanthia and her lover the French Knight Mountferrat. While the female Moor is true to preconceived notions, the lustful male now is the European white French Knight. He is no different from Launcelot the clown of *The Merchant of Venice* (1598). Here, Portia — having evaluated her European suitors — brings up the medieval image of the Moor as soon as the Prince of Morocco announces his arrival. ‘If he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil’, she says, ‘I had rather he should shrive me than wive me’ (I. 3. 125-126). The Prince is not the only Moor

¹⁴³ In *Hamlet* (II. 2), Polonius too ‘will loose his daughter to’ Hamlet as a bait (Jacobs 2020: 31).

in the play; Launcelot has already impregnated a black woman — a ‘negro’s belly’, to be exact (III. 5. 35).

In *The Knight of Malta*, the Knight Mountferrat has his lover Zanthia — the lustful black Moorish maid of the virtuous and noble Oriana. Mountferrat, however, uses the Moor’s services to satisfy his own interests with other married white women. Thus, the Knight will not fulfil his promise of marrying Zanthia unless she enables him to rape her mistress Oriana. Zanthia does her best to meet his demand, but their devious plans fail. At one point the corrupt Knight calls his black lover the ‘devil’ who ‘hast made [him]/ More devil than [her]self’ (II. 3. 17-18), and so does the Danish Knight Norandine at the end. Before the curtain’s fall, Mountferrat is sentenced to marry Zanthia and the couple to be banished. This alliance falls back on the mating of animals. The comment of Norandine is: ‘Away, French stallion! now you have a Barbary mare of your own;/ Go leap her, and engender your devilings’ (V. 2. 417-418). This animal image brings to mind the ultimate result of the marriage of Othello and Desdemona. Iago cautions her father: ‘You’ll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse;/ you’ll have your nephews neigh to you;/ you’ll have coursers for cousins and jennets for germans’ (I. 1. 109-112). Interestingly, in both cases of marriage animal progenies dominate. Nor are these intrigues confined to the Jacobean period. The intrigues of Zanthia and the French Knight are reminiscent of Aaron and Tamora’s plan of Lavinia’s rape.

In Webster’s *The White Devil* (1612), blackness is symptomatic of carnality; what Zanche represents is transposed to her white mistress: ‘Monticelso condemns Vittoria’s “black lust”, thus underscoring the commonly perceived link between blackness and carnality’ (Denmead 2013: 154). In the play Zanche, the black Moor and witch, aggressively blackmails Flamineo into a sexual relationship. In this relation, Flamineo admits, he is comparable to one who ‘holds a wolf by the ears’; if it were not ‘for fear of turning on me, and pulling out my throat, I would let her go to the devil’ (V. 1. 153-156). Vittoria, Zanche’s white mistress, is more lustful and devilish than her black maidservant. What is rather strange is the ease with which the Duke of Florence Francisco de Medici disguises himself as the Christian black Moor Mulinassar. It seems that ‘Turning Turk’ is counter-balanced by the Moor’s ‘Turning Christian’. In addition to Othello and Mulinassar, in *The Knight of Malta* Turkish Lucinda has been converted by her husband Angelo with whom she eloped.

Unlike the serious foreign threats that the Moor reflects in my chosen plays, the Moor in the Jacobean period provides a window into more domestic issues, especially inter-racial sexuality and racism. The Jacobean Moor seems to show that the likely

Catholic European socio-cultural environment is as corrupt as is the Moor her/himself. The Moorish character is no longer of the political stature of Abdelmelec, Muly Hamet, Aaron or even the Prince of Morocco. Now the Moor is often a female with a promiscuous reputation and is relegated to the lower servant class, serving white characters in some corrupt European setting. Celia Daileader demonstrates that the licentious inter-racial sexual relations never involve an English partner, male or female (Daileader 2005: 17). Rather than a Spanish or Roman 'Popish' threat to Protestantism, the Moor is now a morally corrupting factor at the level of personal and familial relations. In *The White Devil*, Francisco impersonates the Moor Mulinassar to carry out his personal revenge. The black Moor maidservant Zanche 'makes visible the blackness that is only figuratively present in Brachiano, Vittoria, and Flamineo' (Barthelemy 1987: 127). She has to die as a matter of priority; leading the murderers, Lodovico shouts at the end of the play: 'Kill the Moor first' (V. 6. 215). Like her fellow Easterners (the Prince of Morocco and Shylock), who appeared in Elizabethan plays, Zanche notes that she too has 'blood/ As red' as Vittoria's or Flamineo's. All she can do at this moment is to invite her murderer Carlo to taste her blood: 'wilt drink some?/ 'Tis good for the falling-sickness' (V. 6. 224-225). Devils, black and white, seem to be everywhere. The English will eventually find a newer black devil across the Atlantic Ocean as the New World becomes more economically attractive.

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