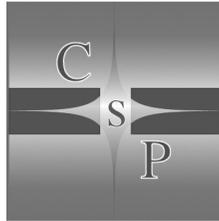


Writing the Other:
Humanism *versus* Barbarism in Tudor England

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Edited by

Zsolt Almási and Mike Pincombe



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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INTRODUCTION

WRITING THE OTHER: HUMANISM *VERSUS* BARBARISM IN TUDOR ENGLAND

ZSOLT ALMÁSI

The story about the birth of this volume should include long life-stories and the description of research projects. As this cannot be accomplished here, I would like to point out one moment in history that can be referred to as the birth of this volume. This book is the fruit of scholarly friendships and an intellectually stimulating conference—the 5th International Conference of the Tudor Symposium—held at Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Piliscsaba, Hungary.

The symbolism of the venue added further significance to the discussions. On the one hand, Hungary was thought of in the sixteenth century both in England and on the Continent as a frontier between Christians and the others, between the human, humane and the barbarian. On the other hand, the papers were read in two buildings facing each other, between which there was a small artificial brook. The fountain of this brook was placed at a monument representing Aristotle, the great pagan philosopher, and the other end of the brook at the feet of another monument, that of St Thomas of Aquinas, the great scholastic philosopher. The brook is to represent the influence of Aristotle on St Thomas, the East on the West, the pagan thought on the Christian, the organic relation between the Christian and the Other. At the geometrical middle of the brook, in front of the doors leading in the two buildings providing the venue for the discussions, there was the statue of St Stephen, founder of Christian Hungary, as if channelling influence, cooperation, co-existence. Thus, the architectural significance of the venue represented the intellectual endeavour of the scholars of the Tudor era exploring the various aspects of the sixteenth-century anxiety of writing the Other.

In this introduction, I will first give a brief account of the philosophical and cultural significance of its main terms: “writing,” “the Other,” “humanism” and “barbarism,” concluding with a review of the various approaches to this thematic taken by our contributors. Then I shall offer a meditation on a particular text, John Finet’s translation of René de Lucinge’s *The Beginning, Continuance, and Decay of Estates* (1606), a (just) post-Tudor work which acts as a paradigmatic exploration of the topics which exercised the minds of sixteenth-century writers.

I

The word “writing” signals the two essential features of the general approach to the anxiety of writing the Other. Although the cultural Other has been a topic for literary theory, cultural studies and cultural anthropology since the 1980s, the forthcoming chapters will deal with the topic in a unique way. First and foremost, the term “writing” implies that cultural phenomena as documented by printing are going to be in the centre of attention. To be more precise, the authors of these chapters focus on printed material, more precisely on a text, or certain texts, and have been interested in the implications of these texts with respect to the sixteenth-century dynamics of the human, humane, humanist and barbarian opposition.

The second implication of “writing” is that the cultural Other was as much invented as described during the Tudor era. This invention which occasionally went into demonisation, at other times rehumanisation, is not to be taken as distorting something that assumed extra-mental and objective reality but rather as a tool for creating a self-identity with an eye on the rhetorical, religious, poetic, national expectations of the readers in the new context of print culture.

This creation of an—occasionally idealised—self went hand in hand with the concerns of a humanism which aimed at a better man through education. Since the 1980s there has been a consensus among scholars that humanism during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was not necessarily anthropocentric. As Kristeller puts it: “Humanism has its proper domain or home territory in the humanities, [...]”¹ The concern for the humanities, more precisely for classical studies, was not an end in itself. As Hankins argues

¹ Paul Oscar Kristeller, “Humanism,” in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, eds. Charles Bernard Schmitt–Quentin Skinner. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 114.

The scope of humane studies was to improve the quality of human beings *qua* human. The humanists claimed that study of good letters made people better, more virtuous, wiser, and more eloquent. It made them worthy to exercise power and made them better citizens and subjects when not exercising power. Humane studies embellished life, brought pleasure, and nourished piety.²

So although humanists were first and foremost philologists, their aim was not only to enlarge the knowledge about classical antiquity among the scholarly community, but the added value of this activity consisted in enabling the disciple to live a more valuable, richer life.

What, however, one means by a more valuable and richer life needs further elucidation. As Christopher Celenza puts it,

one principal meaning of the term “*humanitas*” in antiquity was bound up primarily with learning, a sphere admittedly proper to human beings but not one, equally clearly, in which all human beings partook. To be “humane” (*humanus*) meant not only to be a human being but also to have exercised one’s capacity as a human being to the fullest through learning.³

As it is read above, Renaissance humanists following their chosen predecessors attempted to improve “the quality of human beings *qua* human,” i.e. by richer life we are not supposed to understand one more bar of chocolate, a new TV set or a posh car, but rather some sort of a life that fully realizes the—preferably good—potentialities embedded in human nature. The humanist educational programme thus involved and assumed some concept or image of man, of human nature. This concept or image of man—even if unstated—had a prescriptive function as far as it determined the process of education, i.e. the progress of arriving at the fully human from the present state of man.

At the humanists’ disposal there was a rather massive philosophical tradition to rely on, which can only be briefly summarised here. One of the favourite books of ancient moral philosophy was Aristotle’s *Ethica*

² James Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 32.

³ Christopher S. Celenza, “Humanism and the Classical Tradition,” *e-Colloquia* Vol. 4. No. 1 (2006). <http://ecolloquia.btk.ppke.hu/issues/200601/>. Accessed May 1, 2008.

Nicomachea.⁴ In this work,⁵ one may find two concepts of mankind that are important now: the first nine books of the work take man as a citizen of a city state, while book ten treats man as an ontological category. In the first case, moral development means that the individual human being, i.e. a young man with a well-to-do family background⁶ should become a “man—as—he—could—be—if—he—realized—his—essential—nature”⁷ within the horizon of the expectations of Athens through co-operating with his fellow citizens. It is this context through which this individual can be praised or blamed for his acts. The other approach to man aims at the excellence of the distinguishing feature of a human being as a human being. According to this approach a man is different from the rest of beings by his mind; thus excelling in this will bring about his full realization of his humanity, and so he must lead a contemplative life. These separate approaches to man’s excellence, or special virtue, had a fascinating afterlife in the next centuries.

With a great leap in history, following the brook that started out from Aristotle, we should stop at Saint Thomas of Aquinas, who radicalised the ontological aspect of human beings. In his *De ente et essentia*,⁸ he placed man in a logico-ontological scheme of beings through the application of the hierarchy of the binary oppositions of matter and form, potentiality and actuality. In this hierarchical structuring of beings, Thomas positioned man according to man’s essence (*substantiae compositae ex materia et forma*⁹). This positioning defined man by his distance from beings that are dominantly matter and thus potentiality, and by his distance from the being that is mere form, whose form is pure existence (*cuius essentia est ipsummet suum esse*), and who is thus pure actuality (*actus purus*). Within this structure, man assumes a position that is static and fixed, and has hardly any ethical qualities.

⁴ For this see Jill Kraye, “Moral Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, eds. Charles Bernard Schmitt–Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 325.

⁵ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, trans. W.D. Ross *The Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

⁶ Witness D. S. Hutchinson, “Ethics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 198-199.

⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd edition (London: Duckworth, 2000), 52.

⁸ S. Thomae Aquiantis, “De ente et essentia,” S. Thomae Aquiantis, *Opera Omnia*. vol. 3. ed. Robert Busa (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstadt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag Günther Holzboog KG, 1980), 583–7.

⁹ S. Thomae Aquiantis, “De ente et essentia,” 586.

As I argue elsewhere,¹⁰ this logico-ontological hierarchy of beings was used by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in his *Oratio*¹¹ with a major modification. He took over the entire scheme with the exception that he cut man from the rigid scheme, and claimed that man could occupy any place depending on what he willed. This—philosophically speaking—naive voluntaristic approach to man’s place redirected the claim of the structure and turned it into a moralising prescriptive regime. In this scheme, man had the freedom to act according to a plant and thus occupy the lowest region of Aquinas’s structure or withdraw into God, and become one with God, thus be located on the highest place. This is, however, not presented by Pico in a *laissez faire* mode, but throughout the meditation a hierarchical placement is evident. It is not all the same whether one lives like a bush or one is united with God, as the latter is presented as the desired excellence.

The philosophical tradition above treated man in an ontological, essentialist manner. They defined man *qua* human regardless of what kind of religious, political, financial, social, cultural context he was caught up in, what kind of qualities this man was given. This approach to the human being aiming for what virtues, excellences a particular man should work for did not really appeal to humanists who were more pragmatically oriented. They were not so much interested in man *qua* human in general but rather in man *qua* human in a given context.

One of the reasons for the pragmatic orientation of the humanists was the very situation they themselves happened to be in, which fostered down to earth meditations rather than abstract ones focusing on man as man. Humanists in the Renaissance were not only professional philologists. What Hankins writes about Italian humanists is, by and large, true about English humanists as well.

Chiefly they served as teachers of classics in schools and universities, political secretaries and chancellors, court poets, diplomats and bureaucrats—language specialists in other words. [...] in addition to professional humanists there were many amateurs, generally members of social and political elites, who enjoyed a humanistic education and formed

¹⁰ Zsolt Almási, “Fable or Philosophical Claim?: Thomas of Aquinas in Pico’s *Oratio*” in *Verbum Analecta Neolatina* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, VI/2004/1): 189-199.

¹¹ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio* <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/latinlibrary/mirandola.oratio.html>. Accessed May 1, 2008.

an audience for the writings and oratory of contemporary humanists as well as for Graeco-Roman literature.¹²

Relating professionals and amateurs is important on two accounts: first that this view is generally agreed on by scholars of the period¹³ and also to the extent that humanism is not to be seen as a movement but rather as a cultural phenomenon, an urban and courtly cultural atmosphere in which writers and audience formed a leisurely and professional circle mutually influencing, enriching and entertaining each other. This is so much true that the romanticising, idealising approach to humanism is about to disappear. I agree with Mike Pincombe, when he claims that, beyond enlisting and celebrating the achievements and merits of humanists, a historically speaking serious approach to humanism has to come to terms with the late Tudor perspective as well. In this perspective humanists

[...] were all trifles in comparison with philosophers and other genuinely learned men. They are associated not with the library or the lecture-hall, but with the common room, or, more likely, with the parlour, [...].¹⁴

In this mutually beneficial and determined cultural climate, the horizon of expectations naturally moved to pragmatic, practical issues.

Tudor humanists and thinkers, thus reoriented the approach delineated above to the extent that they aimed at defining man in a specific social, sociological, religious and cultural context. This reorientation surfaced in innumerable ways during the Tudor period. As it would be impossible to account for all these paths in this volume there is only one that is singled out. This one lies in the representation of man as opposed to what only seemed to be “human,” i.e. the Other.

During the period of Tudor rule there were many Others who were presented as different from the rest, i.e. from the idealised remainder of humanity. One of the innumerable Others against whom the ideal could be

¹² James Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 31–32.

¹³ See also Clare Carrol, “Humanism and English Literature in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 246. And P. O. Kristeller, “Humanism” in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, eds. Charles Bernard Schmitt–Quentin Skinner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 114–116.

¹⁴ Michael Pincombe, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the Later Sixteenth Century* (London–New York: Longman–Pearson Education, 2001), 3.

defined was the “barbarian.” He took several shapes depending on the ideal from which distance had to be kept, on the cultural, literary, philosophical context in which the barbarian was to be delineated, or on the emphasis as to whether, on the one hand, the ideal human, humane, or humanist was to be represented, or, on the other, the barbarian to be avoided.

Exploring sixteenth-century printed writings occasionally lead to conclusions going against naive expectations. It may be supposed that describing the opposition to one’s cultural values and dispositions was in an indirect way intended to sustain or reinforce one’s value system. In other words, the Other could have been described and invented for the sake of showing a bad example from which one should distance oneself. Even this oversimplified position can lead, however, to questions such as: “Why is this or that feature attributed to the Other?”; “Why do we need this description—invention of somebody different from us?” Although these questions cannot be answered in a satisfying manner, their common assumption may have unsettling implications.

Once the characteristic features of the Other are analysed and the purpose of the representation is brought into the focus, one may tentatively use a synonym for “description-invention” such as “projection”—with a shift in meaning. Once this shift is made, the questions above will turn into the question: “Whose negative features have been projected into the Other and what is the purpose of this act of projection? This question is more serious if, besides the Other, there is only one more participant of the projection-game, i.e. the one who objectifies and projects fears and sins onto the Other. This would assume that the sins and weaknesses of the people whose values are to be sustained or regained are projected into the Other for the sake of achieving moral development in the sinful and weak but otherwise benevolent reader.

As a by-product of this approach to the Other, one observes a stimulating dynamics of distanciation and appropriation. As it could be seen, the moralising implication of the description–invention of the Other is to differentiate between good and bad, and to make the reader or audience distance themselves from the bad example. In contrast, or rather along with this act of distanciation, the recipient is also to recognise him/herself in the Other, as in a mirror. Thus the moment of distanciation, of the formation of the negative judgement also involves a moment of uncanny closeness to the Other. The anxiety around distanciation and closeness to the Other is at the core of its description–invention almost all the times.

This anxiety remains a shallow and dead hypothesis as long as the anxiety does not surface in certain ways, and as long as authors do not give life to the hypothesis by clarifying the anxiety. The chapters in this volume will amply explore this anxiety without believing that a complete, comprehensive and unified picture has been drawn of all the cultural–literary phenomena that can be classified under the heading: “humanism,” “human” *versus* “barbarism,” “barbarian.” Instead, the book will provide a selection which demonstrates the multiplicity of approaches, voices within the discourse of self– and personal identity, both directly and indirectly. This can only come true insofar as the authors of the chapters are—in harmony with the authors of the texts they meditate upon—philologists, i.e. scholars who like and enjoy words, count and interpret them, measure them with coffee spoons. As a result of this careful love of words there appears lively dynamism, the life of texts where naive boundaries, rigid schematic patterns disappear.

Francis Guinle destabilises any reductive opposition between European *versus* Turkish or Moor, Christian *versus* Muslim. For this purpose, he focuses on George Peele’s *Battle of Alcazar*, which—if anything—should play a significant role in a stereotyping approach. As against this stereotyping approach he claims that the purpose of the play is rather dramatic than historical. Guinle explores the ambiguity that one Moorish character is represented as a stereotypically immoral character, while another Moor is the model of humane civility, i.e. there is no simple dividing line between European and Moor, human and barbarian.

Gunilla Florby demonstrates an unexpected consequence of the elitist quest of humanism for classical texts. When looking for the distinction between humanism and barbarism in George Chapman’s double play, *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron*, she realises that the celebration of violence is not inspired by some medieval barbarity but rather by the heroes of classical texts—fictitious and historical—such as Achilles, Alexander the Great and Hercules.

Erzsébet Stróbl meditates about the symbolic significance of the “wild man” in Elizabethan celebrations and progresses. She lists the characteristic features of the wild man, the barbarous opposite of courtly humanity and civility. In some representations, the wild man stands for the opposite against which the Queen’s virtues, beauty and learning shine more powerfully, and also this opposite is there to be tamed by Elizabeth’s excellence. Furthermore the wildness is occasionally presented as an idyllic openness to the process of humanising.

Pauline Blanc delineates the anxiety around the dissolution of the hierarchical oppositions between prince-beggar, parent-child, citizens-

foreigners, man-woman. She achieves this through showing the presence of barbarism at both ends of these oppositions in Lodge's and Green's *A Looking Glass for London and England* (1589-90).

Agnes Matuska challenges the conventional interpretation of the Vice figure via setting him in the "humanist" *versus* "barbarian" dialectic. She explores his barbarous characteristics in his dramatic style, in his behaviour, use of language and emphasises his humanist aspects as well. These latter ones include his being the critique, the one who explains the moral claim of the play, being a director of the play, and also the trickster, furthermore doing the most for involving the off-stage world (e.g. the audience, pickpockets etc.) in the play.

Benedek Péter Tóta traces the human *versus* barbarian scheme—the latter as somebody who is not capable of uttering and understanding civilised speech—through a linguistically complex situation by the means of thoroughgoing philological apparatus. First, he phrases a working definition of the term "barbarian" based on Thomas More's letter to Peter Giles among the *parerga* to *Utopia* (1516). Then—following the pattern of the fictitious course of transmission of *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulations* (1534–1535) "made by a Hungarian in Latin, translated out of Latin into French, and out of French into English"—he measures this definition against the prefatory texts introducing an account of the Battle of Mohács written by István Brodarics, a Hungarian, in Latin (1527), translated out of Latin into French by Martin Fumée (1594), and out of French into English by R. C. (1600).

Peter Happé describes the dynamism between appropriation and occasional distanciation within humanistic concerns. He focuses his reading to John Heywood's *The Four PP* and the poem entitled "The Spider and the Fly." The analysis demonstrates that Heywood followed the methods of humanism as far as the representation of women, the attitude to printing as a means of communication, linguistic virtuosity, use of classical antiquity, openness to diversity of opinion and celebration of wit are concerned, but in terms of the avoidance of a clearly stated intellectual position Heywood differs from his models. All these are presented in the context of the evolution of humanism in the politico-religious historical changes during Heywood's lifetime.

The analysis of—occasionally promotional—travelogues reveal a complex representation of the Other. Elizabeth Heale explores the representation of the Amerindians in Stephen Parmenius of Buda's *De navigatione*. The poem projects the inhabitants into virtuous, innocent people who wait for the English to convert them, and also who are to be defended against the real other, the Papist Spanish barbarians. The

seemingly simple political agenda of the poem is, however, complicated by the implied imperative that the English rule must live up to the expectations, and by the hidden rhetoric that the celebrated heroism of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, leader of the English colonising campaign, is also famous for his brutality.

Andrew Hiscock in his chapter on Sir Walter Raleigh's encounter narratives argues that Raleigh's, a traveller himself, mythologisation of the inhabitants of Guiana relied on classical authorities for the sake of satisfying the expectation of readers, e.g. those of possible investors. The distanciation of the exotic inhabitants went hand in hand with the demonisation of the Spanish, and their sins, which in turn were brought home with the parallel to the colonising events in Ireland.

Amina Alyal contextualises the Shakespearean diction and versification in *1 Henry IV* within the famous rhyme and rhythm debate in Tudor literary theories. She claims that the playwright's poetic practice both accommodates meaningfully and eliminates the clear distinction between the courtly and the barbarian versification. This furthermore leads to the hidden dissociation of the Other from the barbarous.

Finally, Kinga Földvary focuses on the problem of the poor in William Harrison's *A Description of Elizabethan England*. She finds in this book the method of othering via criminalising and ultimately dehumanising a class of the poor, who consequently do not deserve help from the society.

Although this is far from being a complete description of the anxiety surrounding the nature of humanity, the demonstration of the multiplicity of methods and voices in this discourse has been successful. The complete description would have implied that there was a unified narrative fashioned according to Freytag's triangle with an exposition, a climax and a resolution.¹⁵ Although it would be an exaggeration to claim that it is possible to describe a gradual development towards an end of the theme of the human–barbarian opposition, still it is possible to find a text where the anxiety over the opposition finds some climax before the turning point.

The following meditation thus will focus on a text which gives an illustration of an extreme kind about the anxiety over the dynamism of distanciation and closeness. This illustration will be of “an extreme kind,” as a local reading of this text reveals that the hierarchy of the Christian–Turkish opposition, in which Turks represent a threat for Christians, is sustained on the surface rhetorical level, but if careful attention is paid to

¹⁵ Referred to by John Barth, “Lost in the Funhouse,” in *The Heritage of American Literature*, vol. 2. ed. James E. Miller (Jr. San Diego—New York etc.: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1991), 1943.

the subtext—the occasional remarks that do not harmonise with the claim of the book—the benevolent claim is painfully subverted and undermined.

II

The assumption of René de Lucinge's *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates*¹⁶ is that every state is like a living organism: it is born, it grows, reaches its peak, and then it decays and ceases to exist. In line with this assumption, the book provides a strategic analysis of the Turkish Empire, explores its coming into being, the reasons why this empire could be so effective that it became a threat to Europe, and Christianity, and also directs the readers' attention to events signalling the inescapable decay of the empire.

Lucinge's analysis is carried out with the optimistic objective that this decay can be accelerated once Christian states unite to undo the Turkish Empire by power and cunning. John Finet, the translator, entertainer of foreign ambassadors in the English court, shared this optimism in his dedication of the book to Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury and Privy Councillor, who, according to Finet, was in the position to foster the unity of European states to defeat the Turks. To make the benevolent quest for unity more convincing, Lucinge-Finet celebrate the superiority of the Christian, and degrade the Turkish opponents.

European Christian people are represented as superior to the Turks via appealing to the readers' emotions and piety. First, the unity of the Christian forces should come into being through freedom and virtue. Christians should unite "to the end that every one may voluntarily in devotion consent thereto to the glory of God with a free heart, and an undaunted magnanimitie" (S1v). Second, as some Christian countries have been occupied by the Turks, it is not only the duty of a Christian man that he should feel sorry for them, and be deeply moved by the sight of the suffering of his fellow Christians, but it is also his duty to help them by action: "For if we be Christians we ought not only to have compassion of others calamities, but afforde them also our good and charitable assistance, [...]" (S3v). But as far as the emotional argument is concerned, one should observe the moral gravity of the word "compassion," and also that although compassion is an appropriate emotional response to the pain of

¹⁶ All parenthesized references pertain to this edition. René de Lucinge, *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates. Wherein are handled many notable questions concerning the establishment of Empires and Monarchies*. Trans. John Finet (London: John Bill, 1606).

other Christians, action is needed which is both morally “good” and also absolutely Christian as far as charity and help is involved.

The war of the united Christian forces against the Turks is rhetorically embellished with Biblical language and with references to the mission of all Christians. The objective is associated with farming, i.e. the missionary duty of Christians: to ‘husband his [God’s] vineyard’ (S3v). The missionary work is further qualified with devotional expansion: “inlarge the kingdom of Christ” (S3v), which may well be the spiritual kingdom of Christ, but also geographical as far as the Holy Land is concerned: “deliverance of [...] sacred places” (S3v). The devotional expansion is accompanied with increasing of the number of Christians who may be save from Turkish oppression: “to redeem so many thousand of poore Christian slaves” (S3v); and a means to achive it: “to give life to an infinite number of Christians” (S3v). In these last two quotations, the language of the representation of these tasks reminds one of the acts of Christ, as far as the terms “redemption” and “giving life” are concerned. The war against the Turks conforms to the concept of the Just War, as it is in the name of justice including revenge and punishment: “to revenge their wrongs, to punish the injuries and blasphemies” (S4r). The moral and pious elevation of the Christian people and cause goes hand in hand with the moral and religious degradation of the Turks.

Lucinge represents the Turks conventionally as opposed to the humanistic ideals by means of the rhetoric of denial, demonisation, cursing, animal imagery and finally barbarism. First and foremost not only do the Turkish warriors not live up to the humanistic urban, civilised and courtly expectations: “they bewray no feeling of civilitie and curtesie, [...]”(B1r), but also rudeness and roughness characterise their disposition, as in the “parts of their mind [...] we shall see ought more rude and rough hewen then the spirit of that people” (B1r). The rudeness and the roughness of this nation does not only qualify them as bad on the level of humans, but Lucinge demonises them as the terrifying enemy of both East and West, when he claims that the Turkish “power is [...] the scourge of the East and the terror of the West” (B1v). The characterisation of the Turks does not stop at demonisation, but goes on into cursing as well. Occasionally Lucinge calls them a “cursed race, [...], that vile Mahometane race” (M3v). Twice he identifies them with subhuman qualities, such as animals “that intraged dogge,” “that tyrant and his helhounds” (S4r); and this animal imagery is confirmed by the lack of rational control (“intraged”) and by a link with hell (“hellhounds”). After all this, the reader is not taken by surprise that barbarism is part of the rhetoric of degradation, when he refers to them as “barbarous infidels”

(S4r), “those barbarous people” (V3r), “that dull and wholly illiterate nation” (M3r).

In terms of religion, the reader can find the same, conventional distinction between Christians and Turks. Christianity is superior to every other religion on two accounts: truth and use. As Lucinge puts it “as there is no religion more true, so is there none more favorable to Princes then Christianity, for the quiet and preservation of their estate and minde” (M2v). The claim about the truth of Christianity remains unsubstantiated, while its usefulness is explored. Lucinge asserts that “[i]nasmuch as this by way of conscience subjecteth to the king and all other superiours (howsoever perverse and vitious) the heart, the person, and goods of the subject” (M2v). Christianity is thus deemed as useful, because it is a perfect means of subjection: as it appeals to conscience, and thus results not only in seeming obedience, but in an absolute subjection of the individual, who will serve his superior unquestioningly—emotional devotion, whole personality, and even his goods are at the superior’s disposal.

The instrumental quality is also true about the religion of the Turks, the only difference lies in its falseness. Lucinge assumes that the Turkish religion, i.e. the teachings of Mohammed, is nothing but “fables and grosse absurdities [...], dreams and cousenings” (M3r). As opposed to Christian truth, Mohammed’s teaching is not only untrue, but it is also there to blur reality by creating false realities of fables—nonsensical and dreamlike. This absolutely false religion has been founded on two principles to preserve it—both of them against rationality. First, it is based on “the pleasures of the flesh and the world” to “charm reason and lull asleep the spirit” (M3r). The Biblical terminology of the “flesh” and the “world” connote an absolutely vile and anti-Christian moral code, which results in a state of mind that is neither rational, nor spiritual. Secondly, its maintenance is founded upon the “law of the sword” (M3r), which means that it is forbidden “to enter into any disputation any one point of it, unless it were with the edge of the sword” (M3r). As far as the terminology goes, it can be noted again that the second fundamental principle locates the Turkish religion in a distance from the European expectations, inasmuch as it is the sword that takes the place of rational argumentation. Thus, the false doctrines of Mohamme are preserved by pleasure and power; they offer carnal joys and are in the hand of the mightiest.

So far only that level of Lucinge-Finet has been accounted for that conformed to the conventional moral and religious hierarchical positioning of the Christians and the Turks. At several *loci* of the text, however, it turns out that Christians in general are prone to be seen morally less

advanced than the Turks, and distanciation fails, or, if it occasionally succeeds, it works in the opposite direction: Christians are located in a greater distance from the ideal than the Turks. I will illustrate this dynamism of the hierarchical opposition with reference to the fitness for the purpose and the concepts of reading, literacy and the book.

On the level of fitness for purpose, Christians are found weaker than their Turkish opponents. What distinguishes the Turks from the Christians here is that the Turkish soldiers and captains are able to focus on the task of a warrior, namely doing their best on the battlefield, which simply means fighting well and carrying out commands. In contrast with the warrior mentality of the Turkish soldiers, the Christian warriors spend their time with pleasure hunting instead of making sufficient preparations: they pass their time with books, studies, and arts, instead of practising fighting. When preparing for a battle, instead of fighting they are more concerned with what they are going to eat (see D3v), in contrast with their Turkish enemies who can fight for a month with victuals carried by the individual soldiers (see I2v).

It is also remarkable that loyalty is only observed with respect to the Turkish army.

[T]he incredible obedience of the Captains towards their Generall, and of the souldiours towards their Captaines and such is the love amongst them as there is no danger or difficulty (be it never so great) which they will not easily overcome, so willingly they performe what is injoyned them. (I3r)

So there is not only keeping to the hierarchy—soldier to captain, captain to general—but also a strong bond between soldiers regardless of their rank. Furthermore this bond is referred to with the word “love,” a term that should be an attribute and distinguishing mark of Christians, but is never used denoting them. Love characterises only the Turkish barbarians.

If “love” is attributed to the Turks and not to Christians, one of the most tragic sentences of the work should not surprise or shock the reader. Lucinge, when giving strategic military advice how to overcome the Turks, i.e. first on sea and then on the land, concludes the chapter with the following statement:

[...] we should by little and little heave him out of the whole Empire of Greece, where there would be enough to satiate the greedie ambition of the Christians. (T3r)

This striking claim can easily be read as a tragic sigh that the Christians are far from being morally more advanced than their Turkish foes. If one is

to meditate on the noble issue of defeating the barbarian infidels, one should also take into consideration the moral standards of those who carry out the noble deed, and draw the conclusions. If the Christians have greedy ambition, this is to be satisfied, and for this reason Greece should be sacrificed.

Furthermore it is also important in Lucinge's sentence that there seems to be some movement of distancing. First, there is a strong involvement in the military action implied with the first person plural subject of the sentence: "we should [...] have him out." Then, in the second clause, it is not "we" whose greedy ambition should be satiated, but that of the Christians. This all too bitter distancing of "us" from "Christians" undermines the optimism of the book and that of the dedication. This pessimistic bitterness about Christians is further corroborated by thoughts about learning.

At one level of the text, reading books, learning and arts are attributed to the Christians, whereas Turkish soldiers are denied them. At the end of Lucinge's strategic analysis, however, it turns out that the sign of weakness on the Christian part, which unfortunately they are good at, i.e. books, can be turned against the Turks. Lucinge claims that the most dangerous elite unit of the Turkish army is that of the janissaries, who are raised as the most ruthless warriors, and as soldiers who are ready to die for their emperor. One would then assume that these soldiers are the most barbarians among the Turks, mindless terminators who fight for the emperor with all their might, military machines whom cannot be defeated by the Christian soldiers.

At the same time, Lucinge deconstructs this image when claiming that they are the very subjects of the emperor who are the most exposed to external influence if carried out appropriately. Janissaries are people who are not Turkish born, but stolen from the Christian foes when infants. Torn from their families, they have become attached solely to their superiors, but deep in their hearts there are the seeds of the values of their parents. And books, contemporary mass media are precisely the means through which these seeds may grow into blossom. These flowers in turn are the flowers of corruption, of disintegration, signs of the disappearance of loyalty.

The assumption that even the most ruthless soldiers of the Turkish Empire spend their time with reading either qualifies or modifies the image of the barbarian Turk and the learned Christian opposition. If learning and reading are attributes of civilization, if so far only the Christians were condemned for these, then in the final analysis it turns out

that the barbarian Turks, and even the worst of them can be similar to their opponents in this respect.

This is the time to take a closer look at the concept of the “book” because this represents a similar movement as the previous moral hierarchy. The very first paragraph of Lucinge’s work relates an anecdote which read retrospectively from the last pages of the book furthers second thoughts. The anecdote is about the Goths, who, after having defeated the Greek army, gave up the idea of burning the Greek books arguing that:

leave [...] this poison amongst the Grecians, since in time they [i.e. books – Zs.A.] will bereave them [the Greeks – Zs.A.] of all martial courage, as ordinarily they do all such as apply them selves too much to the like learning and knowledge, making them become tender, effeminate, and altogether unfit for the use of armes; so as failing of courage they will proove more easily the pray of our fortunate conquest. (A2r-v)

This anecdote is to prepare the reader for the idea that the basic difference between the Turks and their Christian opponents is that the Turks apply themselves wholly to war, whereas the Christians to arts and sciences, pleasures and civility. The claim of the anecdote is that a simple way of the martial world leads from books, through too much learning and knowledge to tenderness, and as a consequence to becoming easy preys for the enemy. It is also significant that the Greeks had already proved that they were unfit for the use of arms, as they were the ones that had been defeated. This detail also verifies the reason why books should not be destroyed, because they have shown their power over the Greeks to the extent that the Greeks lost the war. It is further to be noted that it is not just any nation we are dealing here, but the Greeks, the cradle and model of European-Christian humanism. So the very foundation and model of sixteenth-century learning is defeated and represented as the power that can destroy Christian Europe. The image of books and learning is further qualified by the term “poison.” Books are poisonous, working invisibly within the organism on its ultimate destruction.

At the end of the book, siding with the opening anecdote Lucinge returns to books, as the most powerful weapon against the Turks. Books spread in the Turkish Empire have seemingly a double objective: to convert the Turks, or to “make them doubt of the foolish superstitions they observe” (V4v). The common denominator of the twofold objectives is undermining the strength and means of unity of the Turkish Empire: religion and consequently loyalty. This undermining of the strength of the Turks is to be achieved by either converting them to Christianity or pouring into the common ear doubt about their own religion.

Later, however, when it comes to practicalities, conversion is seemingly forgotten about, and what remains is doubt. Naturally, books about the superiority of Christian beliefs cannot be given to the Turks directly, so cunning is needed again. The title of the book should be

coloured, as it doe not at the first discover the intent of the author, but rather that it intice them to peruse it with a certaine curiosity and shew of pleasentness and delight. (X1r)

So the books are to be smuggled into the territory of the Turkish Empire with false titles relying on man's instinctive curiosity and pleasure-hunting.

The books to be smuggled into Turkish territories with misleading titles cannot be straightforward, but cunning is needed in terms of content as well. These books cannot contain

any disputations or subtile point against the Articles of their beleefe, but that contrariwise it be full of tales and matter fit to moove laughter; yet with some well conveied passage which may by way discover or make them doubt of the fables of their Alcoran. (X1r)

Thus; there should be no room for direct challenging the tenets of their faith, but rather with the key concepts of a Sidneian theory of poetry, through delight and indirect teaching, the readers should be moved or cajoled into doubt. Here there is no word about enlarging Christianity through enlarging the number of hearts devoted to Christ, but rather about doubting one's own religion through the means of literature.

Reading thus the opening paragraph in the light of the end of the book, Christians are to spread the poison of books among the Turks. So the Masters of the Christians are the barbarian Goths against the similarly barbarian Turks. And thus the poison used in the appropriate proportion turns into the remedy of Christianity and the poison against the pestilence that the Turkish Empire represents for Christianity. Or read otherwise, the poison is the ultimate remedy against the healthy organism of the Turkish Empire, and the book is a means of mass destruction. What remains then is to question the Christian claim for moral, religious superiority. And if so, to doubt that Lucinge's book was an optimistic call for action and unity and charity for the advancement of the glory of God for the Christians, and to assume it to be an absolutely pessimistic description of the chances of Christianity against the Turkish Empire as the subtext of the book implies. Furthermore one may well doubt the distinction between the civilised European and the barbarians.

* * * * *

Having seen a possible endpoint for the narrative about the dynamism of the humanism—barbarism opposition, there remains only one task to be accomplished. Before opening the gate towards the chapters, I would like to recall the rewarding conference in 2006, where friendly scholars and scholarly friends came together to discuss matters of Tudor humanism and barbarism with the aim of understanding not “the Other” but “one Another.”

PART I:
ON STAGE

BARBAROUS/BARBARIAN:
THE AMBIGUITY OF B/BARBARY
IN PEELE'S *THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR*

FRANCIS GUINLE

Almost every single book written in the last ten years about the representation of the Oriental on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage insists on the fact that the racial and/or religious issues are not the major concern of the plays that stage such a representation. Thus, speaking about *Lust's Dominion* and *The Turk*, Claire Jowitt declares:

However, to read these plays merely as expressions of anti-Muslim sentiment is to neglect central aspects of their significance since the play's Islamic villains and the activities in Christian courts that prove to be corrupt also must refer to domestic English political issues.¹

In a fairly recent book on the subject, Nabil Matar points out that Muslims were perceived as both "admirable and fearsome" and that their "demonization" was a result of their power as an empire.² In an article published in 2001, he claims:

Hasleton justifies the Moors/Muslims in their attacks on Spanish/Christian shipping: he is the first English captive to explain that North African/Moorish and Morisco attacks on Christian shipping are not a result of greed and religious violence; rather, Muslims attack in order to retaliate

¹ Claire Jowitt, "Political Allegory in Late Elizabethan and Early Jacobean 'Turk' plays: *Lust's Dominion* and *The Turke*," *Comparative Drama* vol. 36. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2002-03. Voir aussi: http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-9925900_ITM): 1.

² Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

against Christian pirates and marauders. What the Muslims do to Christians is in reaction to what the Christians do to them.³

In an age where some acts of piracy were considered as political acts, Hasleton's point would probably have come home. In view of Queen Elizabeth's part in the release of captives of Moors and Turks, Nabil Matar can further add:

These accounts were written (and published) more for purposes of praising the queen and her sense of national responsibility than for indulging in polemic and in the vilification of Islam.⁴

It must be granted that these captivity accounts are only part of the literature which concerns the relations between England and the Muslim world. However, in England's dealings with Morocco, for instance, in the late sixteenth century, it seems that political and commercial concerns outweighed any possible anti-Islamic feeling. Yet, there is no doubt that, at the same time, stereotyping was at work and probably helped in the definition of English identity. In the words of Jesús López-Peláez Casellas:

The conspicuous presence of Islam and Muslim in Heywood's drama seems to confirm the role of these plays in the process of construction of an Early Modern English identity.⁵

However, this construction of English identity also relied on other stereotypes such as the Spaniard or the Italian. In the second play which features Thomas Stukeley, the "noble" and "honorable" Englishman is pitted against the treacherous Italians who eventually slay him, and the ferocious Moors who are not merely satisfied with killing their enemy. Thus in his final speech to his fellow countryman, Vernon, Thomas Stukeley presents their deaths as a heroic sacrifice:

Stukeley So now we both die one kind of death,
 In which let this our special comfort be,
 That though this parchèd earth of Barbary

³ Nabil Matar, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625," *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 54, No. 2 (Summer, 2001): 558.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 560.

⁵ Jesús López-Peláez Casellas, "'What Good Newes from Barbary?'" Nascent Capitalism, North-Africans and the Construction of English Identity in Thomas Heywood's Drama," *Atlantis*, 29. no. 1 (June 2007): 130.

Drink no more English blood but of us twain,
Yet with this blood of ours the blood of kings
Shall be commixed, and with their fame our fame
Shall be eternised in the mouths of men. (Scene 28, 28-34)⁶

They are indeed prepared to fight “these bloodthirsty and uncivil Turks,” but to their surprise they are attacked and slain by their own Italian soldiers.⁷ The Turks, indeed, prove most “bloody and uncivil” in their treatment of Muly Mahamet, the Moor and Villain of the play:

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. (Scene 28, 15-20)⁸

It is particularly interesting to note that although Muly Hamet is talking about the Villain's death, we cannot but sense the barbarous aspect of the practice of flaying and stuffing the skin of the deceased enemy. Both Stukeley's and Muly Mahamet's deaths sound undignified, and the protagonists are denied any tragic dimension.

Naturally, behind the word “Italians” we may read here “papists” and behind “Turks,” “Muslims.” This is a choice made by a number of critics, and the “vilification of Islam”⁹ is certainly one of the major aspects that they have harped upon when dealing with the Elizabethan and Jacobean corpus of plays which stage Turks and Moors, often putting them all under the category of “the Oriental.” However, a “New-Historicist” approach of the representation of this so-called “Oriental” in Elizabethan and Jacobean texts can only point to a fundamental ambivalence. The confusion between the various terms, “Turk,” “Moor,” “Ottoman,” “Muslim,” “Oriental,” and “Barbarian,” is understandable in a population which, on the whole, can

⁶ *The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley*, in *The Stukeley Plays*, ed. Charles Edelman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁷ Both *The Battle of Alcazar* and *Captain Thomas Stukeley* mention this infamous death, which is part of the legend, since in fact Thomas Stukeley died of a canon shot.

⁸ This practice of flaying and then stuffing the skin is attested in some Arab sources and described in popular epics such as *Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir Baybars*.

⁹ Nabil Matar, “English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 54, No. 2 (Summer, 2001): 560.

only have had hearsay knowledge of this “Other,” and the fact that none of these terms belong to the same category is often overlooked. Each document must be assessed before we can reach any conclusion, and before we place it in a network of references which may or may not form a unified vision, for each piece of “evidence” is a rewriting of history and of reality, usually with an ulterior motive, or else following the sheer conventions of its genre.

In her study of Thomas Rawlins’s *The Rebellion*, Anna Fåhraeus tries to go beyond the stereotyping, in particular of the black characters, to show how the racial aspect is linked to other issues:

[...] although the stock figure of the Moor as a Machiavellian and/or erotic villain has been well-documented, the effects of the contextualization of race as blackness within different narrative structures has not been sufficiently studied beyond the stereotypical scenes, e.g. villainous bombast, horrific endings, deceptive use of lust etc. This is a seemingly understandable omission as the plays are more or less repetitions of the same tragic tale of lust, ambition or revenge, but there are other concerns reflected in these dramas, such as gender and class, epistemology and mood that deserve critical attention. In my thesis project on horror and miscegenation, I argue that race and racism are intertwined with these issues at a deep level. I take a pragmatic view: the likelihood that the study of the pervasive use of stock Moorish villains will result in an understanding of the justification for racist imperialism seems unlikely unless our own context of that study is broadened beyond the category of race.¹⁰

Plays are, above all, works of fiction; they do not strive to give an exact account of what happened, but follow their own agenda which is basically dramatic, and which obeys (or indeed challenges) a set of rules and conventions. They may reflect a certain reality, even certain historical events, but, on the whole, the reflection is always a distortion, since they do not bend their principles to fit the events, but twist the events to match their codes. They also provide a necessary distance which leads to a fragmented vision of the various issues which must then be reappraised.

In many ways, this paper is an attempt to such a reappraisal of a well-known and well studied play, looking at the evidence provided by the play itself.

Among the numerous Renaissance plays staging Moors, Africans, Mohammedans, George Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar* is notorious for the ambiguity with which the figure of the Moor is treated. On the one hand,

¹⁰ Anna Fåhraeus, *NJES*, vol. 4, no. 2 (December 2005): 145.

one of the major characters is reviled as a Moor—in particular by the Presenter—on the other hand, another Moorish character is shown as the epitome of civility, in spite of the fact that he has allied with the Ottoman Turks. The purpose of this paper is to investigate this ambiguity and demonstrate that Peele's concern is more dramatic than historical, and has little to do with race and/or religion. I do not wish to launch into a lecture on history, even though the play deals with historical events which took place about ten years before its composition, yet, history may help us understand why such ambiguity is introduced in the play, if only because of the expected response from an audience highly conditioned by fairly recent historical events which at the time of performance may be reappraised in the light of the relations between England and Morocco. However, my main point will be to dissociate the fictional characters from their historical counterparts, and to see them as serving a dramatic purpose and function, rather than a historical one. The ambiguity comes also from a specific use of terms to define the characters which we must decode according to their dramatic value, as opposed to their historical meanings.

This being said, I need to give a general outline of the historical events which constitute one of the sources of the play, as they were related in various works which may have inspired George Peele. The battle of Alcazar (or al-Qasr al-Kabîr) took place in 1578, only seven years after the defeat of the Ottomans at the battle of Lepanto. Unlike the latter, it was fought on land, not at sea, and it is generally known as “the battle of the three kings”—Adb al-Malek, Muly Mohammad, and King Sebastian of Portugal who all died during the fight. The battle is also famous for the death of Thomas Stukeley, a famous if controversial figure of the Elizabethan period. The political and religious background of the battle is complex since the conflict not only involved Christians and Muslims, but also Christians fighting other Christians, and Muslims fighting other Muslims. Indeed, the study of the alliances shows a Catholic king helping a Muslim, with the assistance of an Englishman who had first planned to restore Catholicism in Ireland, and the Ottoman army helping another Muslim with the assistance of Christian renegades. On both sides, foreign interference in the affairs of Morocco is a question of political strategy and intrigue, involving the Ottoman Empire, the Papacy, Catholic Spain, Portugal, as well as England and the Irish question. Jonathan Bates underlines the ambivalent feeling about the Moors in Elizabethan England:

Given that the Spanish Empire was England's great enemy, there would have been a certain ambivalence about the Moors. They may have overthrown Christianity, but at least it was Spanish Catholic Christianity. Philip II's worst fear was an uprising of the remaining Moors in Granada