BRITISH-PERSIAN RELATIONS IN THE SHERLEY DOSSIER (1598-1626)

by

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Abstract

As part of a more general interest in "Orientalism" and the history of East-West relations, a good deal of scholarly attention has lately been devoted to cultural, commercial and political interactions between the English and the Persians in the period of Britain's main colonial expansion, from the eighteenth century onwards. This study joins a growing body of scholarship that concentrates on an earlier period and that is developing new theoretical paradigms for understanding East-West relations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in terms of mutuality, dialogue and reciprocity (e.g. Matar, Maclean, Vitkus, Loomba, Burton, Barbour, and Dimmock). As emphasized by these critics, the power relations assumed by postcolonial theory are unsustainable in an early modern context, because it was only during the eighteenth century that Muslim empires such as those of the Ottomans and Persians became the subjects of colonial construction. In fact, in contrast to the imperialist views of the eighteenth century, the early modern English showed a great interest in cultural and commercial relations with the Islamic "Other". In this thesis, I examine early modern England's relationship with the Muslim East in general, and with Persians in particular, emphasizing the fluidity of intercultural relations. I also suggest that "Otherness" in the early modern period itself had a fluid and ambivalent nature. My study focuses on a dossier of texts relating to the travels of two Englishmen (the brothers Anthony and Robert Sherley) to Persia, which played a significant role in the formation of early modern English perceptions of Persia and of Persians. The main scene of the study lies between the first trip made by the Sherley brothers to Persia in 1598 and the publication of the second edition of *Purchas His Pilgrims* in 1626. These accounts are of two distinct types: narratives written by traveller-writers, and those composed by hired writers at home. Juxtaposing these two groups

of accounts, I demonstrate the versatility of the representation of the Persian “Other” and point out how the writers’ predispositions and the changing politico-historical milieu influenced the construction of images of the Persians.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Maryam Jahanmardi.

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To Homayoun and Saam

Prologue

The Sherleys whose travels form the subject of this study are known as the first prominent Englishmen to travel to Persia in the modern era. Although there are many works written about them, their failures and achievements, little attempt has been made to put their role in representing the Persian "Other" in a historical perspective. In fact, the existing studies of the travel accounts of the Sherleys and their companions give an incomplete and even distorted view of the way the Persians are depicted in these accounts. To remedy this defect in the scholarship, I will examine different representations of the Persian "Other" in the Sherley dossier. I argue that these accounts, on one hand, reflect the historical transitions of the time, and, on the other hand, exhibit the fluid nature of the Persian "Other" and its changeability from one discursive context to another.

For the purpose of this study, the accounts are divided into two groups: the first group of accounts is written by traveller-writers who were the immediate observers of the unknown phenomenon of the Persian "Other"; the second consists of pamphlets and printed materials originating with writers who were hired to promote the Sherleys' mission and magnify their achievements. First, I examine the accounts written by traveller-writers, in order to demonstrate how the personal motivations and predispositions of these travellers — in Jonathan Burton's words, their "textual-historical baggage" (22) — have coloured their observations of the Persians and their customs and habits. Next, in studying the accounts produced by hired English writers at home, I consider the propagandistic nature of their accounts, which affected their representation of the Persian "Other." I also demonstrate how this propagandistic quality turned these accounts into largely fictitious works, produced by their authors' imaginations and in accordance with their audiences' expectations.

Except where indicated otherwise, all primary texts have been read in copies reproduced by Early English Books Online (EEBO). In citing seventeenth-century printed texts read through EEBO, I have consistently modernized spelling and punctuation.

1. The Sherley Brothers in Persia

All through the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were various agents such as diplomats, merchants, theologians, artists, and pilgrims, who travelled to the East from England and, by bringing back tales of the Islamic lands, played an important role in the construction of representations of the Muslim "Other." However, there was always a set of preconceived ideas which were mixed with the impression of these travellers and formed a set of notions back home, notions which in turn constructed early modern English society's collective perceptions of Islam. Regarding the construction of various representations of the Muslim "Other" in the early modern period, the Arab and Turkish representations have been well treated by a number of literary historians and cultural theorists since the 1990s (notably Matar, MacLean, Vitkus, Barbour, and Burton). However, while Ottoman and African presences in early modern Europe have been well studied, considerably less attention has been paid to Persia as a distinct entity. Therefore, because much of the work by these scholars is concentrated on the construction of other Eastern "Others" such as Turks and Moors, I examine the representations of the Persian "Other" in early modern travel narratives, specifically those presented in the Sherley dossier.

As such studies as Samuel Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose* suggest, "until the second half of the sixteenth century no Englishman had ever visited Persia" (205). In fact, it was the establishment of the Muscovy Company in 1555, which was managed by English merchants, that initiated trade relations with the more distant Orient. In 1557, seeking out new markets in lands beyond the Ottoman Empire's borders, the Muscovy Company appointed Anthony Jenkinson the head of a mission to Persia, which proved to be a failure. Jenkinson's expedition in Persia failed because he arrived at an unpropitious moment when

there was a truce between the Shia Persians and the Sunni Turks after many years of war. In such a critical moment, it was predictable that the Persian King's policy was to avoid giving offence to his old enemy and follow the advice of his merchants, who were anxious not to disturb the newly revived trade with the Turks. As a result, Jenkinson's trade proposal, which suggested the importation of English goods into Persia by way of Muscovy, was altogether fruitless.

Except for Jenkinson's failed experience, the first extensive journey to Persia was that of the Sherley brothers, Anthony and Robert, in 1598, which motivated the publication of several travel accounts and inspired many writers in the following years. Thus, the close association of Anthony and Robert Sherley with Persia and the bulk of materials written about their journey have made their accounts the best example of the representation of the Persian "Other" in early modern English literature. First, under the general heading of "Prosopography," I will provide a brief account of the Sherleys' adventures, as an extensive biography of them is beyond the scale of this study. Then I will enumerate the travel narratives which exist in the Sherley dossier ("Bibliography"). I begin with Anthony Sherley because he was the head of the mission, although he was the second of three brothers.

1.1 Prosopography

1.1.1 Anthony Sherley

Anthony Sherley, the second son of Sir Thomas Sherley of Wiston, Sussex, began his adventures in the West Indies. As Boies Penrose suggests in *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance 1420-1620,* the Caribbean was the most popular scene of activity among the English privateers in the 1590s, and Anthony Sherley, among many others, was involved in

one of these expeditions in Jamaica (191). Regarding Anthony's motivations for this expedition in Jamaica, there were both financial and patriotic motives, as Penrose indicates: "he hoped to come off with enough plunder to make good the family's losses," and also "desired to deal Spain a blow on his own account" to gain more favours in Queen Elizabeth's court (13); thus, not only in this expedition but in all his other attempts in foreign lands, Anthony did not follow disinterested patriotism as his main motive. After his successful conquest in 1597 in Jamaica, he returned home and was sent on a mission in Europe to help the illegitimate son of the Duke of Ferrara against the Pope (Ross 12). In 1597, Anthony, as one of a group of twenty-four men, including his younger brother Robert, left England on the order of the Earl of Essex without obtaining permission from Elizabeth. It is also necessary to add that because of his bravery in the siege of Rouen in 1592, Anthony had received the Order of Saint Michael at the hands of the King of France, Henry IV, which was interpreted in England as treason against his own queen (Ross 5). Besides, his connection to the Earl of Essex, at a time when he was losing favour with the Queen, doubly estranged Anthony from the English monarch.

Due to the submission of the duke to the Pope, Anthony's mission in Ferrara was cancelled and he and his group travelled to Venice, where he met some Persian merchants. While conversing with these Persians and a Michel Angelo Corra, who was familiar with Persian culture and language and became his interpreter afterwards, Anthony decided to go to Persia. Although, in his account, Anthony claims that travelling to Persia was proposed to him by the Earl of Essex, it seems more likely that it was Anthony who suggested the plan for this trip to his patron (Ross 13). In fact, it was under the influence of the pro-Persian sentiments popular in Venice about 1596 that the idea of this journey took shape. Therefore,

Anthony Sherley and his group left Venice in the spring of 1598 and began a voyage during which they were put off the ship as troublemakers and had to continue their way to the Syrian coast by an open boat. Then, travelling through the Ottoman Empire, which was not a pleasant experience according to their accounts, they went from Aleppo to Baghdad, where they escaped a murderous plot planned against them and fled into Persia.

In order to understand the context in which Anthony and his party interacted with the Persians, one must examine the political situation in the Middle East at the end of the sixteenth century. Anthony's arrival in Persia in December 1598 coincided with the reign of Abbas I, the Safavid monarch who unified different Persian states under a single, central government. Safavid monarchs, including Abbas I, being aware of the constant threat of their Ottoman neighbour, felt the necessity of a powerful military force and began to build up their troops. Their other strategy to keep the Ottomans away from their territories was to establish political and commercial interactions with foreigners, especially Europeans, who had been involved in extended wars with the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, foreign travellers and travelling to Europe were considered of great significance in this period of time. No wonder, then, that Anthony and his men were warmly welcomed by the Persian king and his people. After being entertained according to the custom of the Persian court, Anthony proposed his project, which was an anti-Turkish alliance between Shah Abbas and the Christian states of Europe. By his own account, Anthony initiated the project with a two-fold motivation: first, to persuade the Persian king to join the league with Christians in their holy war against the expansion of the Ottoman Empire; and second, to establish commercial relations with Persia and open up the route for Christian merchants.

Anthony's proposal, with its politico-commercial purposes, seemed interesting to Shah Abbas, since entering into an anti-Turkish alliance with the states of Europe could serve two of Abbas's main intentions: first, both as the king and the chief merchant in the country, he could shore up his silk policy, which was to find alternative and safer routes for Persian silk; and second, this foreign alliance served his plan of standing up to his major enemy, the Turks. As a result, Shah Abbas reacted favourably to Anthony's project and decided to send him, accompanied by an appointed Persian ambassador, to the following Christian sovereigns and leading figures: "the Pope, the Emperor Rudolph II, the Kings of France, Spain, Scotland, and Poland, the Queen of England, the Earl of Essex, the Seigniory of Venice, and the Duke of Florence" (Ross 22-3). The party that accompanied Anthony on his return trip, in addition to the Persian ambassador and his men, included two Englishmen, William Parry and George Manwaring, who also wrote their accounts of the Persian expedition. Meanwhile, Robert, Anthony's younger brother, who accompanied him in this journey along with some other Englishmen, were retained by Shah Abbas as a pledge to ensure Anthony's return and also the success of his mission.

Anthony's return trip was as eventful as his journey to Persia, especially because he was in constant conflict with the Persian ambassador over the title of embassy. In fact, the conflict and the mission itself ended in Rome when the credentials, which were in Farsi, the Persian language, were translated into Latin, and it was revealed that "Husayn [the Persian] is styled 'ambassador' and Anthony 'supreme commissioner'" (Chew 273). Not being able to insist on his claim to be ambassador and thus superior to the Persian rival, Anthony threw over his commission and left for Venice, when he had so far delivered the proposals only to the Pope and the Emperor Rudolph II.

As to Anthony's whereabouts after abandoning his mission, the most significant point is his relation to his native country. Already a traitor in the eyes of Queen Elizabeth for being knighted by a foreign king, and being connected to the Earl of Essex faction, Anthony was now doubly disfavoured, for his project to unite the Christian states with the Persian king against the Ottomans was also contrary to the politico-commercial policy of England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Later on, after the succession of James I to the throne, Anthony, who had been a supporter of James's claim to the throne and, some believed, his agent enjoyed the new monarch's favour but was ordered to stay away from England.

After abandoning the Persian project, Anthony proposed more projects to other European sovereigns such as Rudolph II and the King of Spain. In 1610, while in the Spanish service, he became a pirate by capturing ships and selling their cargo for his own benefit while he was also involved in an anti-Turkish campaign. Anthony's strategy of working on different projects and being at the service of different monarchs at the same time is clearly depicted in a letter from Sir Charles Cornwallis, the English ambassador in Madrid, to his chief, Lord Salisbury. In this letter, Cornwallis cynically comments on Anthony's charlatanism by comparing him to "a cunning juggler [who] tarries not long upon his tricks, lest time and visibility discover what legerdemain seeks to draw into obscurity and marvel" (Ross 70). It was during his stay in Madrid in 1611 that he gave his brother Robert the manuscript of his travel account to Persia. Robert had returned from Persia as Abbas's ambassador to the European courts in order to pursue Anthony's abandoned mission. Robert took the manuscript to London, where it was published in 1613. Finally, having been a

famous politico-commercial schemer all his life, Anthony died in Granada in obscurity and poverty.

1.1.2 Robert Sherley

As mentioned before, Robert, the youngest of the Sherley brothers, was left behind in Persia as a pledge when his brother, Anthony, was sent by Shah Abbas as an ambassador to the Western countries. Beginning in December 1598, Robert's political career in Persia lasted for almost two decades and resulted in two distinct missions as a Persian ambassador to pursue Anthony's unfinished project of alliance between the Persians and the Christian authorities. Meanwhile, he also took part in two great battles between the Persians and the Turks. In addition to his deeds of valour in the battlefield, two other important events happened when he was living in Persia: first, he was appointed as the governor of an important town near the capital city of Isfahan; and second, he married Terresia, the daughter of Ismael Khan, a Circassian of noble birth and Christian faith. Disappointed by the results of Anthony's attempts in Europe, Robert wrote a letter to him in September 1606 which indicates that Robert's position in the Persian court was in danger because of Anthony's failure to fulfill his embassy. Finally, after two years of wandering in the Persian court, in 1608 Robert was assigned as the Persian ambassador to European countries to unite them with the Persians against the Turks.

One of the highlights of Robert's mission in Europe is his stay in the Polish capital in the autumn of 1608. Robert's life at King Sigismund's court at this time became the subject of a pamphlet written by Andrew Leech, which was translated and modified by Thomas Middleton as another pamphlet in English called *Sir Robert Sherley*. After spending some

time in other European courts in Prague and Florence, he met the Pope and finally, in August 1611, reached his native land after more than thirteen years. Although it was suspected that James I would not receive him, Robert was given an audience to discuss his mission. However, the opposition of the Levant and East India companies to Robert's propositions frustrated his negotiations in England. As a result, in January 1613 Robert left England to return to his Persian master, but his return trip was full of hardships and delays and he had to wander in India for two years before reaching Isfahan in March 1615. As soon as he returned to the Persian court, Robert began his negotiations with Abbas and proposed a new mission, this time particularly having Spain in view.

He reached Lisbon in the summer of 1617, and despite his great efforts to attract the interest of the Spanish in silk trade with Persia—he stayed in Spain for almost five years—this second visit was as empty of result as the first one. After the failure of the Hispano-Persian trade mission, Robert paid a visit to his home country in December 1623. Unluckily for him, it was during his second visit to England and in the middle of his negotiations with the English court concerning trade opportunities in Persia that James I died, and his proposal was consigned to oblivion. Finally, in April 1624 Robert was given a private audience with the new king, Charles I. The result of this meeting was not what Robert expected, as the young monarch did not seem interested in pursuing his father's plans. Thus, Robert's only achievement was to be allowed to go back to Persia as a private citizen accompanied by an English agent, Dodmore Cotton.

In March 1627 Robert, with a group of Englishmen, left England for the last time to finish the prolonged mission of Anglo-Persian trade relations. The English group reached Persia and was received into the presence of the Shah in May 1627. Despite the civilities

common in the Persian court, this meeting did not lead to a satisfactory result, as Abbas seemed to have lost his interest in Robert Sherley and ignored him and his entourage during their stay in his court. In the last stage of his adventures in Persia, Robert left Ashraf, the summer camp of the Persian king, for the capital city of Isfahan. However, he became seriously ill on his way to Isfahan and died in July 1628, by which time he had already lost his hopes for the Anglo-Persian politico-commercial mission.

1.1.3 Thomas Sherley

Sir Thomas Sherley, second of that name, the elder brother of Sir Anthony Sherley and Sir Robert Sherley, is another Englishman who is known for his involvement in the East, although, unlike his brothers, the scope of his adventures was limited to the Ottoman Empire. At one point he was active as a privateering adventurer, and his major project was to begin a war against the Ottomans' commerce; however, his attempts brought no honour to his country and no enrichment to himself, since his anti-Ottoman projects alarmed the merchants of the Levant Company and caused some opposition in the English court. It was in one of these projects that, in a failed attack, he was betrayed and abandoned by his own men. Thomas was captured by the inhabitants of Zea, an island in Levantine waters, and later on he was handed over to the Ottoman authorities. Being imprisoned in Constantinople, he was twice condemned to death, but the promise of receiving a large ransom convinced the Turkish authorities to stop his execution.

Since Elizabeth I did not have a positive view of the Sherleys, Thomas did not have any chance to be rescued by the English authorities during her reign; but as soon as James I came to the throne, he appealed to the Ottoman sultan for Thomas's release, even though this

plea had no immediate effect — everything related to English foreign policy was controlled and managed by Sir Robert Cecil, one of the Sherleys' major opponents back home.

However, despite his opponents' efforts, Thomas was liberated in December 1605 and, after spending some time in the Ottoman capital and then in Naples, reached his homeland before the end of 1606 to find himself in considerable trouble. In revenge for the miserable time that he had passed in the Ottoman prisons, Thomas began to provoke a negative view of the Turks among his countrymen. To silence him, the Levant merchants took action and spread rumours about his relations with rebellions in Ireland. Not surprisingly, all their attempts resulted in Thomas's imprisonment in England in September 1607. The most ironic point about Thomas's fate is that he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for turning Turk, something that is extremely unlikely considering his anti-Turkish views. This fake accusation was not really serious and Thomas was soon released. Thomas's most important achievement after coming home was his role in the publication of pamphlets written by Anthony Nixon and Thomas Middleton and a play by John Day which helped the Sherleys, including Thomas's two younger brothers Anthony and Robert, not to be ignored or neglected by their countrymen. Despite being involved in expeditions in the eastern parts of the world, Thomas has never been as well known as his two other brothers, either in his lifetime or later. He spent the last years of his life as a keeper of the Royal Park in the Isle of Wight until his death in 1628.

1.2 Bibliography: The Sherley Dossier

As the first example of the presentation of Persia and the Persian "Other" in the printed materials of the early modern period, one can refer to the travel account of Anthony Jenkinson (1558-1563). It was through Hakluyt's publication of Jenkinson's account that the Tudor public learned about Shah Tahmasb, the son of Shah Ismail, the founder of Safavid dynasty, and his court for the first time. Then for a while, due to the failure of Jenkinson's expedition and also the inconsistency in the trading policy of the Persian monarchs, there were not many considerable Persian expeditions, and consequently no accounts were published in England. In fact, the unstable relationship between Safavid monarchs and the Ottoman Sultans had caused such turmoil that travelling to Persia seemed not only unprofitable but also dangerous. As a result, during the period of time before Anthony Sherley's trip to Persia, there was not much of a positive view of travelling to Persia in the early modern printed materials. Such a negative view was supported by the publication of a travel account in the last years of the sixteenth century called *The Travellers Breviat*. This account, which was originally addressed to Italians, warned readers of the difficulties of travelling to Persia by suggesting that "the Caspian sea is very dangerous and unfrequented; Persia presents difficulties in the way of lofty mountains and vast deserts; only ambassadors are permitted to enter and even they are not allowed to travel freely or to converse with the natives at their pleasure" (qtd. in Chew 217).

Despite the presence of an uncertain and not necessarily positive image of Persia and the Persians, it seems that Anthony Shelery's expedition and the accounts written about it created a print sensation and promoted a much more positive representation of the Persians. The number of books and pamphlets which were directly or indirectly concerned with the

adventures of the Sherleys and their companions suggests that the more the Sherleys' adventures became popular with Londoners, the more representatives of the Persian "Other" frequented the early modern page and stage. What follows is a list of accounts and narratives about the Sherleys' expedition published between 1600 and 1624-25, which will be examined in Chapter Three. It is necessary to add that besides these known and frequently consulted accounts, there still remain many other letters and notes on the Sherleys' expedition, notably in the archives of Vienna and Spain, which could not be included in this limited project. I shall enumerate the most popular accounts according to their date of publication, although this does not always correspond to the order in which they will be discussed in Chapter Three.[1]

S1) *A true report of Sir Anthony Sherley's journey overland to Venice fro[m] thence by sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babylon, and so to Caspian in Persia: his entertainment there by the great Sophie: his oration: his letters of credence to the Christian princes: and the privilege obtained of the great Sophie, for the quiet passage and traffic of all Christian merchants, throughout his whole dominions.* (STC 22425)

This was printed in 1600 in London by R. Blore, for J. Jaggard. As Denise Ross suggests, according to the catalogue of the British Museum, "this pamphlet was printed from the report of 'two gentlemen who have followed him [Sir Anthony Sherley] the whole time of his travels and are lately sent by him with letters into England, September 1600'"(xiv). This anonymous pamphlet was suppressed immediately after being printed. Based on the registers of the Stationers Company, it was "entered on the 23rd of October, 1600" and "R. Blore and J. Jaggard were fined 6.s 8d. 'for printing without license, and contrary to order, a little book on Sir Anthony Sherley's voyage'" (Ross xiv). It is a collection of letters and

[1] References in the style of S1, S2, etc. in later chapters denote the following texts.

historical documents sent to be published in England and to provide public information about Anthony's achievements in Persia. It consists of four different parts:

i. The first part, as its title indicates, is reported by two gentlemen who had followed Sir Anthony Sherley in his trip to Persia and was sent by him with letters to England.

ii. The second part is "the copy of his Oration to the Sophie" (Shah Abbas I) in two pages.

iii. The third part is "the copy of Sir Anthony Sherley's letter of credence from the great Sophie to the Christian Princes" in one page.

iv. The last part is "the copy of the free privileges obtained by Sir Anthony Sherley of the great Sophie for all Christians to trade and traffic into Persia."

S2) *A new and large discourse of the travels of Sir Anthony Sherley, Knight, by sea, and over land, to the Persian Empire. Wherein are related many strange and wonderful accidents: and also, the description and conditions of those countries and people he passed by: with his return into Christendom. Written by William Parry gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his travels.* (STC 19343)

This was written by William Parry, who accompanied Anthony Sherley in his trip to Persia and back to Europe. It was first published in 1601 but became more popular when some parts of it appeared in Samuel Purchas's *Pilgrims*; the complete form was reprinted in J. Payne Collier's *Illustrations of English Literature* in London in 1863-4 (Ross xvi).

S3) *The three English Brothers. Sir Thomas Sherley his travels, with his three years imprisonment in Turkey: his enlargement by his Majesty's letters to the great Turk: and lastly, his safe return into England this present year, 1607. Sir Anthony Sherley his embassage to the Christian princes. Master Robert Sherley his wars against the Turks, with his marriage to the Emperor of Persia his niece.* (STC 18592)

This was the first work written on the Sherleys' adventures by a non-traveller writer, the celebrated Elizabethan pamphleteer Anthony Nixon. It was published in 1607 in London to be sold by John Hodgets in St. Paul's Churchyard.

S4) *Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassador in the name of the King of Persia, to Sigismund the Third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other princes of Europe his royal entertainment into Craiova, the chief city of Poland, with his pretended coming into England : also, the honourable praises of the same Sir Robert Sherley, given unto him in that kingdom, are here likewise inserted.* (STC 17894)

This was written by Thomas Middleton and published in 1609 by I. Windet for John Hodgets to be sold at his shop at the Great South door of St. Paul's. As its title suggests, it focuses on Sir Robert Sherley's travel to Persia and his service as ambassador of Shah Abbas, especially his presence in the court of Sigismund III, King of Poland and Sweden.

S5) *Sir Antony Sherley his relation of his travels into Persia the dangers, and distresses, which befell him in his passage, both by sea and land, and his strange and unexpected deliverances. His magnificent entertainment in Persia, his honourable employment there-hence, as ambassador to the princes of Christendom, the cause of his disappointment therein, with his advice to his brother, Sir Robert Sherley, also, a true relation of the great magnificence, valor, prudence, justice, temperance, and other manifold virtues of Abas, now King of Persia, with his great conquests, whereby he hath enlarged his dominions. Penned by Sr. Antony Sherley, and recommended to his brother, Sr. Robert Sherley, being now in prosecution of the like honourable employment.* (STC 22424)

This was written by Anthony Sherley and is his own account of his journey to Persia. It was written sometime before 1611, as he handed the manuscript over to his brother Robert

at their meeting in Spain in 1611. Later, in 1613, it was published in London by an anonymous editor. A summarized version of it also appeared in Purchas's *Pilgrims*.

S6) *Hakluyt's posthumous, or, Purchas his Pilgrims: containing a history of the world in sea voyages and land travels by Englishmen and others.* (STC 20509)

In this collection of travelogues, which was published in 1624-25, Samuel Purchas included some parts of several accounts of the Sherleys' expedition in Persia; for details, see the discussion in Chapter 3.

2. Postcolonial Theory and the English Renaissance

In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the origins of the preconceived ideas about the Muslim "Other" and the historical changes that influenced the construction of the Muslim image. Then, I introduce the growing body of scholarship, initiated by Nabil Matar, which questions the idea—made fashionable by some of the followers of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)—of viewing the early modern English as already imperialists in the East. In fact, it was during the late 1990s that Matar and some other scholars of the early modern period recognized that Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and the Orientalist discourses that originated from it were not appropriate to be applied to the early modern era, a time when Europe was not yet involved in ruling over and colonizing lands in the East and the great empires were the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moguls. According to the findings of this scholarly movement, the new confrontations of the English with the Islamic world in the early modern period, which were the result of new forms of commerce, necessitated a new image of this "Other." These critics also emphasize that the power relations implied in post-colonial theory are unsustainable in an early modern context, because it was only after the eighteenth-century events and the fall of Muslim empires such as Ottomans and Persians that the process of permanent demonization of the Muslim "Other" began. In fact, contrary to the growing imperialist view of the eighteenth century, people in early modern England showed a great interest in cultural and commercial relations with the Islamic "Other." Consequently, the purpose of the second part of this chapter is to correlate the scholarly resources already available with writing about the attitudes towards the Muslim "Other" in that era.

Having presented Matar's theory of the demonization of the Muslim "Other" and construction of a fixed and stereotypical image of Muslims, I will then introduce other

scholars who oppose Matar's viewpoint, and with whom I side, such as Dimmock, Burton, MacLean, and Loomba. Being the leader of the scholarly movement of revisiting the representations of Muslim "Others" in the light of the actual power relations of the East and the West in the early modern period, Matar insists on the constant demonization of Muslim "Others," something that he is strongly criticized for. On the other hand, his critics insist on the fluidity of the representations and the continuous construction of different versions of Muslim "Others" in accordance with the politico-historical changes of the early modern period, before the emergence of the British Empire at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Following Matar's critics, I suggest that there was no monolithic, unified representation of the Muslim "Other" in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I also contribute to the ongoing discussions of these critics by finding some examples of contradiction in Matar's own description of the representation of Muslims. Thus, I identify some aspects of Matar's discussion which could oppose his own idea of the uniformity of representations in the early modern period. More specifically, I suggest that Matar's theory of a demonized, fixed stereotype representing different Muslim "Others," such as Turks and Moors, is not applicable to the presentation of the Persian "Other," a point that will be reinforced in the next chapter. For now, and prior to investigating the origins of these preconceived ideas, it is important to emphasize that constant changes in the historical circumstances of East-West relations in the early modern period caused an evolution in views of the Muslim "Other."

2.1 A Brief History of the Construction of the Muslim "Other"

To investigate the origins of the preconceived ideas about the Muslim "Other" and the evolution of the Muslim image in the course of different historical circumstances, one should begin with antiquity. At the height of ancient Greek civilization, Aristotle called the Asians intelligent and skillful on account of the hot weather yet also lazy and inactive for the same reason. On the other hand, the Romans depicted the same peoples as fierce and strong warriors who were full of courage and energy (Blanks and Frassetto 1). Although these classical views of Eastern "Others" can still be detected in the collective perception of the West about the East in later ages, many preconceived notions belong to the tradition of polemic misrepresentation of Islam, which began in the medieval period during the Crusade wars between Christians and Muslims. It was medieval theologians who created an evil pagan stereotype representing the Muslim "Other" in order to defend and strengthen the Christian self-image.

Studying Western views of Islam in Medieval and early modern Europe, David Blanks and Michael Frassetto point to the main cause of this demonization by suggesting that "[d]uring the Middle Ages, Islamic civilization was far ahead of its Christian rivals, offering enticing advances in architecture, law, literature, and philosophy" (3). Consequently, due to the cultural inferiority that could be felt among Europeans in the Middle Ages and also the fear of the expansion of Islam, theologians of the period created a fabricated and distorted image of the Muslim "Other" who was condemned as the representative of all wickedness that a Christian must shun. Accordingly, an orientalist discourse was constructed which implied the awareness of Europeans of their own inferiority in facing the increasing power of the Muslims. However, this pre-modern orientalism is distinct from the modern orientalism

that was produced in the period of French and British colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2] Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasize that there are moments where modern attitudes towards the Muslims are foreshadowed in medieval and early modern texts.

Moving away from the Middle Ages and its dark image of the Muslim "Other", one can find an interesting comparison between Turks and Trojans in the fifteenth century discussed by James Harper in his article on "Turks as Trojans; Trojans as Turks." In this article, Harper demonstrates how Trojans were identified with contemporary Ottoman Turks in fifteenth-century manuscript illuminations and paintings. Knowing that Ottoman Turks were the most widely known Muslims in Europe, we may be surprised to find that the Turks' victories in the fifteenth century led them to be identified with the Trojans, despite the many dark images of Muslims in the Middle Ages. This identification reflects the admiration that Italians felt for the power of Turks in the fifteenth century. As Mustafa Soykul also suggests, "The Turks were admired and praised by many Italians for their military valor, obedience to authority, discipline, perseverance, justice, order and many other qualities that the Italians perceived to be lacking in Christendom in general and in the Italian states in particular" (8). Nevertheless, as the Ottoman Empire continued invading Christian lands in the course of fifteenth century, the above mentioned positive image was replaced by darker representations. Finally, by the time of the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in the late fifteenth century, a new phase in the orientalist discourse began, and as Ananya Kabir

[2] According to Suzanne Conklin Akbari in her book, *Idols in the East, European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450,*there are "two distinctive vectors within pre-modern Orientalism: alterity defined in terms of religious difference, and alterity defined in terms of geographical diversity. Far more than in modern Orientalism—which, as suggested in the introduction, can be said to have its origins in the eighteenth-century colonial period—these two vectors were complexly intertwined, so that religious difference and geographical diversity were simultaneously invoked" (280).

concludes, “Trojans were presented not as Turks [anymore], but as ancient Romans” (16). Alongside this paradigm shift, the terminology applied to Muslims also changed and “Saracen” which had been the known term for different Muslim “Others” was replaced by terms like Turks, Moors and Persians.

This change in terminology also signals a new phase in relations between different Muslim “Others” and the English: an age of cultural and commercial exchange. The new confrontations of the English with the Islamic world in the sixteenth century, which were the result of the new forms of commerce, necessitated a new image of these Muslim “Others.” Undoubtedly, the medieval image of the Muslim “Other” retained its place in the English collective perception, but it was the great commercial developments of the second half of the sixteenth century, associated with the reign of Elizabeth I, that brought the Muslim figure to the spotlight. According to Richard Hakluyt, in *The Principle Navigations*, Elizabeth initiated her relations with the Islamic world as early as 1561, corresponding with Safavid Shah, an overture which failed at that time (2: 9). Later on as there was great competition among different European countries to establish commercial relations with the Islamic world, English merchants had to begin trading with the Turks, and this competition motivated Elizabeth to sponsor commercial and diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. It was in the years between 1570 and 1650 and after the initiation of Anglo-Ottoman relations that England experienced “one of the most striking transformations in economic history,” and “new forms of capital, a new sense of purpose, and a new vitality in economic enterprise” emerged (Rabb 2-3).

As the most powerful and prosperous Empire of the time, the Ottoman Empire could make the best of allies, and Elizabeth I’s primary purpose for seeking an alliance with the

Turkish rulers was to encourage trade and request military aid. Of course, trading with the "infidel," the title used to refer to Muslims, was not something that could be easily accepted by English society at large. As a result, what Elizabeth emphasized in this alliance was that "Protestant Christianity shared more doctrines with Islam than with the idolatry of Catholicism" (Blanks 127). This view is also reflected in the words of her ambassador in Istanbul who, using pronouns like "us" and "we" (as opposed to "them" when referring to Catholics,) tried to show the union and commonality between Islam and Protestantism (Blanks 128); and the relationship between the followers of these two religions progressed insofar as Turks were called "allies of the Reformation" (Vitkus in Blanks and Frassetto 211). To defend Elizabeth's policy in expanding her diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottomans, Francis Bacon laid emphasis on the common religious views shared by Protestants and Turks, who were Sunni Muslims, suggesting that "the Turk favored Protestant England because Muslims abhorred 'the scandal' of images which prevailed among Catholics" (Matar, *Islam in Britain* 124, citing Bacon's *Observations on a Libel*). By 'the scandal' of images Bacon means the resentment that both the Elizabethans and the Ottomans felt towards worshiping icons by Catholics and the Shia Muslims (MacLean, *Looking East* 14).

In spite of emphasis on religious affinities, Elizabeth's motivation in establishing the Anglo-Ottoman alliance was to encourage the Ottomans to continue their war against Catholic Spain; in this way she could "weaken her greatest enemy at sea, while providing an excuse for trading with the infidel" (MacLean, *Looking East* 46). Hence, their common cause was to destroy the idolatrous Catholics. Although this new political and commercial affinity did not cause a drastic evolution in the image of the Muslim "Other" in the collective

perception of early modern English people, it brought the latter into closer contact with the Islamic world, which in itself caused the flourishing of various representations of the Muslim "Other" in early modern travel narratives. It is important to remark that these various representations, though not totally different from the dark images of the medieval period, were not as demonized as they became later on at the end of the seventeenth century.

The death of Elizabeth I and the accession of James I in 1603 represent the beginning of a new era in Anglo-Islamic relations. Indeed, the Jacobean era is characterized by James's reversal of Elizabeth's foreign policy towards the Ottomans. James's antipathy towards the Ottoman Empire is implied in a poem[3] by the king himself, which was republished for his coronation and contained words like "faithless, circumcised Turbaned Turke," suggesting the shift in England's strategy towards the Turks (Dimmock 199). Thus, as Matthew Dimmock suggests, with the change of monarchs in England "the dominant trope of the 'Turke' constructed in previous decades shifts" (17). Unlike Elizabeth, James considered signing letters to the Turks as "unfitting a Christian Prince" (Dimmock 200). Nevertheless, contrary to his negative attitudes towards Turks, James was more inclined to establish his foreign relations with the Turks' old enemy, the Persian Empire. Regarding the Ottoman-Persian enmity, which has a long history, the study of late Elizabethan foreign policy reveals that, "interested in the conflict [Ottoman-Persian wars], [Elizabeth] sought primarily to supply the continual Ottoman demand for arms and armaments with which to combat the Persians," whereas James "famously favored the Persians over the Ottomans" (Dimmock 141).

James's interest in Anglo-Persian relations was such that in 1601 (before his accession to the throne) he expressed his interest in potential future relations in answer to the

[3] This poem by James I was published in *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at Vacant Hours.* (London, 1603)

Persian Shah Abbas (Dimmock 141). For the same reason, it was only during James's reign, in 1607, that Anthony Nixon's accounts of Anthony Sherley's travel to Persia could be published and a play[4] based on the Sherleys' adventures performed on the stage. In addition to these two works from the Sherleys' dossier, there is another travel account by Anthony Sherley, reporting his trip to Persia, which was published in 1613 and is the major focus of the next chapter. To emphasize this shift in viewpoint, it is necessary to recall that due to Elizabeth's pro-Turkish policy, the first pamphlet of the accounts of Anthony Sherley's travel to Persia, published in October 1600, was immediately suppressed and the printer and seller were fined. As Samuel Chew points out, "they were ordered to bring all copies to the Stationer's Hall to be destroyed" (268). Hence, it was in James's reign that Persians began to appear on the early modern page and stage, an appearance that was repeated in more plays and continued to the end of the seventeenth century.

Despite James's antipathy towards the Turks and the rise of some literary misrepresentations of different Muslim "Others," it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that the English were powerful enough to oppose Muslims outside the imaginary world of literature. According to Matar's study of East-West relations, the military and naval developments of the Interregnum changed the nature of the relationship between Britain and the Muslim "Others" such as Turks, Moors, and Persians and also the representations of them (*Britain and Barbary* 10). In fact, it is during the seventeenth century that England's transition from a trading power to an imperial one took place, and its military and naval developments changed it from a country interested in negotiation with Muslim Empires to a country with imperial plans to dominate the Islamic world. This transition was not limited to political and commercial affairs, and, alongside political changes in England, as John Gillies

[4] *The travailes of three English brothers* (1607)

suggests in his *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (1994), there was "a major paradigm shift in the discursive construction of otherness between the beginning and the end of the seventeenth century" (28). In short, England's evolution from a trading power to an empire in the eighteenth century signals the beginning of another phase in the orientalist discourse known as modern orientalism: the gradual domination of a consistently degraded and demonized image of the colonized Muslim "Others."

2.2 Matar's Critique of the Application of Said's *Orientalism* to Early Modern Anglo-Islamic Relations

When analyzing the discourses of Anglo-Islamic relations in the early modern period, it is false to follow the dichotomy of an ever powerful West and an always subordinate East which was introduced by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). As one of the first scholars in the early 1990s who argued against applying post-colonial theory to a pre-colonial period, Nabil Matar demonstrates that before the eighteenth century Englishmen never used words such as "colony," "plantation," or "settlement" to refer to the Muslim Empires and never travelled to the Islamic world as "colonists" but as "factors" (*Turks, Moors* 11). Thus, no colonial discourse, practice, or goal could be recognized in early modern Anglo-Islamic interactions. Moreover, as Matar suggests, during the early modern period Muslims did not see themselves in a subservient position to Christendom, and it was the Ottoman Empire that was attacking European trading ships, capturing many Englishmen (*Islam in Britain* 12). In Said's own words, Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (*Orientalism* 3). The most important point about Said's theory is that he emphasizes the presence of a Western overwhelming power which has been shaping

and dominating the East, whereas "the authority of possessiveness" and "the security of dominion," which are the essential parts of modern Orientalism—or Saidian Orientalism—were neither felt nor expressed by the English travellers and writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Matar, *Islam in Britain* 11). Moreover, as Said indicates, the major focus of *Orientalism* is on Western representations of the Orient rather than a "real Orient," a feature which has misled many of scholars to ignore the real peoples and cultures of the Orient (5). No one denies the importance of Said's study in introducing the orientalist discourse to the modern world; however, as McLean suggests, "many scholars coming of age in the long shadow of *Orientalism* have felt free to dismiss the important historical studies produced by skilled and knowledgeable orientalists" (*Looking East* 10). And as a result of this bad influence, many of these critics[5] fell prey to the regrettable mistake of applying the post-colonial discourse to the critical readings of early modern English texts about the East, treating them as the products of an imperialist power.[6]

In addition to Matar, Vitkus and Goffman have also argued against this "ahistorical tendency to describe early modern Englishmen as 'imperialist' before English imperialism began" (Vitkus, *Turning Turk* 3). Their argument is based on the fact that, as Goffman points out, "the Englishmen's imperialism is not innate," (4) and instead of being imperialist in their early modern encounters with the East, "the English were a society of mimic-men who were learning (or hoping) to imitate alien models of power, wealth, and luxury" (Vitkus, *Turning Turk* 9). Continuing the same argument initiated by Matar, Richmond Barbour, in his *Before Orientalism* (2003), argues that "to project [Edward Said's] findings backward, to read pre-

[5] To name some of them: Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness*; Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe*; Jack D' Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama*; Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities.*

[6] In her study *Idols in the East, European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450,* Suzanne Conklin Akbari also criticizes the application of Saidian orientalism to medieval literary works.

colonial ethnography as if its rhetoric bespoke European dominance of the world, or its defensive tropes necessarily foretold aggressive expansion, is anachronistic" (3). It is "anachronistic" especially because the scope of Said's theory begins in the second half of the eighteenth century and not before. In fact, all through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, commercial exchanges rather than imperialist conflicts were dominant in Anglo-Islamic relations, and the commercial and military power of Muslim empires was what attracted and amazed Western travellers to the East. Thus, early modern travellers to the Orient could have hardly enjoyed the "positional superiority" which, according to Said's theory, their eighteenth-century fellows felt in their encounters with the weakened and defeated Orient (*Orientalism* 7). In fact, it was only in the eighteenth century and with the decline of Muslim empires that the discourse of domination and conquest turned into the actual colonization of Muslim lands and the modern orientalist discourse began to be produced. In addition to the Westerners' lack of "positional superiority" to the East in the early modern period, another feature in Saidian Orientalism which makes it inapplicable to the early modern literary productions about the East is the lack of "discursive consistency" in construction of the early modern images of Islam and the Muslim "Other" (Burton 12). In other words, the consistency of representation which characterizes the eighteenth-century encounters is lacking the experience of early modern travellers to the Orient. What these travellers observed and reflected in their accounts of the early modern Orient is not a uniformly negative image but a more complicated picture which points to the fluid and evolving nature of the early modern representations of the Muslim "Other," something that will be discussed in what follows.

2.3 Matar's Theory of the Demonization of Muslim "Others"

In his study of the representations of the Muslim "Other," Matar recounts issues such as the demonization of Islam and the misunderstanding of Islamic society and religion. As he demonstrates, the attitude of early modern English society towards the Muslim "Other" was "an attitude of fear, anxiety and awe," which was due to the superiority of the Muslims as a military and commercial power at the time (*Turks, Moors* 8). Thus, the English began "to demonize, polarize, and alterize this undefeatable other" (*Turks, Moors* 12). However, the same military and commercial superiority of the Muslim "Other" was an attraction to the English sailors and soldiers who, compared with other English people, were in closer contact with the Islamic world and in many cases were drawn to it, as it "offered both attractive employment and favorable service" (*Turks, Moors* 44). This group of Englishmen was condemned at home, especially for joining and enjoying Muslim power. In many cases, joining the Ottoman army or navy could lead to "taking the Turban" or "Turning Turk," which were other names for conversion.

The best examples of English travellers to the East who were involved in military affairs in Islamic lands are the Sherley brothers. Although they never converted to Islam, the Sherley brothers were known both in Persian and English sources as military advisors in the Persian king's court, and Robert fought in some of the Persian-Ottoman wars when he was in Persia. In fact, all through the seventeenth century, joining the Islamic forces and converting to Islam became so popular among commoners such as soldiers and sailors that intellectuals and theologians alike were challenged to react and began fabricating and demonizing images of the Muslim "Other." The best avenues for presenting the public with these fabricated stories of the Islamic world and the Muslim "Other" were plays and sermons. According to

Matar, “In the imaginatively-controlled environments of the theater and the pulpit, Britons converted the unbelievers, punished the renegades, and condemned the Saracens” (*Islam in Britain* 20). The consequence of the process of demonization was the emergence of a set of popular stereotype of the Muslim “Other”: “‘The Turk’ was cruel and tyrannical, deviant, and deceiving; ‘the Moor’ was overdriven and emotionally uncontrollable, vengeful, and religiously superstitious, the Muslim was all that an Englishman and a Christian was not” (Matar, *Turks, Moors* 13).

Studying the construction of fixed, demon stereotypes representing the Muslim “Other” in the early modern period, Matar introduces a phenomenon called “superimposition” (*Turks, Moors* 16). According to his study, in the early modern era, known as the Age of Discovery, English people had the chance to experience living in a triangle, called by Matar the “Renaissance Triangle,” which linked England to both the Old World and the New World. The English Renaissance was not only the age of the exploration of the New World, but also a time for the expansion of England’s commercial and political relations with the Islamic world, consisting of powerful empires like Ottomans and Persians. This concurrency of the discovery of the New World and the expansion of relations with the Old World is one of the focuses of Matar’s argument, as it reveals why, in encountering the Islamic world, the English chose the same rhetoric as they used when meeting the natives of the New World. The process of “superimposition,” which means transferring “constructions of differentiation from the American Indians to the Muslims,” is reflected in the usage of the term “Barbarian” in reference to Muslims in the sixteenth century, a stereotypical term that has been permanently used to refer to different Eastern “Others” since then (Matar, *Turks, Moors* 15). According to Matar, the use of the term “barbaric” in reference to Muslims

happened for the first time, just as the English were experiencing their first encounters with the American Indians, and the word "Barbary" began to appear in the discourses of both the New World and the Old World.[7] However, it is necessary to emphasize that, contrary to the Muslims, the Persians used to be called "barbarian" by the Greeks in antiquity and long before Islam.[8]

In fact, by representing these different "Others," American "Indians" and "Muslims," through the same terminology, the English conveyed the desire to dominate the Old World, an impossible dream at that time, as they had begun to dominate the American Indians in the New World (Matar, *Turks, Moors* 15). The major paradox implied in this superimposition is that the English began to apply the term "barbarian" to the advanced Muslim world of the early modern era, when, due to the blooming commercial and political interactions between England and Muslim Empires, they were in close contact with the Old World. Therefore, superimposition of demonized images borrowed from New World encounters to the Muslim "Others" indicates that the construction of stereotypes — "demonization" in Matar's terms – – did not have anything to do with actual encounters between the English and Muslims, either at home or abroad.

[7] For more information about the use of the term "barbarian" in reference to Muslims in medieval period see W. R. Jones's "The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe."

[8] As Edith Hall suggests, "the idea of 'the barbarian' as fully fledged anti-Greek was an invention of the early years of the fifth century BC," which is more than two centuries before the conversion of the Persians to Islam (2). Undoubtedly, due to the fact that Persia, long before the Ottomans, was the most powerful empire of the East, and thus the major enemy of ancient Greece, the Persians preoccupied the imagination of the Greeks and were frequently represented in ancient Greek texts. This representation, as could be expected, was not positive at all; rather, as an exercise in self-definition, the Greek writers often portrayed the barbarian Persians as the opposite of the ideal Greek. In fact, as Edith Hall suggests, the Greek poets created the "discourse of barbarism" to conceptualize the inhabitants of the east as "defeated, cruel and always as dangerous" (99). The representation of the Persians in ancient Greek literature can be considered as one of the first instances of Western writers' attempt to create the "Other"; thus, it is not surprising that the same discourse was reproduced centuries later when the Western world, through the Crusades, had to encounter its major enemy, this time not the pagan Persian but the Muslim Persian. And it was essentially the same discourse of barbarism—what Hall calls "a complex system of signifiers denoting the ethnically, psychologically, and politically 'Other'" (2)—that early modern writers and their readers, in their turn, adopted.

To demonstrate the relation between this thesis and Matar's theory of "the Renaissance Triangle," it is necessary to mention that Anthony Sherley, who is the central figure in the study of Anglo-Persian relations, was one of many English ambassadors, traders, and explorers who spent all his life in the Renaissance geographical triangle: he goes from England to Jamaica, then back to Europe; he sets off for the Levant and Persia; he goes from Persia to Europe and finally to Jamaica, where he dies (Matar, *Turks, Moors* 97). Through a critical reading of his accounts in the next chapter, I will examine the way his encounters with the New World affected his representations of Persian Muslims.

Sharing Matar's view on the demonization of the Muslim "Other" in the early modern period, Vitkus suggests that the phenomenon of conversion, known as "turning Turk" at that time, is the main reason for the construction of evil images of Turks as the main Muslim "Other." According to him, Turkish stereotypical features such as "aggression, lust, suspicion, murderous conspiracy, sudden cruelty masquerading as justice, merciless violence rather than Christian charity, wrathful vengeance instead of turning the other cheek" were supposed to contaminate Christians and lead to their conversion, which was metaphorically referred to as "turning Turk" (*Three Turk Plays* 3). By fixating on such evil features, both early modern drama and sermons, on one hand, warned the English against the damnation that resulted from conversion, and, on the other hand, constructed an inaccurate representation of Muslims that remained in English culture and even grew to a well-established set of stereotypes which are still prevalent. The construction of these stereotypes eventually led to the emergence of an idea that traditionally associated Islam with violence, treason, cruelty, and wrath. However, unlike Matar, Vitkus admits that "the early modern images of Islam are contradictory, and may contain both positive and negative features"

(*Three Turk Plays* 3). As an example of the negative features, one can refer to the stereotypical conception of Oriental kingship which was associated with tyranny and despotism, a notion that had its roots in the Bible and also in Roman and Greek classical texts. According to Vitkus, although the pejorative cliché of the endless tyranny of Muslim rulers, especially the Ottoman sultans, used to dominate the early modern page and stage, the wealth and absolute power and discipline of the Muslim ruler and the loyalty of his subjects were praised in many of the sources of the time (Vitkus in Blanks and Frassetto 219). In fact, the collective perception of early modern English society consisted of contradictions about Muslims who were "demonized and exalted, admired and condemned… often heroic, and always dynamic, but …also potentially transgressive" (Vitkus, *Turning Turk* 22).

In addition to Vitkus, other scholars such as Matthew Dimmock, Jonathan Burton, Gerald MacLean, and Ania Loomba oppose Matar's idea about the consistently demonized image of Muslims in the West; instead, they suggest the presence of complex Western attitudes towards the Muslim "Other." In their discussions, they argue against the idea that in the early modern period the Muslim "Other" was stereotyped as merely marginalized and evil. Generally, this group of scholars agrees that early modern attitudes towards Islam were not uniformly hostile and fearful. Studying the representations of the Muslim "Other" in the early modern period, Loomba points to English society's ambivalent feelings towards the Turks and demonstrates that in many of these representations the Muslim "Other" is "glamorized as well as hated" (qtd. in Burton 22).

Burton is another scholar who questions Matar's idea that the representations of the Muslim "Other" "are all the same without any uniquely differentiating features" (*Turks, Moors* 6). In his *Traffic and Turning*, Burton indicates that "English representations of Islam

were complex and nuanced, moved by a variable nexus of economic, political, and cultural forces" (11). In opposing Matar's view that the representations of the Muslim "Other" are mere demonized stereotypes, Burton's major point is that the process of demonization was a project conducted by dramatists and clergymen at home and not necessarily by the real travellers of the Orient. According to Burton, the dramatists and clergymen focused on demonization of the Turks in order to prepare the English to "[turn] to the Turks without 'turning Turk'" (18). The other debatable point about Matar's study is that, according to him, "in their discourse about Muslims, Britons produced a representation that did not belong to the actual encounters with the Muslims" (*Turks, Moors* 6-7). In other words, he suggests that the representation of the Muslim "Other" was uniformly evil and unaffected by the real interactions between the English and Muslims in Islamic lands. However, Dimmock opposes Matar's view and believes that "continuing English encounters with Muslims, both imagined and 'actual', multiplied and complicated notions of the 'turke'" (10). Thus, these complicated notions of the "Turk" could not present them as thoroughly and consistently evil.

While Matar has been criticized for his views on fixed images of Muslims in the early modern period, there is a controversial issue in his theory which contradicts his own view. Although he insists on the dominance of a unified, negative image of the Muslim "Other" all through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is he himself who introduces the ambivalent reactions and attitudes of the English towards "the Turban." The "turban," an item of clothing particularly used by the Muslim "Other," was "the preeminent symbol of Muslim power and hegemony," which became the subject of various concerns in early modern discussions of identity (Blanks 39). As Matar argues, "the English associated the Turban with Islam" (Blanks 40); if so, then anyone with a turban is a Muslim and if, as he

suggests, there were ambivalent views about the turban in England, then it would be quite natural to expect contradictory attitudes towards those who wore it. Hence, the turban as a sign of being Muslim reflects the ambivalent perceptions of Islam in the early modern period. This range of various reactions to the turban begins with considering it as an object of Oriental fashion on the streets of London and ends with the negative attitudes towards it as the symbol of conversion (Blanks 40).

To demonstrate the ambivalent nature of attitudes towards the turban and its relation to politico-social relations with Muslims, Matar examines the reactions of different English monarchs. His study of the evolution of the significance of the turban begins with Elizabeth's reign and her attempt at wearing Turkish dress, which implied her preference for cooperation with Islam rather than with the Pope. A few years later, in James's reign, when Robert Sherley, Anthony Sherley's brother, who was sent by the Persian king to England as a Persian ambassador, insisted on wearing a turban while attending the English court, James hesitated to accept a turbaned Englishman. Even though, after negotiations, Robert Sherley was given an audience, which did not lead to any successful result, James's hesitation not only demonstrates his essentialist view of Englishness but also implies the presence of a not necessarily positive attitude towards the Muslim "Other" in that period of time, and it could be the consequence of the growth in the number of conversions to Islam among the English, which was one of the king's major problems.

Finally, as the last stage of change in attitudes towards the turban, Matar refers to the statue of Charles II which was completed in 1675 after the Restoration, showing "the king on his horse astride the figure of a turban-clad Oliver Cromwell" (Blanks 52). This image does not reflect the grandeur that used to be associated with the turban; on the contrary, it implies

that the restored king has destroyed the turban and has no fear of it any more. In fact, by the time that Charles II came to the throne, the same pre-modern orientalist discourse that was dominant in the iconography of the crusades was revived. In other words, the turban which used to be the most distinctive element to denote the Saracens of the illustrations and narratives of the crusades was once more used in the Restoration period to suggest the evilness of the defeated enemy, Oliver Cromwell.[9] Therefore, the change in reaction towards the turban, and its being "worn and unworn, praised and defamed, admired and hated" in the early modern era implies the changeability of the representations of the Muslim "Other" both in real life and in literature (Blanks 53).

In addition to the ambivalence concerning the usage and significance of the turban as an Islamic symbol, the numerous different ways that the early modern English employed the term "Turk" could support the idea that there was no monolithic, unified representation of the Muslim "Other" in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One scholar who has studied different significations of "Turkishness" in the early modern England is Gerald MacLean. MacLean's study of the etymology of the word "Turk" indicates that, contrary to the erroneous usage of "Turk" as synonym for Muslim and Ottoman, "to Ottomans themselves, the word referred disparagingly to the Anatolian peasantry over whom they had come to rule" (*Looking East* 6). The most important point about this mistake is that the powerful Ottomans were known in England by the same name that they used to call their inferior subjects, meaning they were downgraded, whether intentionally or not. Besides, this misconception about the identity of the Ottomans indicates the uncertainty and ambiguity

[9] For more information on turban and its significance as a distinctive element of Saracen alterity see Nadia R. Altschul's "Saracens and Race in Roman De la Rose Iconography: the Case of Dangier in MS Douce 195."

which was associated with the representations of the Muslim "Other" outside their own territories.

In addition to indicating a national and religious identity, "Turk" in early modern England was used as a trope which could be "pejoratively applied to anyone who portrayed contradictory or tyrannically patriarchal characteristics" (MacLean, *Looking East* 8). And it was in its same usage as a trope that "to turn Turk," metaphorically, meant "to commit an act of betrayal" (Burton 11). It was the versatile nature of the term "Turk" which made it appropriate as a title to be assigned to the members of different condemned religious and ethnic groups. For instance, it was used in the polemical discourse of both Protestants and Catholics. These two hostile religious rivals used to refer to each other as infidels and "Turks," with Protestants calling the Pope and Roman Catholics the "second Turk" (Vitkus in Blanks and Frassetto 212). Of course, it was not just Turks who were supposed to share common religious beliefs with each of these two Christian groups; as Mustafa Soykut suggests, the Muslim "Other" in general (Turk, Moor, or Persian,) to the Protestant, represented "the evilness of the Catholic" and to the Catholic, represented "the heresy of the Protestant" (5). In fact, Anthony Sherley uses the same discourse in his efforts to establish an alliance based on religious affinity between the Shia Persians and the Protestant England. If, at one time, in an effort to defend Elizabeth's pro-Turkish policy, Francis Bacon played up the common religious views shared by English Protestants and the Sunni Turks, later, in the reign of James I, Anthony Sherley would advocate the alliance between the Shia Persians and English Protestants by demonizing the Turks.

The fluidity of the representations of the Muslim "Other" was not just used by Protestants and Catholics in their polemic discussions; in general, this ambivalent nature of

the Muslim image gave the travellers, writers, and clergymen the opportunity to use the Muslim "Other" as a model for early modern English society either to follow or to avoid. In other words, whenever necessary, early modern travellers, dramatists, and clergymen constructed an image of the Muslim "Other" and set it as a model for their English readers and audience to learn from. In many cases, the lessons derived from these representations were about domestic affairs.

The best example of this "opportunistic use" of the constructed representations of the Muslim "Other" can be found in the travel accounts of William Biddulph, an English clergyman who travelled to Istanbul (MacLean, *Looking East* 14). As he recommends, "the devotion of the Turks to their 'blind guide[s] and superstitious churchmen' could be used to shame English readers into proper acts of piety" (Burton 26). Furthermore, even in producing the image of the Ottoman Sultans as tyrants, something that was discussed earlier in this chapter, the English were seeking a political purpose: "to teach the English to love, honor, and obey their good and gracious king" (Burton 27). Thus, the early modern representation of the Muslim "Other" magnified those aspects of Islamic culture and religion which could be used for propagandistic purposes. More instances of setting Muslims as models for the English to learn from can be found in Anthony Sherley's travel account, *Relation*, as he praises the Persian court and its discipline as opposed to the Western courts, which will be fully discussed in the next chapter.

The emergence of these divergent and sometimes contradictory representations of the Muslim "Other," especially in the first few decades of Anglo-Islamic relations, was the result of an ambivalent feeling that the English had towards the powerful Muslim empires. MacLean calls this feeling "imperial envy," and by "envy" he means a psychological

phenomenon which consists of "identification as well as differentiation, of sameness as well as otherness, of desire and attraction as well as revulsion" (*Looking East* 22). Even if the same was not true of all English writers, the English travellers who wrote about their experiences in Islamic lands always knew that they were writing about empires that had conquered "more than a third of the known world," and were not "backward, vulnerable, and 'Orientalized' space[s] to be conquered and controlled" (MacLean, *Looking East* 20). Of course, it is necessary to point out that this feeling of admiration and envy began at a time when the English initiated their relations with Eastern empires and started to fade away at the end of the seventeenth century, when the English began to establish their own empire.

While both Matar and his opponents have focused on the Turks and Moors as the major Muslim "Others" of the early modern period and studied the representation of these two groups of Muslims in the literature of that period, in what follows I will examine the representations of the Persians in one of the first groups of travel accounts about Persia published in early modern England: the Sherley dossier. Opposing Matar's theory of the dominance of a monolithic, unified representation of the Muslim "Other," I emphasize the ambivalent nature of the Persian "Other" presented in different texts in this dossier.

3. Representations of the Persian "Other" in the Sherley Dossier

Travel accounts, when viewed as documents recording different features of the visited place and its inhabitants in one specific period of time, communicate not only beliefs, habits and customs of the visited, but also the mentality and ideology of the visitor. In this chapter, I will read a cluster of travel accounts written in the first quarter of the seventeenth century which, on the one hand, relate the Sherleys' expedition in Persia and, on the other hand, reflect the significant transitions in the representation of the Persian "Other" in the print material of that span of time. Through the analytic reading of these accounts, I examine the fluidity of the representations of the Persian "Other" and the influence of the politico-historical milieu in which they were produced. These accounts are written by both traveller-writers and hired writers at home, and my goal in analyzing them is, first, to recognize the moments at which these two groups of writers enter into the process of production and modification of the Persian "Other," and second, to explain how the representatives of the Persian "Other," produced by each group, are affected by the context of their production and the motivations of the writers. Finally, I demonstrate that the presence of these different, and sometimes even contradictory, representations complicated the image of the Persian "Other" constructed in the first quarter of the seventeenth century; hence, Matar's theory of a demonized, fixed stereotype representing different Muslim "Others" is not applicable to the presentation of the Persian "Other."

3.1 Traveller-Writers' Accounts

3.1.1 Anthony Sherley's *Relation* [S5]

Although Anthony's *Relation* (1613) is not the first published about his journey to Persia and is certainly not the best one written about that trip—critics consider William Parry's more acceptable as a travelogue—it should be included in any study of the Persian "Other" in the seventeenth century for it influenced the representation of the Persian "Other" which appeared in almost all of the actual accounts, works of fiction, and drama of his time and even those of later centuries. Reading Anthony's account, I examine his representation of the Persian "Other" to demonstrate how his politico-commercial scheme has coloured his image of the Persians.

The first important feature of Anthony's account which makes it different from conventional accounts written by typical early modern travellers is that it was written more than ten years after he had abandoned his mission to unite the European countries and Persia against the Ottomans. In fact, he wrote it when he had already lost his reputation and was living in poverty. There is no wonder that, having failed in all his projects, he tried to regain his fame by writing this travelogue and glorifying his journey to Persia. It may be for the same reason that a great part of his account is devoted to his thoughts and emotions on various issues rather than objective description of the place and its people. These extended views of Anthony are presented in italics in the published text, which indicates their emotional and intellectual significance for him; however, the italicized sections, as Chew points out, "obscure the narrative sadly" (294). This feature of the account makes it more like a collection of views and contemplations of the writer about Persia and the Persians rather than the objective and unbiased observations of a witness.

The second important feature of Anthony's account is that, as mentioned above, there is no certain information about the exact time of its production. According to the 1613 preface, the manuscript was given to Robert Sherley, who was then the Persian king's ambassador in Spain, and reached England in August 1611. Thus, it is probable that Anthony wrote it sometime in 1610 or later, which is at least ten years after the actual trip. Knowing the fact that a large section of the account is devoted to Anthony's many interviews with the Persian king and his courtiers,[10] we may find it difficult to trust the authenticity of the speeches attributed to the Persians so long after the event. For it is hard to believe that Anthony had memorized all the speeches. He did not know Farsi, the Persian language, and, as Denison Ross suggests, there is the possibility that "he allowed free play to his pen and his imagination when describing these interviews" (xxii).

According to his own account, in visiting Persia and risking his life in such a dangerous journey, Anthony wished to be "the spectator" of what he had heard in Europe about the fame of the Persian king and his people (65). However, although Anthony considers the role of a "spectator" for himself, he is more an actor than an observer, as asserted by the editor of his account who calls Anthony "the first and chief Actor" (1). In fact, contrary to his own claim, which we shall consider below, he had not remained detached from the subject of observation as an observer, but entered into the circular pattern of transition of information about the "Other" in the early modern era. According to Anthony's description of his motivations for this journey to Persia, he had heard about the Persian "Other" when he was in Europe; he then decided to go and witness what had been reported at second hand, and now he was reporting what he learned about them by himself. Thus, as

[10] To be exact, his account contains elaborated reports of the speeches by Shah Abbas, the Grand Vizir (minister), Bustan Agha, Allah Verdi Khan, Tahmasp Quli khan, and Muhammad Agha, the Turkish envoy.

Jonathan Sell concludes, “the circle will be completed when his own report fills its [early modern] hearers and readers with wonder” (106). Following Sell, I suggest that this constant travelling of information from East to West and vice versa adds more dimensions to the known image of the Persians and, consequently, complicates and multiplies Westerners’ notions of them.

Anthony’s account provides a detailed history of the Safavid reign, with specific focus on Shah Abbas’s internal administration. In his own words, his account is about “[Abbas’s] person, the nature of his people, the distribution of his government, the administration of his justice, the condition of the bordering of Princes, and the causes of those wars, in which he was then occupied” (30).The most important point to note here is that, even though Anthony promises to write about the nature of the Persian people, a quick look at the list of issues presented in his account indicates that only a small portion of it is devoted to the Persians as ordinary citizens. In deed, his account is more about Abbas than any other Persian, and it seems that Anthony has devoted his travelogue chiefly to the presentation of the king of Persia and the contributions of his government. In other words, Anthony’s account is an attempt to construct an acceptable representation of Shah Abbas I as a politico-commercial ally for the Christian sovereigns. This attempt is reflected in the subtitle of the account which enumerates Abbas’s virtues: *a true reflection of the great magnificence, valor, prudence, justice, temperance, and other manifold virtues of Abbas, now king of Persia*. As Sell points out, Abbas is “the star of Sherley’s report” and “the prominence assigned him in the title” is clearly dominant all through the account (106).

Once he begins his description of the Persian monarch, Anthony provides his readers with a list of characteristics which are “prima facie attributes fit for a king” (Sell 107). Thus,

"[the] furniture of [Abbas's] mind [is] infinitely royal, wise, valiant, liberal, temperate, merciful, and [he is] an exceeding lover of justice, embracing royally other virtues, as far from pride and vanity, as from all unprincely signs or acts" (30-31). In addition to these traditional attributes, which are repeatedly emphasized on different occasions, Anthony ascribes some stock physical features to Abbas to depict him as a powerful and glorious king: "[Abbas's] person then is such, as a well-understanding nature would fit for the end proposed for his being, excellently well shaped, of a most well proportioned stature, strong, and active; his color somewhat inclined to a man-like blackness, is also more black by the sun's burning" (30-31).

The most interesting point about Anthony's description of Abbas's appearance is his reference to the blackness of his complexion, which is defined by Anthony as "man-like," indicative of masculinity, and darkened by burning in the sun. Anthony's brief but significant explanation about the dark complexion of the Persian "Other" suggests his attempt to distinguish the Persian "Other" from other baser, dark-skinned Muslim "Others" such as Moors, who were quite well-known to his readers in England. According to Ania Loomba's study of race in the early modern period, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries comprised "the last period in history where ethnic identities could be understood as fluid, or as the first moment of the emergence of modern notions of race" (201).[11] Anthony's readers evidently had their own assumptions about dark-skinned Muslims, which seem to be not necessarily positive. By assigning positive features to Abbas, Anthony tries to present an

[11] For more information about white and black Saracens see Suzanne Conklin Akbari's *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450,* especially the chapter on "The Saracen Body" which is about "the division of Saracens into those who are white, well proportioned as assimible, and those who are dark-skinned, deformed or of grotesque stature, and doomed to destruction" (156). It implies that the negativity associated with the colour of skin could have lingered in the collective memory of the early modern reading public. Anthony, being aware of this reality, tries to interpret the darkness of Abass's complexion in a positive way.

acceptable politico-commercial partner for European powers. We must therefore add a nuance to Sell's statement that "[he] does not bother to inflect the paradigm… [and] limits himself to ticking off the standard topical attributes of encomiastic personal description" (107).

In the process of beautifying Abass's image, in addition to listing positive and princely features, Anthony conceals all troubling, negative attributes that Abbas was known for, such as the severe punishments he meted out for treasons and the blinding of his own brothers as potential traitors and a danger to his throne. To describe this cruel and inhuman way of eliminating all potential rivals, Anthony uses a witty strategy to lessen its horrid aspect and justify its necessity: he claims that based on the laws and customs of the Persian kingdom, "the first born only rules," although the king might have many children; thus, "to avoid all kind of cause of civil dissension, the rest [of the male children] are not inhumanly murdered, according to the use of the Turkish government, but made blind with burning basons: and have otherwise all sort of contentment and regard fit for Prince children" (31). Since the issue of silencing and eliminating the sources of civil dissension to guarantee the peace and stability of the kingdom was current in England at that time, Anthony tries to explain the reason behind this negative aspect of Abbas's ruling system. At the same time, by comparing what Abbas did to maintain the security of his kingdom with what the Ottoman Sultans used to do, which was killing their siblings and potential rivals, he modifies the unbelievably inhuman actions of the Persian King.[12] It is not surprising that the dominant notion of the innate cruelty and violence of the Turkish sultans, which was known to Western

[12] It is important to remember that Anthony's trip to Persia happened in the early years of Abbas's reign, when he had not yet blinded his younger brothers. But by the time Anthony wrote his account, he knew that his readers had heard of these cruelties in the Safavid court and did his best to present a more tolerable image of the glorious king, who was at the centre of his failed project in Persia.

readers, is called inhuman and used to mitigate the horrifying method of Abbas. On Anthony's explanation, blinding of brothers was a necessity for some patriotic cause, which could not be avoided, and was generously compensated by providing princely lifestyle for the miserable victims for the rest of their lives.

Besides understating Abbas's cruelty, the other device that Anthony uses to temper the image of the Persian "Other" is to magnify Abbas's justice. Thus, he focuses on the style of government in his reign and compares it to Plato's Commonwealth, "the fashion of his government differing so much from that which we call barbarous, that it may justly serve for as great an Idea for a principality, as Plato's Common-wealth did for a Government, of that sort" (30). This passage reveals not only Anthony's attempt to present an ideal image of the Persian king and his government, but also his awareness of the prevailing negative image of the Persian which could still subsist somewhere in the memories of those familiar with classical texts, where the Persians used to be called barbarians. And it is not the only time that Anthony defends the Persians against being categorized as barbarians. In fact, being freshly back from Jamaica and as a traveller of "the Renaissance Triangle," (Matar, *Turks, Moors* 16) Anthony is aware of the popularity of the stereotypical term "barbarian," applied to the Easterners by the Westerners, so he takes every chance to save the Persians from being labeled as barbarian. By emphasizing the sophisticated system of government and the justice and wisdom of the Persian king, Anthony tries to reconstruct the familiar representative of the Persian "Other" which had its roots in the preexisting notions of early modern English readers.

In his efforts to redeem the image of the Persian "Other," Anthony praises the absolute power and discipline of Abbas and the loyalty of his subjects and goes so far as to

set up the Persian king and his government as a model for Western politicians. While referring to the reasons of the failure of his project in Persia, Anthony suggests,

> I speak only of a good intention, tossed with the tempests, first of many desperate calamities; then with many potent oppositions; the justice, wisdom, temperance, liberality, valor, mercifulness, and generality of all excellent virtues in a Prince esteemed by us barbarous, and yet indeed fit to be a pattern and mirror to some of ours, who have *Christ* in our mouths, and not the least of his Saints in our hearts. (110)

In this passage, Anthony not only rejects the popular idea about the Persians as barbarians but also compares them with the Western Christians who are, in his words, hypocritical. After considering a Utopian quality for Abbas's reign by comparing it to Plato's model of commonwealth and then introducing Abbas and his government as a mirror for Western princes, Anthony becomes even bolder in criticizing the way people are treated in European states:

> The subject being ever the person of the king, and his excelling virtues: which I had rather speak of, to point out by them the happiness of his state, then to see a far off the miseries of some of ours swimming in blood, full of cruel commandment, continual accusations, false friendships, the ruin of innocence, impalpable factions, and pernicious ends of things: contrary to that which ought to be with us of a better profession; and is with those which we despise. (110)

In this regard Anthony's account follows the convention of "accounts of foreign lands, penned by political dissenters, [which] did turn into veiled attacks on the prevailing status quo at home" (Sell 25). As a result, Anthony's representation of the Persian "Other" does not

seem to have been really pleasant to his countrymen, especially the politicians, who already viewed the travellers with suspicion. This suspicious view of travellers in the early modern period is remarked by Sell: "the traveller who had sailed off limits [and] known the other… was therefore transgressive, a potential threat to the ship of state and unsettler of the consensus"(24).

It is for the same reason that, although popular among the reading public in early modern England, Anthony and the accounts of his trip to Persia were not welcomed by the politicians. Already out of favour with Elizabeth for accepting the French king's award of knighthood, Anthony was also accused of treason for his relations with the Earl of Essex, and as a result, the politicians back home were watchful of all his movements and confiscated all the letters sent by him or addressed to him. As Sara Ahmed suggests, "the one who moves through space, or gets closer to the stranger returns home as almost the savage, as contaminated by the in-between of the narrative" (12). And that is why, as a banished servant and a proclaimed traitor, Anthony and his adventures were looked upon with great suspicion in England.[13] Thus, in such a political scene in England, Anthony's attempts were considered a threat to both the political stability of England and the friendly relations between the Turks and the English. In general, it des not seem that Anthony's version of the Persian "Other" was in accordance with the domestic and foreign policies of the English monarchs in the early seventeenth century.

In considering Anthony's attempts to present a more palatable Persian "Other" in his account, it is also important to point to his technique of juxtaposing two popular Muslim "Others," the Persians and the Turks. As Ahmed points out, in encountering an "Other" who

[13] For more information regarding Anthony's reputation at the English court see Boies Penrose's *The Sherleian Odyssey* (223, 323), E. Denison Ross's *Sir Anthony Sherley* (xix-xxi), and Jonathan Sell's *Rhetoric and Wonder* (105).

is not familiar "we seek to find other ways of achieving recognition, not only by rereading the body of this other, who is faced, but by telling the difference between this other and other others" (8). This is exactly what Anthony does when he faces the Persian king for the first time; not being familiar with the Persian "Other" in comparison with the Turks, which was the case with many of the English, Anthony describes the bodily features of Abbas. However, even before that he chooses another way of presenting the Persian "Other," by emphasizing the difference between the Persian "Other" and other Muslim "Others," specifically the Turks. Thus, long before explaining the virtues of the Persian king and his government, Anthony provides his readers with a detailed account of "the barbariousness of the Turk," by devoting a detailed description of his trip through the Ottoman Empire (9). In this section, Anthony depicts the Ottoman Empire as a "forest of wild beasts, living all upon rapine, without any sense of humanity, more than an appearance" (14). By presenting the extreme corruption of the Turkish government and the incapability of the Ottoman princes, Anthony prepares the scene for later introduction of a completely different Muslim "Other," the Persians, who could be the best of allies of European nations in both political and commercial matters. Given the purpose of Anthony's mission, it is understandable that he juxtaposes the Persians and Turks, on one hand, to oppose the idea of Persians as barbarians, and on the other hand, to construct a more favourable representative of the Persian "Other." Beside this primary detailed portrayal of the Turks, all through his *Relation* Anthony compares the Persians with the Turks to emphasize their differentiating features. To Anthony, "in Asia, the Persian has as great an extent of territories as the Turk and better inhabited, better governed, and in better obedience and affection" (41).

It is important to add that since the beginning of the Safavid dynasty (1502-1736), the conflict between the Sunni and the Shia in Persia had been a major issue for the Persian monarchs. The forcible conversion of the Sunni Persians, who were the majority of the Muslims in Persia, began in Shah Ismail I's reign (1502-1524) and resulted in the establishment of Shi'ism as the national religion. Because of the tensions between these two Muslim sects, and also the enmity between two powerful Oriental empires, Persian and Ottoman, it was one of the priorities of Safavid monarchs to suppress Sunnism and promote Shi'ism in Persia.

Anthony, like many other Europeans, would have been informed of these tensions through sources available to English readers at that time.[14] In any case, he took advantage of these conflicts for two purposes: first, to convince Shah Abbas to enter the league with Christian states against the Ottomans; second, to convince his readers in England to accept the Shia Persians as favourably distinct from the Sunni Turks. To this end, Anthony relates some of the anti-Sunni activities in Persia which were sponsored by Shah Abbas as a part of his plan to suppress Sunnism in Persia. One of these activities was the annual Shia ceremony of burning of the image of Sunni Caliphs whom Anthony calls "main heretics". He also points to Shah Abbas's habit of drinking wine, which was against the Sunnis' religious beliefs and, as Anthony assumes, was "not for the love of the wine but to scandalize so much more the contrary religion" (75-6). Of course, by contrary religion he means the Sunni version of Islam.

In addition to these signs of discord, which suggest the unbridgeable distance between the Persian "Other" and other Muslim "Others," Anthony concentrates on the

[14] Anthony's source of information, as Chew points out, could be a popular chronicle called *The History of Wars between the Turks and the Persians* (1595). The book was originally written by an Italian physician called Giovanni Thomaso Minadoi in 1588 and was translated by Abraham Hartwell (250).

affinity between the Shia Persians and Christians. Being aware of the significant role of religion in the construction of an acceptable image of the "Other," Anthony presents those aspects of the Shia Persians which linked them with Christians and separated them from the Sunni Turks. In fact, this tendency of calling forth the similarities between Shia and Christians can be found in many of the travel narratives of the early modern period[15] and, as a convention, has its roots in the trading relations between the English merchants and their Persian peers. As Chew suggests, "The agents of the English merchants who sought to establish commercial relations, and possibly looked for a political alliance between England and Persia, would naturally welcome any sign of sympathy with Christianity" (229). Using the same strategy, Anthony tries to make both sides of this contract, the Persian king and the European states, interested in beginning extended relations. Reporting his conversations with Shah Abbas, he claims that he encouraged Abbas to provide more liberty of religion and security of trade for Christians in Persia. His justification for this proposal was that on one hand Abbas could "save [himself] in diverse things of them [Christians] which have been hidden to [him];" and on the other hand, he could use it as a means of opposing the Turks who were "absolute and tyrannous enemy of Christians" (118).

To explain the reasons for Abbas's policy of tolerance towards Christians and the Persians' hospitality in treating them—the positive features that Anthony highlights in his presentation of the Persian "Other"—it is necessary to review the history of the relationship between the Persians and the Armenians, who were the major Christian community in Safavid Persia. Contrary to Anthony's claim of his role in granting liberty of religion and security of trade to Christians in Persia, the presence of Armenians in some areas in Persia

[15] For examples of the early modern narratives which reflected on the similarities between the Shia Muslims and Christians, consult Chew's *Crescent and the Rose* (223-233).

and their peaceful cohabitation with the Persians has roots in Abbas's policy of monopolizing the silk trade, which had both political and commercial reasons. As many of these Armenians were silk workers or merchants, Abbas, the chief merchant of Persia, began his population displacement scheme in the early seventeenth century by forcibly deporting Armenians from their own lands, the border area between the Ottoman Empire and Persia, to the inner parts of the country. He resettled the Armenian silk workers in silk-making provinces and lodged the Armenian merchants in the capital and under his own strong support and protection. [16] By suggesting that Christians were much better tolerated and more honoured among the Persians, Anthony takes advantage of this aspect of Abbas's strategy in dealing with Christians. However, Abbas's interest in Christians did not have any personal spiritual motivation, although many Western travellers interpreted it as the sign of his possible conversion to Christianity in the near future.[17]

Irrespective of whether it was Anthony's suggestion or Abbas's plan to attract more Christian merchants to his country, the positive consequences of the Sherleys' presence in Persia is documented in a letter included in the anonymous pamphlet, *A true report of Sir Anthony Sherley's journey overland to Venice fro[m] thence by sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babylon, and so to Caspian in Persia*, published in 1600 (S1).[18] As the title of this letter indicates, it contains "the privilege obtained of the great Sophie, for the quiet passage and traffic of all Christian merchants, throughout his whole dominions." The letter begins with

[16] There are two of Abbas's decrees about Armenians' properties and accommodation preserved in the Vank Church Museum in Isfahan, the capital city in Abbas's reign, which prove his special attention to the problems of Armenians. For more information on Abbas's silk policy and the role of Armenians, see Ina Baghdiantz McCabe's *Orientalism in early modern France*

[17] For more information on Abbas's possible conversion, see Denison Ross's *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (29-41).

[18] A detailed description of this pamphlet can be found on page 14 of chapter one.

Shah Abbas's explicit order of freedom of trade and religion for Christians: "I the king, our absolute commandment, will and pleasure is that our countries and domains shall be, from this day, open to all Christian people and their religion: and in such sort that none of ours of any condition, shall presume to give them any evil word" (Ross 96). What is ordered in this letter conforms to Anthony's representation of the Persian "Other," introduced as more hospitable to and tolerant of Christians than Turks. Moreover, although the publication of this pamphlet in England was suppressed, later references in other works to its content and the advantages promised in it added to the positive image of the Persian King and his people in the eyes of early modern English readers.

In sum, a close reading of Anthony's account makes it clear that it cannot be regarded as an informative travel narrative, since it does not follow the conventions of travel writing and does not explore the life of ordinary inhabitants of Persia. His *Relation*, especially the section devoted to Persia, is more about his politico-commercial mission than the places or the people he met in Persia. For the same reason, his representation of the Persian "Other" is mostly limited to Shah Abbas, the most famous Persian in early modern England, and the features that made him a favorable ally for Christian states.

3.1.2 William Parry's A new and large discourse [S2]

In addition to Anthony himself, another traveller-writer who accompanied him in his journey and put pen on paper to share his experience in Persia was William Parry. His narrative, *A new and large discourse of the travels of sir Anthony Sherley Knight, by sea, and over land, to the Persian Empire* (1601),[19] regardless of its positive features as a travelogue which are

[19] The edition of Parry's account used in this project is the one published in Ross's *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (98-137).

praised by the majority of critics, is of great value as the most prominent document introducing the Persian "Other" to the English reading public. Being published shortly after the anonymous pamphlet mentioned above, which was suppressed immediately after publication, Parry's account had a significant role in publicizing the Sherleys' journey to Persia. Parry published his account more than one decade before Anthony's own account reached English readers and was a reference for many other works written and performed about the Sherleys and Persia. The significance of Parry's account in relation to the present project is that its representation of the Persian "Other" is the product of the firsthand experience of a traveller who is an eyewitness to many of the stories told by Anthony and others in later accounts. Through close reading of a cluster of passages from Parry's account and a comparison of his version of the Persian "Other" with Anthony's claims, I will demonstrate how the political and social context of the traveller-writer, along with his personal viewpoints, could colour his image of the Persian "Other" he met in this journey.

Parry begins his account by addressing one of the issues that early modern travellers had to face upon returning home: being accused of telling lies. In his first statement, recalling an old proverb, Parry suggests, "it has been, and yet is, a proverbial speech among us that travellers may lie by authority" (Ross 98). He then affirms that the main reason behind this accusation is that when travellers share "the truth of their own knowledge, [because] it exceeds the belief of the inexperienced and homebred vulgar, they are by them concluded lies for their labor" (Ross 99). This atmosphere of suspicion is perfectly described by Sell: "The best way to parry the new knowledge and new worlds proclaimed by travellers was to accuse them of lying, thus morally ostracizing those who opened the doors of home to alterity" (25). Furthermore, concerning this specific account, Parry, like many other

travellers, calls his observations of the events and people in Persia authentic: “For mine own part, I am resolved to make a true relation of what mine eyes saw, not representing the judgment of the vulgar, but contenting myself with the conscience of the truth; besides which, (I protest) I purpose to write nothing” (Ross 100).

However, contrary to what he claims and despite his repetition of words like “true” and “truth,” his observations are all based on his personal interpretations and might not be necessarily the truth about what he witnessed; therefore, although Parry insists on his being truthful and trustworthy in relating the story of Anthony Sherley’s adventures, there are still some moments in his account when his representation of the Persian “Other” is inevitably diluted by his misunderstanding of this new phenomenon, which is quite common among traveller-writers. In what follows, I will first discuss the most important similarity between Parry’s account and Anthony’s, then I will demonstrate some of the moments in Parry’s account when his representation of the Persian “Other” is different from Anthony’s.

Parry’s image of the Turks as the first group of Muslim “Others” whom they encountered on their journey through the Ottoman Empire is as negative as Anthony’s. The Turks are depicted as “beyond all measure a most insolent superbous, and insulting people, ever more pressed to offer outrage to any Christian…” (Ross 107). He also considers them subject to Christians’ hatred not only because of their evil behavior but also because of their being “damned infidels and sodomitical Mahomets [Muhammadans]” (Ross 107). Certainly, in Parry’s description of the Turks, words like “sodomitical” and “infidel Muhamadans,” demonstrate the stereotypical nature of his observation; carrying a baggage of preexisting notions about Turks, he uses the same expressions used at home to describe this unfavourable Muslim “Other.” On the other hand, his description of Persia and the Persians, in contrast to

that of the Turks, is quite positive. In fact, it seems that in Parry's account, as in Anthony's, the Turks are described in negative terms, and the evilness of their nature is emphasized in order to magnify the positive features of the Persians. According to Parry's account, as soon as the travellers pass the borders of Persia, they find themselves in a paradise: "upon our first entrance we thought we had been imparadised, finding our entertainment to be so good and the manner of the people to be so kind and courteous far differing from the Turks'" (Ross 115). What Parry has reported so far is a favourable image of the Persians, although it will not be the same all through the narrative. In addition to his image of the people, Parry's image of the Persian king is also quite positive; however, his description of Shah Abbas's personality and appearance is not as elaborate as Anthony's, and his narrative is more concentrated on common people and their customs and habits.

The major difference between Parry's representation of the Persians and that of Anthony is that Parry never tries to beautify the image of the Persian "Other" in the exaggerated way that Anthony does. In other words, Parry's representation of the Persian "Other," no matter whether it is accurate or not, is a combination of good and evil characteristics, and he never conceals his dissatisfaction with those aspects of the Persians and their customs that he despises. For instance, he introduces the Persians as "no learned nation, but ignorant in all kind of liberal or learned sciences and almost of all other arts and faculties, except it be in certain things pertaining to horses' furniture and some kinds of carpeting and silk works, wherein they excel" (Ross 122). The first important point about this description is its erroneous nature as a piece of information related by a traveller-writer who insisted on narrating what he had witnessed in Persia. Given that the Safavid dynasty, especially Shah Abbas's reign, is famous for its contribution to the development of different

sciences such as chemistry, physics, mathematics and geometry, which can be detected in the architecture of cities like Isfahan, Abbas's capital city, it is strange that Parry was ignorant of all these signs of scientific achievements. Regardless of the number of scientists and philosophers who lived in Isfahan in Abbas's reign, there were several schools whose buildings are still among the most important tourist attractions in Isfahan. Thus, as Ross also points out, "it is hard to believe [Parry] had not seen book-shops in the bazaars and libraries in private houses. Evidently, the beauty of Persian calligraphy made no appeal to his eye" (Ross 122).

The second point about Parry's low opinion of the intellectual attainments of the Persians is that, unlike Anthony, he does not hesitate to comment on the Persians' disadvantages and the undesirable aspects of their customs, since he is not promoting any political or commercial contract between the Persians and Europeans. For instance, as their arrival in Persia coincided with the triumphal return of Shah Abbas from his war with the Uzbeks, known as Tatars, Parry describes the Persians' way of greeting their king and celebrating his victory by comparing the noise made by the people to the one that "the wild Irish make" (Ross 118). He uses a stereotypical feature, attributed to the Irish and familiar to the English, to describe the new phenomenon, the Persian "Other."

Described by both Parry and Anthony, Shah Abbas's return from his war with the Tatars is significant as one of the instances of discrepancy between the viewpoints of the two traveller-writers. Shah Abbas returns to the capital city after his troops have killed a lot of the Tatars and have captured their king and his son. According to Parry's description, Shah Abbas enters the capital city "in great triumph, having borne before him, advanced upon pikes, one thousand two hundreds heads of the conquered Tatars; whose king and his son he

led along in triumph; having taken them prisoners" (Ross 117). Parry's description of this hideous scene of more than one thousand heads upon pikes (although the number could be inaccurate) is quite objective and devoid of further comments on its inhuman aspect. In contrast to Parry's realistic version of this incident, Anthony's account provides the reader with a fabricated version of it. According to Anthony, "The night before [Abbas] entered, there were thirty thousands men, sent out of the town on foot with horse-men's staves, upon which were fastened *vizards of so many heads*: All those in the morning, when we were commanded to meet him…we found marching in battle array towards the town" (65, emphasis added). Anthony relates that the heads on the staves were just "vizards" and implies that the whole custom of carrying the heads of the defeated soldiers on staves in cities was nothing but a theatrical show of power and dominance, whereas Parry's account, and also two more accounts written by other members of the group—George Manwaring and Abel Pincon[20]—make it clear that what was carried to the city ahead of Shah Abbas's troop were real heads of soldiers, killed by the Persians in their war with the Tatars.[21] In fact, Anthony's version of the story conveys his usual strategy of beautifying the image of the Persian "Other" and avoiding any reference to the cruelty of the Persian customs.

This important difference between Parry's presentation of the Persian "Other" and Anthony's suggests that Parry, free from Anthony's political and commercial considerations, narrated what he had seen in Persia, and his image was not colored by the prejudices which

[20] George Manwaring and Abel Pincon, a Frenchman, also accompanied Anthony and gave their own accounts, but as theirs were not published during the period that the present study covers, I did not include them here. For complete texts of these two accounts see Ross's *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (137-226).

[21] There is also a painting of the triumphal return of Shah Abbas to the capital which depicts the same scene of heads on the staves carried by the Persian troop. This painting originally appeared in a book called *The Silsilat-al-nasab-i Safaviya*, written by Sheikh Pir Husayn 'Abd az-Zahidi, a 17th century writer. This book is at Cambridge University Library, and a copy of the painting appears on the cover of the book, *Safavid Persia*, edited by Charles Melville.

affected Anthony's account. Nevertheless, the same characteristic of observing the Persian "Other" and interpreting it according to one's own perceptions and motivations is common to both Anthony's and Parry's accounts. Being two different observers with distinctively different motivations in communicating their experiences in Persia, what Parry and Anthony depict as the Persian "Other" adds to the complexity of this phenomenon and gives it a kaleidoscopic quality, even though none of their images could be called utterly true.

3.2 Hired Writers' Accounts

What distinguishes the traveller-writers Anthony Sherley and William Parry from hired writers is that according to their claim, their representations of the Persian "Other" were based on autopsy. Anthony and Parry were both real travellers whose actual encounters with the Old World led to the construction of a more reliable representation of the Persian "Other" than the fictitious and fabricated image of the Persians found in "the textual-historical inventory" available to the early modern reading public.[22] In fact, what they produced joined "the experiential inventory" and, in turn, became the source of writers at home who were, most of the time, hired to promote and advertise the adventures and achievements of these travellers.

Among these writers were Anthony Nixon and Thomas Middleton, who were hired in two different contexts to publicize the achievements of the Sherley brothers, Anthony and

[22] The term "textual-historical inventory" is used by Jonathan Burton in his *Traffic and Turning*, and refers to all the sources available to anyone in England who was interested in knowing the Muslim "Other." This inventory was, most of the time, accumulated by those who never left home, and their information about the Muslim "Other" was not firsthand. Burton's classification has two more sources of information about Muslim "Others," called "experiential inventory" and "domestic inventory." By "experiential inventory" he means the information collected in accounts which were based on the actual encounters of the English with Muslims both in the Islamic lands and at home. Finally, the "domestic inventory" refers to "all of those notions of difference that contributed to an Englishman's sense of normative selfhood" (24).

Robert. In addition to these two writers' narratives, I will briefly discuss Samuel Purchas's *Pilgrims* which contains a summarized version of Anthony Sherley's *Relation*, and a brief account of Robert Sherley's second trip to England and his short stay in Emperor Rudolph's court.

3.2.1 Anthony Nixon's The three English brothers [S3]

As was mentioned before, Anthony Nixon's *The three English brothers* (1607) is the first pamphlet published about the Sherleys' adventures written by a hired writer. This hired writer was the most infamous of authors, a "Jacobean plagiarist and hack" as Lambert Ennis calls him, who used to write about "almost every subject under the Jacobean sun" and "depended for his next meal on finishing a pamphlet" (377-8). In the Jacobean period, when a great number of national events provided pamphleteers with plenty of material to write about, the adventures of the Sherley brothers could be a reliable source of income for Nixon. Thus Nixon was hired by Thomas Sherley, one of the Sherley brothers, to write the story of the adventures of Thomas and his two other brothers, who were away from England. Thomas Sherley, who had been held in the Turks' prison for several years, upon his return to England in December 1606 commissioned Nixon to write the pamphlet and to publicize "the tedious travails and dangerous adventures of these three excellent spirits" (sig. B1v).

Nixon affects to consider it important to introduce these English travellers to the reading public and save them from oblivion. As he suggests, "it was then a fault unpardonable in us of the English Nation…to bury in oblivion the virtues of those of our country Men, whose noble deeds deserve forever to live upon the tongues of men, with honourable mention" (sig. B1v-B2r). Given that Nixon was hired to write about the Sherleys

and keep them and their projects in the public eye, the propagandistic nature of his pamphlet is quite predictable. The aim of my reading of his pamphlet is to demonstrate how its propagandistic function contributed to the construction of a fabricated and fictitious version of the Sherleys' travels and how it affected the representation of the Persian "Other."

What were the sources used by Nixon? He states that he wrote it "according to the notes and instructions [he had] received" (sig. G2v). Regarding the conditions surrounding pamphlet production in Renaissance England, it is important to remember that there were a group of printers and publishers who "acted as manuscript brokers" and "either produced manuscripts or provided the 'evidence' to a hack, often in the form of a witness to an event, who would write a text based on this source" (Shaaber 260). In such a historical context, as Ennis's study of Nixon's pamphlets suggests, *The three English brothers* is an example of pamphlets produced based on manuscripts provided by a broker (382). Moreover, in Ross's judgment, Nixon's work is a "compilation derived from a variety of sources without acknowledgment" (xii). Thus, just like many other early modern writers who are known for their imaginative engagement with the "Other," Nixon has mixed fact and fantasy to produce a narrative which is quite fictitious in some parts. Although what Nixon claims in his narrative might have been believed by his readers, the fabricated quality of his narrative was already detectable by contemporary travellers, who had the actual experience of close contact with other nations. For instance, John Cartwright, a clergyman who had travelled to countries such as Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Media, Parthia, and Persia, published his own travel account in 1611[23] and commented adversely on Nixon's narrative, considering it "more fit for a stage for the common people to wonder at, than for any man's private studies" (70).

[23] John Cartwright's book is *The preachers trauels: Wherein is set downe a true iournall to the confines of the East Indies, through the great countreyes of Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Media, Hircania and*

Since the main purpose of this narrative was to promote the Sherleys' mission and glorify their achievements, it was essential for Nixon to justify the absence of two of the brothers from their home country. When Nixon was asked to write his pamphlet, Anthony Sherley was still lingering in different countries in Europe and the younger brother, Robert Sherley, was in Persia as a pledge with the Persian king, waiting for Anthony's return. Nixon, without referring to Anthony's inconclusive mission, interprets his staying away from England as an act of self-sacrifice and as a part of his mission to achieve glory for his country: "to redeem his brother, … [and] to restore Religion to those unhappy conquered kingdoms by the Turk" (sig. J1v). Imputing a religious cause to Anthony's mission, Nixon tries to depict him as a national hero with a holy mission. Ignoring the fact that Anthony was officially forbidden to re-enter England and was shunned even by his former master, James I, Nixon goes so far as to express his wonder "that neither the desire which every man naturally hath to his own country, nor the joyful welcomes nor honourable entertainments that attend him here, can any whit stir his mind, or draw his affections from his purposed intendments against the Turk" (sig. I4r).

According to Nixon's claim, Anthony is a patriot and a faithful Christian who has accepted the pains of self-banishment to gain political advantages for his country, while keeping his promise to the Persian king to establish the alliance against their common enemy, the Turks. But how is this common enemy depicted in Nixon's narrative? Unlike the accounts studied so far which have been written by travellers, Nixon's narrative is devoid of examples of contacts and conflicts between the travellers and their Turkish hosts. Nixon

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Parthia. With the authors returne by the way of Persia, Susiana, Assiria, Chaldæa, and Arabia. Containing a full suruew of the knigdom [sic] of Persia: and in what termes the Persian stands with the Great Turke at this day. (STC 4705)

confines his description of the Turks to enlisting some of the popular negative characteristics attributed to the Turks in the early modern period. As Nixon depicts them, the Turks are "the most inhumane of all other Barbarians. Their manner of living is for the most part uncivil and vicious. For their vices, they are all pagans and infidels, sodomites, and liars. They are a very scornful people…" (sig. H4r). He goes on to say that "the Turks are beyond all measure, almost insolent, superbous and insulting people, even prest to offer outrage to any Christian…" (sig. I1r). As mentioned before, the traveller-writers, such as Anthony, Parry, and even Manwaring, supported their negative views of the Turks by giving some examples of their own personal experiences with the Turks during their travels across the Ottoman Empire. Contrary to these accounts, Nixon takes the shortest and easiest path to reach his goal, which is to magnify the evilness of the Turks as the Christians' common enemy and to glorify Anthony's efforts in the Christian cause. He constructs his negative picture of the Turkish "Other" by making a list of all the evil attributes which the English used to associate with the Turks. Among these attributes "barbarian" is explicitly used to refer to the Turks, a stereotype that was known to the English readers who were recently exposed to the narratives about the New World and its "barbarian" natives. According to Matar's study, Turks and Moors began to be called "barbarian" at precisely the same time that the English began their expeditions in the New World and brought back home their experiences of encountering the Indians of the New World. This ironic superimposition of the term barbarian to the advanced Turks confirms the constructed nature of hired writers' representations of the Muslim "Others," something that distinguishes their productions from the travel narratives of those who had encountered the Muslims in their own lands.

Compared to his representation of the Turks, Nixon's image of the Persian "Other" is more tolerant, although not quite as positive as Anthony's. In fact, in representing the Persians, he does not try to show them as utterly different from their Muslim fellows, the Turks. Consider how he explains the Persians' religion: without naming the different sects that the Persians and the Turks belonged to, Nixon suggests that "for [the Persians'] devotion, it is much after the Turkish ceremonies, their priests somewhat differing in their orders, and habit, their temples and religious places, much after their building and fashion" (sig. H2r). Thus, unlike Anthony or even Parry, Nixon does not register any major difference between the Shia Persians and the Sunni Turks, a difference which was typically emphasized as the cause of preferring the Persians to the Turks. Nixon also does not hesitate in relating the horrible custom of the Persians in beheading their enemies and "having a thousand of their heads advanced upon pikes" (sig. H1v). Although the same scene is described in Parry's and Manwaring's accounts, what makes Nixon's narration of this incident salient is his emphasis on its being a part of "the custom of the country"[24] (sig. H1v). Thus, contrary to Anthony's strategy in beautifying the image of the Persians, Nixon does not insist on presenting the Persians in a favourable light so long as he recommended them as a potential ally for Christians.

Moreover, probably under the influence of Parry's erroneous account of the Persians' intellectual attainments, Nixon introduces them as "for the most part unlearned, ignorant in all kind of liberal sciences, yet are they good warriors, politic and valiant, observing order

[24] One more example of Nixon's emphasis on this horrid custom of the Persians is his recounting of the story of Robert Sherley's valor in attending the warfare between Shah Abbas and the Ottoman Sultan. According to Nixon, when Robert's "gentle offer" of exchanging the Turkish captives with his brother Thomas, who was imprisoned by the Turks, was rejected, he "presently cut off the heads of those thirty commanders [the Turks], and (according to the custom of Persia) caused them to be carried in triumph about the Market place, on top of his soldiers' pikes" (sig. J3r).

and discipline, they have been held a people fierce and uncivil, little better than the Turks; but of late they are grown very courteous, and respective unto strangers, by whose conversion they have much bettered their manners and conditions" (sig. H3v). The most important point implied in this passage, which makes it different from other accounts, is that Nixon not only associates the Persians with the Turks and calls them "uncivil" and "fierce," but also considers their interaction with strangers—Westerners like the Sherleys—as the main cause of the improvement in their manners and conditions. Therefore, he does not consider them a genuinely noble and well-mannered people, and gives the credit for their courteous behavior to foreigners who travelled to Persia. However, contrary to Nixon's view, the previously discussed traveller-writers mentioned the politeness and hospitability of the Persians as the effects of Abbas's powerful government and his positive views of foreign travellers.

Finally, Nixon's image of the "uncivil" Persians who "are grown very courteous and respective" through their communication with the civilized strangers echoes the same colonial discourse of the influence of the Western civilization upon the uncivilized, barbarous "Other"—a kind of discourse that was more popular among Europeans who had never encountered the outside world and were limited to popular notions already existing in their own countries. Besides the overall tone of Nixon in his narrative, which implies the superiority of the Sherleys to the people they visited, his account indicates the major difference between the traveller-writers' views of the "Other" and those of hired writers at home. The image of the Persian "Other" depicted by the traveller-writers is less affected by blind prejudices, whereas the views of the writers at home, who had not witnessed the Old

World by themselves, are contaminated by fictitious and fabricated information about other nations and their customs.

3.2.2 Thomas Middleton's *Sir Robert Sherley* [S4]

So far the accounts written about the Sherleys' adventures were mostly about Anthony as the chief agent at the centre of the Persian-Christian alliance project. Except for Nixon's narrative, which contains some fabricated stories of Robert's achievements in Persia, there was no work entirely devoted to his role in the continuation of the mission initiated in 1598, until in 1609 Thomas Middleton's pamphlet was published.

As mentioned before, upon Anthony's leaving Persia, Robert was retained in Shah Abbas's court as a pledge of his brother's return. Later on, when Anthony abandoned his mission and there was no hope of his return, Robert gained the chance to approach Shah Abbas and, despite his brother's betrayal, propose the continuation of the unfinished project. Thus, in 1608 Shah Abbas sent Robert as his ambassador to various European countries to unify the European leaders in supporting the Persians in their war against the Turks. Among the first European leaders that Robert met was Sigismund III, King of Poland and Sweden. The Royal entertainment that Robert received in Sigismund's court became the subject of a pamphlet written by Andrew Leech, a Scottish writer who was known in Poland as Lechowicz. Leech's Latin pamphlet, *Encomia Nominis & Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaeii*, gave an account of Robert's splendid reception in Sigismund's court. It was published in 1608 in Poland, and Robert sent a copy of it to England. Planning to go to England as soon as possible, Robert intended to publicize his mission in his home country by having the pamphlet translated and published there before his own arrival. Consequently, in London,

Thomas Middleton was hired for this purpose, and the first English pamphlet exclusively on Robert's Persio-European mission was published in London in 1609.

Although Middleton is known for his prolific career as a playwright, his miscellaneous writings are also of considerable significance. The most popular of these writings was *The peace maker*, which celebrated James I's achievements as a glorious peacemaker and saviour of England. However, there are other, less acclaimed pamphlets, such as *Sir Robert Sherley*, that were written by Middleton in order to earn a living, especially in those periods of time when he was not engaged in writing for performance and writing for publication could be an alternative. Thus, as Gary Taylor suggests, the double dedications of *Sir Robert Sherley* to different patrons in different issues, once to Robert's father Thomas and again to his brother Thomas, acknowledges the existence of personal financial difficulties, which apparently prompted the writing of such pamphlets (847).

Regardless of Middleton's personal motivations in writing *Sir Robert Sherley*, the major purpose of this pamphlet was to promote Robert's embassy and pave the way for his mission to James I's court. Robert's trip to England was expected to happen in early 1609, but, due to Robert's house arrest in Spain, it was postponed to the summer of 1611. As the full title[25] of the pamphlet suggests, it is devoted to the glorification of Robert's achievements at the Persian court and the magnificence of his reception in Poland. The last part of the title: *the honourable praises of the same Sir Robert Sherley, given unto him in that kingdom, are here likewise inserted* also implies Middleton's use of Leech's *Encomia* as one of his sources. However, as G. B. Shand suggests, in addition to Leech's Latin account, and

[25] *Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassador in the name of the King of Persia, to Sigismund the Third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other princes of Europe his royal entertainment into Craiova, the chief city of Poland, with his pretended coming into England: also, the honourable praises of the same Sir Robert Sherley, given unto him in that kingdom, are here likewise inserted.* (STC 17894)

in order to write the section on the Persians' lifestyle and manners, Middleton consulted the fifth book of Strabo's *Geography*, written about 17-23 AD, well before the rise of Islam (258). As Shand's study of the origins of this pamphlet indicates, Middleton seems to have used a Latin translation of Strabo's book, which was published in "thirteen editions between 1469 and 1625" (258). Although Strabo's book seems to have been popular in Middleton's time, it does not mean that it was the only available source of information concerning the Persians' lifestyle and manners. In fact, despite the existence of some more up-to-date travel accounts by English and non-English travellers, Middleton chose a source of information about Persia which depicted the Persians long before their conversion to Islam, a source that, as Shand points out, was "a second-hand description and 1600 years out of date" (261).

Middleton writes of the Persians' religion, "which they observed of old, doing worship and reverence in their upright zeal to the Sun, Moon, Venus, Fire, Earth, Water, and Winds, erecting neither Alters nor Statues, but in open fields offering their sacrifices…." (12). In this passage, which is a paraphrase of what Strabo wrote about the Persians' religion in ancient times, Middleton disregarded the fact that the Persians were no longer Zoroastrians and had already been converted to Islam. The Persia that he presents in his pamphlet is a Zoroastrian Persia, where people worship natural elements and "are fed and do live by Acorns, and Hedge-pears, their bread [is] course and hard, their Drink [is] running springs" (13). Accepting Strabo's *Geography* as the major source of Middleton's information about Persia, we can see that what Middleton described as the common diet of all the Persians was, in fact, a distorted version of what Strabo had described as the Spartan diet of Persian boys who used to be sent to military training camps "from five years of age to twenty four" (Strabo 179). In fact, what Strabo describes as the diet of these young trainees is not exactly

what Middleton tries to present, since, according to Strabo, "their daily food after their gymnastic exercises consists of bread, barley-cake, cardamom, grains of salt, and roasted or boiled meat; but their drink is water" (181). Comparing this passage from Strabo's *Geography* with Middleton's version reveals the variety and richness of the Persians' diet as opposed to the simple, and even poor, diet described by Middleton. Moreover, Strabo presents a more detailed description of the Persians' luxurious dining habits in the same part of his book, which seems to be ignored or deliberately overlooked by Middleton: "Persians dine in an extravagant manner, serving whole animals in great numbers and of various kinds, and their couches, as also their drinking cups and everything else are so brilliantly ornamented that they gleam with gold or silver" (183).

By presenting an erroneous image of the Persians' lifestyle, a simple life of hard work and contentment, Middleton tries to exonerate them from the accusation of having a luxurious, epicurean lifestyle, something about them that was easily condemned by English readers. As a result, the Persian "Other" that Middleton introduces in his pamphlet is stripped of both the Islamic religion and the luxurious lifestyle that it was associated with among the early modern English. Instead, he depicts them as a people who worship nature and live a simple life—hence, tolerable allies for Christians in the holy war against the Turks. Furthermore, in the course of refining the image of the Persian "Other," Middleton justifies the Muslim custom of polygamy among the Persians, the most detestable custom to English readers, by stressing the patriotic importance of having a larger population to defend their Empire: "And so much they do detest Sterility and Bareness, that from the highest to the lowest they take many wives in marriage, counting the fruitful propagation of the Empire, the only happiness they can raise to it, and so much they thirst after human fruitfulness" (12).

The other detestable quality that was especially associated with the Persian kings at that time was their cruelty and injustice in treating their subjects. Middleton writes: “and so severe their laws are in effect, to the punishing of all rebellious, treasonable, and disobedient people, that whosoever be that is found repugnant in the least demeanor to the will and affection of the king he is presently ceased [i.e. seized] upon by the Tormentors, his head and arms chopped off, and with his detested body thrown into some common field, without either grave or covering” (12). In this passage, Middleton justifies the severity of the Persian laws and punishment by juxtaposing it with detestable terms such as rebellion and treason. According to him, severe physical punishment and painful deaths are all justifiable, insofar as they are practiced to stop “rebellious, treasonable, and disobedient people.” According to Shand, Middleton’s strategy presented in the above passage is explainable by the fact that “his more conservative contemporaries, in the wake of the Essex and Gunpowder incidents, were very aware of the possibility of treason and apt to approve any amount of rigor in the maintenance of law and order” (261). Taking advantage of this dominant mood of potential treason in England, Middleton presents the Persian king and his court as very determined in the maintenance of discipline in their society and praises them for their swiftness to punish any form of treason, something that was quite understandable for English readers.

Being hired to advocate Robert’s mission, Middleton introduces it as a call to “the Christian confederacy against Mahomet and his Adherents” (12). For that reason, he tries his best to remove any signs of the Persians’ alliance with Islam. Hence, he not only resorts to Strabo’s version of the Persian “Other,” but also makes justifications in his translation of Leech’s account as his other source. Writing for a Protestant English reading public, Middleton also had to make other changes to Leech’s pamphlet, such as modifying “the

pamphlet's pro-Rome or pro-Persia attitudes [which] seem likely to offend" (Shand 260). As a result, Middleton's translation has two important features: first, it is devoid of the "most obvious Roman Catholic features" of Leech's version; second, it does not emphasize Robert's loyalty to the Persian king lest it seem treasonous to the English, who were supposed to celebrate Robert's glorious return as an English patriot.

3.2.3 Samuel Purchas's Hakluytus Posthumous or, Purchas his Pilgrims [S6]

As a well-published expedition happening in the first decades of the "Age of Discovery," the Sherleys' travels to Persia attracted the attention of one of the most significant chroniclers of the time, Samuel Purchas. Both Anthony's and Robert's adventures in Persia are among the collection of travel accounts in Purchas's *Pilgrims*, which was published in 1624-25. Purchas's *Pilgrims* is a collection of English travellers' accounts of their expeditions in different parts of the world, including the Ottoman and Persian Empires. In the Book 8 of *Pilgrims*, chapters 8 to 13 are devoted to the accounts of English travellers to the Ottoman Empire and reflect the observations of these travellers on the social, political, and cultural aspects of life in this powerful empire.[26] Book 9 of *Pilgrims* is mostly about Persia and the expeditions of Englishmen in this empire. The first two chapters of Book 9 are given to Anthony Sherley's account of his travel to Persia, and chapter 10 is about Robert Sherley and his mission in Persia and Europe.[27]

The most important feature of Anthony's account published in this collection is that it is not intact. Purchas was selective, publishing parts of the accounts that he compiled and

[26] These travellers are George Sandy, William Biddulph, Edward Barton Esquire, and Captain John Smith.

[27] In addition to the Sherley brothers, there are travel accounts about Persia which are included in Book 9 of Purchas's *Pilgrims*, such as John Newberie's account in chapter 3 and John Cartwright's in chapter 4.

omitting others. In his introduction to the excerpts from Anthony's texts published in *Pilgrims*, Purchas indicates that he extracted "the History" of the travels and left out those sections which include Anthony's reflections and interpretations of the events and characters: "This summary is … in his own words, but many things which pertain rather to his mind than body's travels, in discourse of cause, etc., are left out not for want of worth but of room: this work [*Pilgrims*] looking another way. The studious may read the Author himself; the History we have extracted" (qtd. in Chew 294). In fact, the omitted sections are the parts of the account which were the most valuable from Anthony's viewpoint. These passages, printed in italics in Anthony's *Relation*, contain Anthony's ideas about the superiority of the principles of statecraft in Persia and his advice for Christian princes to follow those principles as their model. Although Purchas claims that these omissions were "not for want of worth but of room," it seems that he followed a patriotic strategy in purifying Anthony's account of its pro-Persian comments, which could be interpreted as treasonous by English early modern patriots. What Purchas is seeking in publishing Anthony's account is to present him as a patriot adventurer who has taken the trouble of travelling to faraway lands like Persia.

What Purchas includes in his *Pilgrims* about Robert Sherley's trip to Persia is what he heard from Robert during their only meeting in England when Robert was there as Shah Abbas's ambassador. In the introduction to chapter 10 of the Ninth Book of *Pilgrims*, devoted to Robert's adventures in Persia, Purchas points out that, "I rather thought to insert what by his [Robert's] humanity and conference, I learned only in one dinner with him (not knowing that I would publish what I then received) than not to embellish these discourses, with so illustrious an English Travellers Name and Memory" (1805). Moreover, the title of the narrative devoted to Robert is a "brief memorial of the travels" of Robert Sherley, which

explicitly indicates the purpose of its publishing: like other narratives written by hired writers, it was published to promote the name and achievements of Robert Sherley and save him from being forgotten by the English public. To glorify Robert Sherley as an English champion, Purchas enumerates the gifts and titles that he received from different kings and emperors of the world and emphasizes the nobleness of his birth as an Englishman. Among all his glorious achievements, Purchas includes "the Original Imperial character under the Great Seale and subscribed by Emperor Rudolph" which attests Robert's high valuation with the Emperor (1806). Consequently, there is practically no mention of Persia and the Persians as the main subjects of Robert's travel, and in this regard Purchas's account, like others written by hired writers, departs from the conventions of travel writing and joins the group of propagandistic narratives which were produced to revitalize the fame and name of the Sherley brothers among their almost estranged countrymen. Hence, Purchas's attempt is not much concerned with the representation of the Persian "Other."

In short, the significant feature of Purchas's narrative is that it claims, contrary to what Anthony and his companions, such as Parry, suggest in their accounts, that the main object of the Sherleys' trip to Persia was "to kindle a fire betwixt the two most puissant of both *Asian* and *Mahumetan* Princes [The Turkish Sultan and the Persian King], that by their division and diversion of Turkish invasions, Christian Princes, Countries, and States might bee indebted to their private undertaking" (1805). Purchas's interpretation of the Sherleys' intention in his mission, although erroneous, reveals the nature of his narrative, which follows the dominant trend of other narratives written by hired writers: to magnify the patriotic advantages of the Sherleian odyssey and understate the other commercial and cultural aspects of it. However, Purchas's account differs from two formerly discussed

narratives, Nixon's and Middleton's, in that in summarizing the Sherley brothers' expedition in Persia, Purchas does not differentiate between the two distinctively different Muslim "Others," the Persians and the Turks. In all other accounts, by condemning the Turks and magnifying their evil characteristics, both traveller-writers and hired writers glorified the Persians and portrayed them as a tolerable ally for Christians. Contrarily, Purchas categorizes these two Muslim "Others" in the same group as "Mahumetans" and enemies of Christianity, and suggests that the Sherleys' mission was to advocate a war between these two evil forces and thereby keep them busy destroying each other. In the light of this politically distorted report of the Sherleys' mission, it is not surprising that Purchas does not show any interest in representing the Persians as reliable allies for the Christian states, or that his account, except for some brief parts in the summarized version of Anthony's *Relation*, does not contain any of his own comments and views about the Persian "Other."

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In Anthony Sherley's account, the image of the Persians, coloured by his politico-commercial scheme, is beautified and idealized to present a more palatable Persian "Other" who deserves to be England's ally. In William Parry's account, which is devoid of Anthony's motivations, the image of the Persian "Other" is diluted by the personal viewpoints and affected by the misunderstandings of the writer. In the case of hired writers, it is the propagandistic nature of what they produced that affects their representation of the Persians and changes it to a fabricated and fictitious image. In Anthony Nixon's pamphlet, the Persians are depicted almost as negatively as their Turkish fellows, except they are civilized due to their contacts with Western civilization, a colonial discourse which was popular

among the English writers and readers at home. On the other hand, Thomas Middleton's version of the Persian "Other" is stripped of the Islamic religion and the luxurious lifestyle that it was known for—hence, doubly fabricated and purified as a perfect ally for the English. Finally, the last account which added to the complexity of the representation of the Persian "Other" was Samuel Purchas's politically distorted report of the Sherleys' mission, which equalizes the Persians with the Turks as the major enemies of the Christian countries.

By reading a cluster of travel accounts about the Sherleys' expedition in Persia in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, I have suggested the existence of significant transitions in the representation of the Persian "Other" in the print material of that specific span of time. The study of two groups of accounts, one by traveller-writers in the Sherleys' party and the other by hired writers at home, has demonstrated the fluidity of the representation of the Persian "Other" and emphasized the role of both the writers' motivations and predispositions and the politico-historical milieu in which the accounts were produced in the construction of an ambivalent image of the Persians.

Epilogue

This thesis makes no claim to advance the theoretical paradigm established by the scholars mentioned in previous chapters. However, I have tried to demonstrate the most significant aspects of their approach and bring to light the Persian side of the question.

In the preceding chapters, I have tried to sketch out the early modern representations of the Persian "Other" and demonstrate the fluidity of its nature. This has required me to explore the Sherley dossier, since the Sherleys' diplomatic enterprise created a print sensation, resulting in the publication of several travel accounts. These accounts are of two distinct types: narratives written by traveller-writers, and those by hired writers at home. Examining these two groups of accounts, I demonstrated, first, how the real travellers' pre-existing notions and firsthand experiences with the Persian "Other" complicated their representations of it; and second, how the framework of assumptions and circumstances at home shaped the representation of the Persian "Other" in the printed materials produced by professional pamphleteers and hired writers in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Juxtaposing these two groups of accounts, I disproved Matar's idea that the representations of the Muslim "Other" in the early modern era were "all the same without any uniquely differentiating features" (*Turks, Moors* 6).

Moving through history, subject to changes in religious, political, and commercial relations between the East and the West, the representations of the Muslim "Others," including the Persian "Other," changed: some characteristics were emphasized more than others and some others were forgotten for a while or lost their importance. Thus, these representations had a quite fluid nature until the end of the seventeenth century, when the process of the colonization of the East began and the Muslim "Others" began to be

represented as utterly evil. Following Jonathan Gil Harris's trend of thought in *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare,* I suggest that the representation of the Persian "Other" is an untimely matter insofar as it does not belong to one specific time; rather, it is a survival from an older time, an image which has been modified in different periods, travelling through history from the ancient Greece to the early modern England. In fact, in the fashion of a process known as "palimpsesting," the pagan representations of the Persians, which were produced by the ancient Greeks, were superseded by the new images of the early modern Persians who were Muslim now, even though some aspects of the older version of the representation could still be detected in the descriptions of the English writers, both traveller-writers and hired writers at home. In short, the representations of the Persian "Other," being palimpsested through time, "[contains] within itself a potentially infinite number of alternate universes that touch each other." (Harris 22)

Moreover, Harris's critique of "treating the Orient and the past as synonyms partitioned from the West" ties his study to the present thesis (194). His discussion of Shakespeare's and his contemporaries' views of the Orient as "the location of the past" is significant for the present study insofar as it reveals the major difference between the representations of the East found in traveller-writers' accounts and those found in hired writers' travel accounts or even other literary forms such as plays and poems (189). According to Harris, "Shakespeare and his contemporaries understand what is temporally as well as geographically oriental in a variety of ways: the 'antique' culture of Persia, Greece, and Egypt, the 'outmoded' rituals of Roman Catholicism, and most insistently, the 'old' covenant of Judaism" (24). Thus, they tried to distance themselves from the Orient as something out-of-date; however, very ironically, the constant and pervasive presence of the

Turks, Moors, and Persians, the so-called outmoded "Others," on the early modern page and stage proves the professional writers wrong and suggests that the past was always potentially present. In fact, being presented by both travellers and non-travellers in the early modern writings, these "Others" were not weak and superseded entities in "the waiting room of history" (Dipesh Chakrabary, cited in Harris 28), not at least before the end of the seventeenth century when colonization of the East began. Even though in Shakespeare's plays, and many others of his contemporaries, the Orient is a metonym for the past and the Occident stands for the present and future, in the travel narratives of the time (especially those written by the traveller-writers) the contemporary Orient is powerfully present and vital.

In summary, by comparing the travel narratives written by traveller-writers with those by hired writers at home, it was the major purpose of this thesis to shed light on the presence of the Persian "Other" in a group of accounts which in turn became the reference of many other early modern theatrical and non-theatrical productions of the Persians. The best example of this further group of literary productions is *The travailes of three English brothers* (1607), a play written by John Day in collaboration with William Rowley and George Wilkins, which was based on Anthony Nixon's account of the Sherleys' trip to Persia. Belonging to "the imaginatively-controlled environment of the theater," as Matar calls it (*Islam in Britain* 20), and also having Nixon's work as its major source, this play is full of fabricated stories about the Sherleys' visit to Persia; hence, it is doubly distanced from the representations of the Persian "Other" in Anthony Sherley's *Relation*, adapted in accordance with the appetites and assumptions of contemporary English men and women. Even though this play could also have been studied as a part of the present thesis, the

existence of several other plays about the Persians, written and performed in the first half of the seventeenth century,[28] suggests that a separate study of the representations of the Persian "Other" in these early modern dramatic works would be fruitful.

[28] *Aglaura* by Sir John Suckling (1638), *The Sophy* by Sir John Denham (1642), and *Mirza* by Robert Baron (1655)

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