

Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture

Edited by
GALINA I. YERMOLENKO



ROXOLANA IN EUROPEAN LITERATURE,
HISTORY AND CULTURE

To my late mother

Tamara

Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture

Edited by
GALINA I. YERMOLENKO
DeSales University, USA

ASHGATE

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*Galina Yermolenko
Hellertown, PA
August 2009*

Note on Texts, Transliterations, and Spellings

Foreign Language Words and Passages

Short original foreign language words and passages follow their English translations and equivalents in the main text. Longer original foreign language passages are provided in the footnotes. Occasionally, for emphasis, foreign words or short phrases are used first; in such cases, their English translations are signaled by square brackets and single quotation marks.

Spellings

Archaic English and foreign language spellings are usually retained in quotations from old sources and their titles. Conventional English spellings of foreign words are used when available and where appropriate.

The collection uses several variants and spellings for the names of Roxolana and Suleiman, as well as other related Turkish figures (both historical and fictional). These variants have been in use for several centuries, and they occur in the various historical and literary texts discussed in this volume. The general “name” policy for this volume is to retain the versions and spellings used in the original texts, providing, in parentheses, their most common modern variants.¹

Transliterations

This volume follows modern Turkish orthography for words and names of Turkish, Arabic, or Persian origin. Several unfamiliar Turkish letters correspond to and are transliterated in Latin/English letters, according to the following:

- c* — as *j* in English (e.g., Cihangir – Jihangir)
- ç* — as *ch* in English (e.g., Çelebi – Chelebi)
- ş* — as *sh* in English (e.g., paşa – pasha)
- İ, ı* — as *I, i* in English (e.g., İbrahim – Ibrahim)
- ö* — as *o* in English (e.g., Özen – Ozen)
- ü* — as *u* in English (e.g., Hürrem – Hurrem)

¹ For more specific comments on the early modern and modern versions and spellings of the names used in this volume, see Appendix 2.

Transliterations of Ukrainian and Russian bibliographic citations (in the footnotes to Chapters 1, 5, 6, and Bibliography) follow the Library of Congress (LC) system. In the main text of Chapters 1, 5, and 6, the LC conventions have been modified. In the reproductions of both Ukrainian and Russian personal names, the soft sign (*ь*) is not transliterated (e.g., Sichynsky, Novosiltsov). Ukrainian initial *я*-, *ю*-, *є*- appear as *ya*-, *yu*-, *ye*- (e.g., Yuri); final *-uŭ*, *-iŭ* (in personal names) are rendered as *-y*, *-i* (e.g. Sichynsky, Yuri); and *-ŭ* appears as *-i* (in Kyiv).

Ukrainian place names are spelled in both the main text and in transliterated bibliographic citations according to standardized Roman-letter correspondences to the Ukrainian language geographical names (e.g., Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv).

Introduction

Galina Yermolenko

Any study of the West's relations with the harem must be in large part a study of the imagination.¹

Roxolana, or Hurrem Sultan, the legendary wife of Suleiman I, the Magnificent (1520–1566), left a special trace in Europe's cultural memory. The impact of this Asian queen on the Western imagination is comparable only to that of Cleopatra. "The greatest empress of the East," Richard Knolles wrote of her—rather high praise, considering the scathingly critical portrayal the venerated English historian gave the "wicked woman" in his famous *Generall Historie of the Turks* (1603). Most other historians were equally harsh to Roxolana, often portraying her as a witch and ruthless schemer whose tight grip over Suleiman, and her insidious harem intrigues, led to the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

Although Western historians have been struggling to define Roxolana's legacy for over four centuries, it is often overlooked that she was largely a creation of the European imagination. Due to the lack of historical records and hard evidence, most of what is known about this woman rests on a handful of secondhand contemporaneous accounts and subsequent reinterpretations and speculations by numerous historians, quasi historians, dramatists, and other men of letters who have shaped the Western discourse on Roxolana. Yet, despite the fictions written about this woman, her allure and impact on Europeans have not been critically explored to date.

The present collection is the first book-length critical study of the Roxolana figure in European history, culture, and imagination from the mid-sixteenth century to the present. Contributions to this collection examine cultural responses to Roxolana in both Western and Eastern Europe—namely, Italy, Spain, France, England, Germany, Turkey, Poland, and Ukraine. The collection attempts to account for Roxolana's unwavering appeal across the continent by probing into European attitudes and ideological biases in relation to the Ottoman Other and the Female Other.

Because most of what was written about Roxolana in Europe is based on several famous moments of her career at the Ottoman court, and because the essays and translations in the present collection refer to these famous stories in various ways,

¹ Ruth Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 1.

it is important for the reader to get acquainted with Roxolana's life. Following is a comprehensive, and probably most up-to-date, account.²

Hurrem Sultan

Roxolana is believed to have been born in the western part of Ukraine around 1505.³ Sometime between 1515 and 1520, when she was around 15 years of age, she was abducted by the Crimean Tatars in one of their slave raids on Ukraine. She most probably followed the route that thousands of her compatriots followed in the sixteenth century—walking in long caravans of captives to the biggest slave market in the Black Sea region, Caffa (Kefe; Kaffa; presently the city of Feodosia), on the Crimean coast, whence the captives were shipped to other Mediterranean slave markets. She then appeared in the *Avret Pazari* ['Women's Bazaar'], a slave market in Istanbul, and, according to a legend, was purchased for the imperial harem by Ibrahim Pasha, the close friend of the young Crown Prince Suleiman.⁴ Ibrahim presented her to Suleiman, probably before the latter became sultan in 1520. Her playful temperament and great singing ability quickly won her the name of *Hurrem* [the 'Joyful' or the 'Laughing One'], and that was probably what attracted Suleiman's eye. She quickly became Suleiman's favorite concubine (*hasseki*), having ousted from that position the beautiful Circassian concubine Mahidevran (Gulbahar, Gulbehar, or Gulfrem, in other sources),⁵ the mother of Suleiman's first-born son Mustafa.

In 1520, Suleiman ascended the throne as the tenth Ottoman sultan. In 1521, Hurrem gave birth to her first son Mehmed. From that point on, her career as a royal concubine took a rather unusual turn. The Ottoman harem system operated on the principle "one concubine mother—one son" that was designed to prevent

² For a shorter account of Roxolana's life, see my article, "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Emprise of the East'" in *Muslim World* 95.2 (2005): 231–47.

³ Roxolana's Ruthenian origin was confirmed in the early seventeenth century by Samuel Twardowski, member of the Polish Embassy to the Ottoman court in the years 1621–1622. Twardowski heard, at the Turkish court, that Roxolana was the daughter of an Orthodox priest from Rohatyn, a small town in Podolia, not far from Lviv. See *Przeważna legacya i.o. Krysztofa Zbaraskiego ... do Najpotężniejszego sołtana cesarza tureckiego Mustafy, w roku 1621 ...*, in *Poezye Samuela z Skrzypny Twardowskiego*, ed. Kazimierz J. Turowski (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czas," 1861), 169. See also Ahatanhel Kryms'kyi, *Istoriia Turechchyny* (Kyiv: Akademiia nauk, 1924), 184 n. 2.

⁴ See Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, trans. and ed. Donald M. Nicol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 70. I am using here a modern English translation of Spandugino's chronicle *De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani* (1538).

⁵ Mahidevran's Circassian descent was mentioned in the Venetian reports discussed below: e.g., "la circassa" (Navagero); "una donna circassa" (Trevisano). See Eugenio Alberi, ed. *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ser. 3: *Relazioni degli stati ottomani*, 3 vols (Firenze [Florence: Società editrice fiorentina], 1840–1855), 1: 74–5, 77; 3: 115. By some other accounts, she was of a Montenegrin origin.

the mothers' influence over the sultans and dynastic affairs.⁶ Hurrem however bore the Sultan, in a quick succession, daughter Mihrimah (b. 1522) and four more sons—Abdullah (b. 1522), Selim (b. 1524), Bayazid (Bayezid) (b. 1525), and Cihangir (Jihangir) (b. 1531).⁷

This break in the imperial harem protocol was not lost on the Istanbul public. Rumors of Hurrem's power over Suleiman and her influence in the harem began to circulate around the capital. These rumors were carefully recorded by several western diplomats at the Sublime Porte, travelers to Turkey, and escaped captives. The most notable of these sources were the reports of the Venetian ambassadors (*baili*), particularly by Pietro Bragadino (1526), Bernardo Navagero (1553), Domenico Trevisano (1554), and the author of "Relazione anonima della guerra di Persia dell'anno 1553"⁸; the narrative, *I costumi et i modi particolari de la vita de' Turchi* (Rome, 1545), by an Italian traveler Luigi Bassano; and *The Turkish Letters* of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Emissary of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand to the Porte between 1554 and 1562.⁹ In European reports and accounts, Hurrem was always referred to as *Rossa*, *Rosselana*, or *Roxolana*, for she was believed to be of Ruthenian or Russian descent.¹⁰

⁶ Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 58–9.

⁷ There is a great deal of disagreement in Western sources, both old and recent, about the number and succession of children that Suleiman had by Hurrem. I follow Peirce's list, which is based on Hurrem's habit of mentioning all her children's names in her letters to Suleiman. See *The Imperial Harem*, 60.

⁸ Bragadino's report was first published in Marino Sanuto's *I Diarii* (Bologna: Forni, 1533). Navagero's, Trevisano's, and the anonymous reports were first published in Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ser. 3, vol. 1 (1840). Bragadino's report was also published in Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ser. 3, vol. 3 (1855). However, the content of the Venetian reports was well known to most Italian and other European diplomats and politicians at the time. See Lucette Valensi, "The Making of a Political Paradigm: The Ottoman State and Oriental Despotism," *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 177.

⁹ All four letters were first published in Latin as *Augerii Gislenii Turcicae legationes epistolae quatuor* (Paris, 1589) and later translated into several European languages and reprinted many times. See Carl Göllner, *Tvrčica. Die europäischen Tükendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts. II. Band: MDLI–MDC* (Bucarești [Bucharest]: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România; Baden-Baden: Verlag Librarie Heitz GmbH, 1968). See also my essay in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

¹⁰ Cf. "donna di nazione russa" (Bragadino); "[donna] ... di nazione russa" (Navagero); "Sultana, ch'è di Russia" (Trevisano). See Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 3: 102; 1: 74; 1: 115. The belief that Roxolana was of Russian rather than Ukrainian origin may have been a later reinterpretation of the words *Roxolana* and *Rossa*. In early modern Europe, the word *Roxolania* was used in reference to the province of *Ruthenia* (*Rutenia*), or *Red Rus*, in the western part of Ukraine, which was later known under the names of *Podolia* (that is, eastern Podolia that was under Polish control at the time) and

It is hard to say what exactly propelled this young woman to the summit of Ottoman power. After all, about three hundred other beautiful women in Suleiman's harem vied for their master's attention. According to the Venetian reports, Roxolana was not particularly beautiful, but rather graceful, elegant, and modest.¹¹ Yet, her irresistible charm and playfulness, or perhaps her fair skin and hair, may have stood out among other concubines. It may have also been her ability to produce male heirs for the Sultan that gave her that extra power. But most probably it was her intelligence and a gift for political intrigue that gave her the advantage over other women in the harem.

The harem was part of the Sultan's greater royal family of about 80,000 people, including concubines, viziers, military officers (janissaries, sipahis), eunuchs, and other government officials, all of whom were slaves of foreign (predominantly Slavic and Caucasian) origin acquired through child levy (*devşirme*), slave trade, or as gifts.¹² This slave elite—frequently referred to as the *kullar* or *kul* ['a slave of the sultan, educated in the palace and in the service of the state']¹³—was the sultan's property, even though it differed radically from other types of Ottoman slaves, such as domestic or galley slaves, in that its members were raised in the imperial palace, well educated, and appointed to high offices of state. They enjoyed their upper-class privileges and had a rather personal relationship with their master, one based on allegiance and mutual reliance. The *kullar* privileges, however, were non-hereditary and could be easily taken away, along with their lives, if the relationship with the sultan soured. One can imagine the constant and terrifying insecurity the members of the *kullar* must have felt under these circumstances. Hürrem entered the empire as a captive in a slave market—

Galicia. Thus the Italian word *Rossa* ['Red'] emphasized Roxolana's origin in *Red Rus*. The inhabitants of *Muscovy Rus* were usually called *Muscovites* at the time. See Kryms'kyi, *Istoriia Turechchyny*, 185–6 n.2.

¹¹ Cf. Bragadino: "giovane ma non bella, ma aggraziata e menuetta (piccina)"; Navagero: "piacevole, modesta." See Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 3: 102; 1: 74.

¹² On the structure of the Ottoman harem, government, and slave system, see Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New York: Praeger, 1973); Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*; as well as the following scholarly collections: *The Ottoman Empire in the Reign of Suleyman the Magnificent*, ed. Tülây Duran (Istanbul: The Historical Research Foundation; Istanbul Research Center, 2 vols, 1988); *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: École du Louvre; la documentation française, 1992); *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, eds Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis, 1993); and *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, eds Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (New York: Longman, 1995). See also earlier classic studies: Albert Lybyer, *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), and Roger B. Merriman, *Suleiman the Magnificent, 1520–1566* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1944).

¹³ İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 223.

salary—2,000 aspers a day—was phenomenal! For a comparison, a standard *hasseki* stipend in the sixteenth century was between 150 and 500 aspers per day, according to the Ottoman privy purse records.¹⁸

One can say that Suleiman put Hurrem outside and above the slave hierarchy, having broken practically every article of the imperial harem protocol to her benefit. In 1533 or 1534—the exact date is unknown, but possibly after the death of Suleiman's mother, *valide sultan* Hafsa, in 1533—Suleiman contracted a legal marriage with Hurrem, thereby manumitting her as a slave. The event shocked both the Ottoman public and the Western observers: "In doing this," wrote ambassador Busbecq, "he violated the custom of the sultans who had preceded him, none of whom had contracted a marriage since the time of Bajazet I."¹⁹ The wedding was celebrated in a magnificent formal ceremony. A journal entry of the Genoese Bank of St. George in Istanbul described the festivities in the following manner:

This week there has occurred in this city a most extraordinary event, one absolutely unprecedented in the history of the sultans. The Grand Signior Suleiman has taken to himself as his Empress a slave woman from Russia, called Roxalana, and there has been great feasting. The ceremony took place in the Seraglio, and the festivities have been beyond all record. There was a public procession of the presents. At night the principal streets were gaily illuminated and there is much music and feasting. The houses are festooned with garlands and there are everywhere swings in which the people swing by the hour with great enjoyment. [...] There is great talk about the marriage and none can say what it means.²⁰

With the marriage contract, Hurrem was awarded 5,000 ducats annually in legal dowry.²¹ She was now a wealthy sultana, with grand apartments and a hundred maids. By some accounts, her clothes alone cost 100,000 ducats.²² In the wake of Hafsa's death, Hurrem filled the niche that had been heretofore occupied only by a *valide sultan*.

Hurrem's power was also manifest in the fact that upon marrying her, the Sultan became practically monogamous, which was unheard of in the Ottoman harem

¹⁸ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 127–8.

¹⁹ Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562*, trans. Edward S. Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 28.

²⁰ Qtd. in Barnette Miller, F. R. G. S., *Beyond the Sublime Porte: The Grand Seraglio of Stambul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1931), 93–4. Suleiman's wedding festivities, "for which no expense was spared," were also mentioned in Theodoro Spandugino's 1538 chronicle *De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani*. Similar to the comments in Busbecq's *Turkish Letters* and in the Genoese Bank journal, Spandounes's reaction was total surprise: "... this was an unheard-of event for a Sultan." See Spandounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, 70.

²¹ *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 28, 118.

²² Nicolae Jorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, 21 vols (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1908–1913), 2: 345.

history.²³ Rumor had it that she persuaded the Sultan to marry off the most beautiful young concubines in his harem, arguing that their unused beauty was being wasted away. Traditionally, those concubines who did not become intimate with the sultan would eventually be married off to high-ranking court officials, members of the *kullar*, and would thus graduate from the harem. Yet, as one writer put it, when Hurrem burst into the imperial harem, everyone graduated very quickly.²⁴

Hurrem's long-time rival, Mahidevran, was out of the way in 1534, having followed her son Mustafa to the province of Manisa, in eastern Turkey.²⁵ In the Ottoman royal family tradition, a sultan's concubine was to remain in the harem only until her son came of age (around 16 years old or so), after which he would be sent away from the capital to govern a faraway province, and his mother would follow him. She would return to Istanbul only in the capacity of *valide sultan*, or mother of the reigning sultan. This tradition, as well as the tradition of sultans' not having legal wives, was designed to protect the ruling dynasty from the influence of one woman or her clan.

Hurrem however remained in the harem with her hunchback son Jhangir, even after her three other sons—Mehmed, Selim, and Bayazid—left Istanbul to govern their provinces.²⁶ Moreover, in 1536 Hurrem transferred the harem from the Old Palace (*Eskiserai*) to the New Palace (*Topkapi*).²⁷ Such close proximity to the sovereign enabled her to exert enormous influence both on him and the Ottoman affairs. She influenced Suleiman's choice of viziers and grand viziers, and she actively participated in the Sultan's diplomatic correspondence.²⁸

²³ Trevisano wrote in his 1554 report that once Suleiman had known Roxolana, he “not only wanted to have her as a legitimate wife and hold her as such in his seraglio, but he did not even want to know any other woman: something that had never been done by any of his predecessors, for the Turks are accustomed to take various women in order to have children by them, or for carnal pleasure” (“... dopo che la conobbe, che non solamente ha voluto averla per legittima moglie e tenerla per tale nel suo serraglio, ma, siccome è la fama, non ha voluto dappoi conoscere altra donna: cosa non piu fatta da alcuno delli suoi predecessori, essendo i Turchi soliti di pigliare ora una, or un' altra donna, si per aver figliuoli, come per lor piaceri carnali”). See Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 1: 115–6. Translation mine.

²⁴ Godfrey Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women* (London: Saqi Books, 1997), 127.

²⁵ Alan W. Fisher, “The Life and Family of Süleymân I,” *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, eds Inalcik and Kafadar, 13.

²⁶ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 90.

²⁷ Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 86–7. By other accounts, the move happened after a fire broke in the Old Palace in 1541, 1543, or even in the late 1540s. See Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 16; Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women*, 125; and J. Michael Rogers, “The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent,” *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, eds Inalcik and Kafadar, 285.

²⁸ For more details on the two extant letters of Hurrem Sultan to Polish King, Sigismund II August, see Szymon Askenazy, “Listy Roxolany do Zygmunta Augusta,” *Kwartalnik historyczny* 10 (1896): 113–4; and my essay, “Roxolana: ‘The Greatest Empresse of the East’,” 240–41.

The Turkish public was quite troubled by such drastic, unprecedented changes in the imperial harem tradition and “by this persistent attachment of the monarch to one woman, which it considered unnatural and harmful.”²⁹ The Italian traveler Luigi Bassano wrote in his *I costumi et i modi*: “... the Janissaries and the entire court hate her and her children likewise, but because the Grand Turk loves her very much, no one dares to speak, and always every one speaks ill of her and of her children, and well of the first-born [i.e., Mustafa] and of his mother [i.e., Mahidevran], who has been repudiated.”³⁰ The Turks believed that Hurrem held her astonishing power over Suleiman through witchcraft, and they called her *ziadi*, or witch. In Bassano’s words, Suleiman “bears her such love and keeps such faith to her that all his subjects marvel and say that she has bewitched him, and they call her *ziadi* [‘witch’].”³¹ Busbecq also cited, in his *Turkish Letters*, the rumor that Roxolana practiced witchcraft to entice Suleiman. While describing the Turkish belief that the hyena had a great potency in love, Busbecq mentioned several hyena owners in Istanbul who were reluctant to sell them, because they were saving them for the Sultana, “as the Sultan’s wife was commonly reputed to retain his affection by love-charms and magic arts.”³²

In Hurrem’s defense, it must be said that the accusations of her as a schemer and witch resulted from her ambiguous status in the harem. As Leslie Peirce argues, in the imperial harem tradition, the two roles of a sultan’s concubines—his favorite (a sexual role) and the mother of the prince (a post-sexual role)—were separated, the separation made at the moment when the woman left the harem to follow her adult son to a province. In Hurrem, however, “these two functions were collapsed for the first time in the career of one woman,” as she was “caught between two conflicting loyalties: mother to the prince, and wife to the sultan.”³³ The public was thus confused as to whether Hurrem was loyal to her husband or to the princes, as the system did not allow a compromise in this regard.

In the spring of 1536, a dramatic event took place in the imperial harem that would be afterwards connected with Hurrem’s intrigues. The Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha (1493–1536), Suleiman’s bosom friend and favorite courtier, was suddenly executed in the imperial palace after he had dined with the Sultan and retired into a guest bedroom for the night. He was found dead the following morning—his

²⁹ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 63.

³⁰ “... i Geniceri, e tutta a lacorte le porta odio, e à suoi figliuoli fimilmente, ma perche il gran Turco gli vuol bene, nessuno ardisce di parlare, e io sempre n’ho sentito à tutti dir male di lei e de figliuoli, e bene del primogenitor, e della sua madre repudiate.” Luigi Bassano, *I costumi et i modi particolari della vita de’ Turchi* (Roma [Rome], 1545; ed. Franz Babinger; München [Munich: Hueber], 1963), cap. 15 [44]. Translation mine.

³¹ “le porta tal’amore che fa merauigliare tutti i suoi sudditi, in tanto che dicono ch’ella l’ha ammalciato, perche la chiamano Ziadi, che vuol dir Strega.” Bassano, *I costumi et i modi particolari della vita de’ Turchi*, cap. 15 [44]. Translation mine.

³² *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 49.

³³ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 89–90.

throat cut, and the walls of his bedroom splattered with blood. Ibrahim's execution came as a surprise to many. He had commanded extraordinary personal power due to his longstanding friendship with the Sultan. Captured as a boy from near Parga on the coast of Epirus, Ibrahim was presented to Suleiman as a page when the latter was still a young prince. Handsome, charming, intelligent, musically gifted, and socially adept, Ibrahim quickly became Suleiman's favorite. After Suleiman ascended to the throne in September 1520, Ibrahim quickly made an illustrious career as a statesman, rising from the master of the inner chamber to the high court falconer, and to the Grand Vizier within the first three years of Suleiman's rule.³⁴ According to some sources, he even married Suleiman's sister Hatice Sultan in a magnificent wedding ceremony in May 1524.³⁵ Ibrahim was appointed Commander-in-Chief for several war campaigns (including three in Hungary and one in Persia) that he carried out successfully. He was in charge of almost all European diplomatic negotiations at the Sublime Porte.³⁶ By 1535, Ibrahim had reached the zenith of power and amassed enormous wealth. He had built for himself a splendid palace on the Hippodrome, surrounded by beautiful gardens. He also endowed the construction of numerous charitable and state structures, including mosques, *imarets* (public soup kitchens), bridges, and aqueducts.³⁷ His sudden execution on March 15, 1536, was conducted secretly and without any apparent reason. Unlike his magnificent career, his end was undignified: his body, stripped of its clothes, was thrown outside the harem gate and then clandestinely buried in an unmarked grave. Moreover, all of his estates, foundations, and possessions were confiscated. Even his name eventually disappeared from history books.³⁸

Hürrem's role in the downfall of Ibrahim is a matter of conjecture. Many early modern sources did not mention her name in connection with this story. Although it is difficult to account for Ibrahim's sudden demise, there are several possible explanations. One possibility is that Ibrahim caused his own destruction with his arrogant behavior and extravagant lifestyle. Power, wealth, and favoritism may have corrupted him to the point that he forgot his place. In his chronicle *De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani* (1538), Theodoro Spandugino (Theodoro Spandounes) wrote that Suleiman showered Ibrahim with gold and presents, and "gave Ibrahim so much power to appoint and dismiss that he was like a universal patron of all government officials."³⁹ Having amassed enormous power and wealth

³⁴ E. J. Brill's *First Encyclopaedia of Islam 1913–1936*, eds M. Th. Houtsma et al, rpt. ed., vol. 3 (Leiden-New York-Köln [Cologne]: E. J. Brill, 1993), 441.

³⁵ See Demetrius Cantemir, *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire ... From the Year 1300, to the Siege of Vienna, in 1683*, trans. N. Tindal (London: J., J., and P. Knapton, 1734), 179. Rogers and Ward claim that Ibrahim's marriage to Suleiman's sister is questionable, but his magnificent wedding ceremony is well documented. See *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 10.

³⁶ Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 9–10.

³⁷ E. J. Brill's *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 441.

³⁸ Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 11.

³⁹ Spandounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, 115.

(“vne insolente prosperité” [‘an insolent prosperity’]⁴⁰), he sometimes acted, and referred to himself, as “sultan.”⁴¹ There were also rumors that Ibrahim had harbored secret sympathies for Christians and was himself a clandestine Christian. This possibility, however, is unlikely in light of his successful military conquests in Hungary, and may be the slander of his rivals at the court who were jealous of Ibrahim’s extraordinary power and eager to bring him down.⁴²

Thus Hurrem was not necessarily the culprit in Ibrahim’s death. But she might have exploited the rumors against Ibrahim and influenced Suleiman’s decision to remove him.⁴³ Her remark, in one of her earlier letters to Suleiman (from 1526), suggests that the relationship between the two favorites was not without tension: “And now you inquire about why I am hurt by Ibrahim Pasha. You will hear about it when God willing my meeting with you will be granted to me. For the moment tell Pasha our greetings. We hope they accept.”⁴⁴ Ibrahim and Hurrem were the only two people who held a unique place in Suleiman’s life without being his blood relatives. As the intimates of the Sultan, they certainly vied for his affection. After Hafsa’s death (1533) and Mahidevran’s departure from the harem (1534), Ibrahim remained Hurrem’s only rival for the Sultan’s attention. But even if Hurrem’s jealousy of Ibrahim was illusory, it could have been easily imagined. And, indeed, so it was imagined by European chroniclers, beginning with Paolo Giovio in the 1550s, after whom Europeans firmly connected Ibrahim’s death with Roxolana’s machinations.⁴⁵

By the mid-1530s, Hurrem was able to wield more power than ever at the royal court. The 1539 marriage of her daughter Mihrimah to Rustem Pasha—a captive of Bosnian origin who was shrewd enough to earn governor positions at Suleiman’s court, and was appointed Grand Vizier in 1544⁴⁶—allowed Hurrem to form her own faction within the harem family and the government. For the first time in Ottoman history, a former concubine was able to wield so much power due to her unique position within the dynasty.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Michel Baudier, *Inventaire de l’histoire generale des Tyrres* (Paris: H. le Gras et I. Guignar, 1641), 254.

⁴¹ Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: H. Holt, 1998), 64.

⁴² See Spandounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, 74–5; Inalcik, “Sultan Süleyman: The Man and the Statesman,” 92–3.

⁴³ Cf. Inalcik, “Sultan Süleyman: The Man and the Statesman,” 92–3.

⁴⁴ Qtd. in Inalcik, “Sultan Süleyman: the Man and the Statesman,” 96. Inalcik’s translation of letter 1 was published in M. Cağatay Uluçay, *Osmanlı Sultanlarına Aşk Mektupları* (Istanbul: Saka matbaası, 1950), 31. A similar English translation of this letter was also published in Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 87.

⁴⁵ For the list of the early modern sources, see n. 5 in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

⁴⁶ Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 11.

⁴⁷ Cf. Leslie Peirce, “The Family as Faction: Dynastic Politics in the Reign of Süleyman,” Veinstein, *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 110.

During these years, Hürrem's royal status and public image were strengthened through her numerous building projects. Women in the Ottoman imperial family habitually endowed religious and charitable buildings, but the latter were commonly located outside, or at least on the outskirts, of the capital. Hürrem, however, had the sole privilege of building such foundations in the very heart of Istanbul. This confirmed her high status within the Ottoman dynasty.⁴⁸ In 1538–1539, royal architect Sinan built her a charitable complex at the *Avret Pazari* ['Women's Bazaar'; later named *Hasseki*] in the Aksaray district of Istanbul. Hürrem's endowment included a mosque, a *medrese* (university), an *imaret* (public soup kitchen), an elementary school, a hospital (added later, 1550–1551), and a fountain.⁴⁹ Later, Sinan built a double bath (*hamam*) bearing Hürrem's name on the grounds of the Hippodrome and next to *Ayasofya* (Hagia Sophia), a very prestigious area of the capital.⁵⁰ In addition to the Istanbul endowments, Hürrem built mosque complexes and charitable foundations in Adrianopol, Ankara, Edirne, Karapınar (in Anatolia), Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina.⁵¹

A tragedy that must have tarnished Hürrem's triumph during this period was the death of her eldest son Mehmed in 1543. The young Prince was a charming person and an able governor of Manisa. Some speculated that he would be Suleiman's heir apparent.⁵² His death was evidently a deeply felt loss for Suleiman and his family: the Sultan expressed his grief very publicly by constructing a *Şehzade* ['Prince'] mosque in his memory.⁵³ After Mehmed's death, Suleiman's eldest son by Mahidevran, Prince Mustafa, was favored by both the court and the army as the

⁴⁸ See Peirce, *The Imperial Harem* and "Gender and Sexual Propriety in Ottoman Royal Women's Patronage," *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, ed. D. Fairchild Ruggles (New York: SUNY Press, 2000), 53–68.

⁴⁹ See Esin Atil, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; New York: Abrams, 1987), 26, 287; Peirce, "Gender and Sexual Propriety in Ottoman Royal Women's Patronage"; Rogers, "The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent," 285; St. H. Stephan, "An Endowment Deed of Khâsseki Sultân, Dated the 24th May 1552," *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 10 (1944): 172–3; and Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 81.

⁵⁰ Atil, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent*, 26; Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923* (New York: Basic Books/Perseus Books, 2005), 149; Stephan, "An Endowment Deed of Khâsseki Sultân," 172–3; Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 78.

⁵¹ See Atil, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent*, 287; Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 18–9; Amy Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), 46–7; Stephan, "An Endowment Deed of Khâsseki Sultân," 172–3; Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 81.

⁵² Fisher, "The Life and Family of Süleymân I" 12–3; Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 20.

⁵³ Fisher, "The Life and Family of Süleymân I," 12.

new heir apparent. Ottoman historian Peçevi described Mustafa as being “smarter and better qualified” to be a sultan than Suleiman’s other three sons.⁵⁴

What happened 10 years later—the execution of Prince Mustafa at the order of his own father—constitutes one of the most dramatic and most frequently described moments of Ottoman history. In retrospect, the entire blame for the fall of Mustafa was put on Hurrem Sultan and Rustem Pasha. The Istanbul public believed that Hurrem masterminded the plot against Mustafa in order to secure the throne for one of her sons, and that she was assisted in this plan by her son-in-law, Grand Vizier Rustem. Busbecq wrote in his *Turkish Letters*: “The Turks [...] are convinced that it was by the calumnies of Roostem and the spells of Roxolana, who was in ill repute as a practiser of witchcraft, that the sultan was so estranged from his son as to entertain the design of getting rid of him.”⁵⁵

According to popular rumors, through her sorcery and female charms Hurrem managed to raise doubts and suspicions about Mustafa in the Sultan’s mind. At her behest, Rustem produced a forged letter implicating Mustafa in dealings with Suleiman’s arch-enemy, the Persian Shah. Hurrem also attempted, unsuccessfully, to kill Mustafa by sending him poisoned clothes as a gift. Finally, on October 6, 1553, the suspicious Suleiman summoned Mustafa from the province of Amasia, which the latter governed at the time, to his military tent in Aleppo and ordered his eunuchs to strangle the Prince on the spot.⁵⁶ Gruesome details of this drama emerged in most European accounts of the tragedy: that Suleiman was watching the cruel spectacle from behind a veil in the tent and was even encouraging the mutes to finish their bloody deed promptly⁵⁷; that shortly afterwards, Hurrem’s hunchback son Cihangir (Jihangir), unable to cope with his beloved half-brother’s violent death, either died from grief⁵⁸ or committed suicide⁵⁹; and that later Hurrem organized the murder of Mustafa’s young son.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Peçevi *Tarihi*, 300 qtd. in Fisher, “The Life and Family of Süleymân I,” 13.

⁵⁵ *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, eds Charles T. Forster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, 2 vols (London: Kegan, Paul, & Co., 1881; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), 1: 114.

⁵⁶ See *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq* 32; Trevisano’s report in Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 1: 171–7; and “Relazione anonima della guerra di Persia dell’anno 1553,” in Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 1: 207–13.

⁵⁷ See “Relazione anonima della guerra di Persia dell’anno 1553,” 1: 207–13; *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 32.

⁵⁸ *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 80.

⁵⁹ See the dispatch of a French chargé d’affaires Mr. Codignac to M. Ladève, published in Girolamo Ruscelli, *Lettere di principi*, 2 vols (Venezia [Venice: G. Ziletti], 1570), 1: fols 166v–72r. It must be noted that historians do not always directly connect Cihangir’s death with Mustafa’s execution, despite the common belief that the two half brothers were rather close. Prince Cihangir did die soon after Mustafa in Aleppo, while campaigning against Iran. See Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, 140.

⁶⁰ *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 119–20.

These tragic events caused great turmoil among the janissaries and the army, and the rebellion was appeased only by lavish bounties.⁶¹ Rustem was dismissed from his post until 1555, when he was reinstated as Grand Vizier. There also appeared numerous poetic laments on Mustafa's death. The poet Yahya Bey wrote:

Alas! alas! and a column of the earth is broke atwain;
 For the tyrant Death's marauders Prince Mustafa have slain.
 Eclipsed is his sun-bright visage, away were his helpmeets ta'en;
 Through treason and guile have they wroughten the House of Osmán
 bane.⁶²

In another moving elegy, the poet Sāmī addressed Suleiman himself, appealing to his reputation as a just and lawful ruler, the *Kanuni* ['Law-Giver'], and to his poetic name of *Muhibbi* ['Lover']:

O king of noble blood is this justice?
 You may be the lord of the world but is this proper government?
 Is this the practice of the great emperors of history?
 [...]
 Is this tenderness to kill someone as dear to you as Mustafa?
 You killed him deluded by a lying trick and where is the truth in that?
 [...]
 You have been deluded by the words of an enemy: is that love?⁶³

Nevertheless, many accounts of the Mustafa tragedy were based on unsubstantiated gossip and speculation, and it is possible that the roles of Hurrem and Rustem in this affair had been greatly exaggerated.⁶⁴ Hurrem's fears of Mustafa were not unreasonable, as she had a great stake in this matter. Had Mustafa ascended to the throne, all Hurrem's sons would have most likely been executed, according to the fratricide custom of the Ottoman dynasty, which required that all brothers of the new sultan be executed to avoid feuds among royal siblings.

And yet, exonerating Mustafa entirely as an innocent victim and portraying Suleiman as a mere puppet in Hurrem's hands is also unfair. There had been signs of tension between the Sultan and Mustafa long before October 1553, whether provoked by the Hurrem faction or by others. Although Mustafa was favored to be the next sultan by his faction, this was not necessarily what Suleiman had in mind. The history of the military and governorship appointments of Suleiman's sons provides a rather interesting piece of evidence in this regard. Traditionally, the son favored by the sultan as heir apparent would be appointed to govern the

⁶¹ *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 32–3; Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 21.

⁶² Published in E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, ed. Edward G. Browne, 6 vols (London: Luzac & Co., 1900–1909; rpt. 1958–1967), 3: 131.

⁶³ Qtd. in Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 21.

⁶⁴ Cf. Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 20–21.

southwest province of Manisa, which was closest to the capital. Such a strategy was designed to assist the favored heir in reaching the capital, and the throne, sooner than other brothers when the incumbent sultan died. Mustapha governed Manisa between 1534 and 1541. But in 1541 he was appointed to govern the rather remote province of Amasia in eastern Turkey. It is also curious that there is no evidence of Mustafa having ever participated in a war campaign—unlike Suleiman's other sons. Mustafa may have been Suleiman's early favorite,⁶⁵ but the situation mysteriously changed after 1541.

By 1553 Mustafa had served as a province governor for 20 years and had most likely been disappointed by the lack of promotion to higher offices.⁶⁶ Suleiman, on the other hand, had other good reasons to fear that one of his sons would overthrow him: his own father, Selim I, reportedly poisoned his grandfather Bayazid (Bajazet) II to "catch the nearest way" to the throne. There had been numerous examples in Ottoman history when young princes overthrew their august fathers.

In any event, it is rather surprising that in the course of a decade Prince Mustafa failed to dissipate his father's suspicions about himself. The situation had been steadily escalating for years. Because Mustafa was supported by the army, his actions may have eventually developed into a factional war, or at least they may have appeared so to the Sultan. Thus, Suleiman's reactions were not unreasonable in the face of the impending Civil War.⁶⁷ As Turkish historian Halil Inalcik has argued, Suleiman's actions against Mustafa reflected his view that law and order in the Empire were more important than family relations.⁶⁸

That the dynastic tension could be destructive for the peace of the Empire became evident from the events in the wake of Mustafa's death. Two sons of Hurrem, Selim and Bayazid, became locked in a deadly power struggle for the title of heir apparent. While Hurrem was still alive, she was able to temper their animosity. But after her death in the spring of 1558, the feud between the two brothers exacerbated. By the spring of 1559 it unfolded into a full-scale civil war.⁶⁹ Bayazid was defeated at the battle of Konya and fled to the Persian Shah, Suleiman's arch-enemy. He was soon extradited to Suleiman's agents and was executed, together with his sons, at the behest of his own father in Tabriz in September 1561.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Alan W. Fisher, "Süleyman and His Sons," in Veinstein, *Soliman le Magnifique et Son Temps* (cf., n. 47 on p. 10), 119.

⁶⁶ Fisher, "Süleyman and His Sons," 120.

⁶⁷ "Suleiman was sufficiently alarmed by Mustapha's actions to ask Ebussuûd, the Şeyhülislam, for a *fetvâ* justifying the execution of Mustapha. [...] This *fetvâ* was in Rüstem Paşa's hands when he set out for eastern Anatolia in August 1553." Rogers and Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 21.

⁶⁸ "Suleiman the Lawgiver and Ottoman Law," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 1 (1969): 111, qtd. in Fisher, "The Life and Family of Süleymân I," 16. See also Fisher, "Süleyman and His Sons," 120.

⁶⁹ Atil, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent*, 23.

⁷⁰ Fisher, "The Life and Family of Süleymân I," 15. Rogers and Ward give the date of execution as 1560; see *Süleyman the Magnificent*, 24.

But by that time Hurrem was already dead. She died on April 18, 1558, around the age of 53, of some unknown disease. Suleiman became inconsolable and sank into a period of deep mourning. He buried his wife in a domed mausoleum, close to the *Süleymaniye* mosque, which he constructed and appointed as his own burial place.⁷¹ Hurrem was the first woman in Ottoman harem history to have been honored in that way.

The Sultan lived for eight more years—eight unhappy years filled with suffering from gout and arthritis, and from an incurable ulcer, or gangrene, on his leg.⁷² There is no doubt that he also suffered emotionally from the feud between his two remaining sons. Suleiman died suddenly, of a heart attack, on September 7, 1566, while on a war campaign to Szigetvár, Hungary. Altogether he had ruled his Empire for 46 long years, and his reign went down into Ottoman history as the “golden age.” Ultimately, it was Hurrem’s son Selim who inherited the throne, but he turned out to be a drunkard and a weak, ineffectual ruler. Selim II lost the famous Battle of Lepanto (1571) that significantly diminished Ottoman power in the Mediterranean region. Many historians have associated the start of the Ottoman Empire’s decline with his reign.

Unquestionably, Hurrem has left us with a dubious personal and historical legacy. She enjoyed the lifetime devotion of her sultan-husband in the very heart of a crowded Ottoman harem, and bore several of his children. Yet, sadly, her family disintegrated a few years after her death: by 1562 all of her sons, except Selim, were dead.⁷³ Those who hated her could gloat at the ironic and tragic twists of fate that rendered this woman her just “desserts,” even if posthumously.

In her harem career, Hurrem achieved infinitely more power than any *hasseki* in the preceding three hundred years. As Navagero wrote in 1553, “... there has not been in the Ottoman house a lady that has had more authority.”⁷⁴ Unlike other royal concubines before her, who had never risen above the level of harem rivalry, Hurrem successfully employed her political ambition and actively shared power with her sovereign husband.

But Hurrem’s personal victory over the Ottoman slave system, though amazing in its scale and significance, led to politically questionable results. She forever changed the balance of power within the Ottoman seraglio, having introduced “the sultanate of women,” or a pattern of strong concubines and sultanas and weak

⁷¹ Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women*, 124–5.

⁷² See the report of the Venetian *bailo* Marcantonio Donini in Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 3: 178–9; and *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 55.

⁷³ Hurrem’s daughter Mihrimah had a rather successful life however as her father’s favorite offspring and confidante, Rustem Pasha’s wife, and a fabulously rich woman, whose name later adorned many grand hotels along the French Riviera. See Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women*, 126; and Fisher, “The Life and Family of Süleymân I,” 9–10.

⁷⁴ “... non fu mai nella casa ottomana alcuna donna che avesse maggior autorità.” Alberi, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 1: 74–5. Translation mine.

sultans, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She was afterwards blamed for having created “the system of rule by favorites and courtiers which was soon to enfeeble the empire so disastrously.”⁷⁵ Early modern Ottoman historians, such as Çelebi, Peçevi, and Solakzade, portrayed Hurrem as a ruthless schemer pursuing illegitimate goals, and they never forgave her Mustafa. At the same time, they vindicated Suleiman I as an innocent, albeit bewitched and uxorious, ruler.⁷⁶ This highly unpopular Turkish image of Hurrem was transmitted to the early modern West by the diplomats, travelers, and escaped slaves, and it persisted in European historical writings on the Ottoman Empire for several centuries.

The Collection

The essays and translations selected for this collection largely reflect the evolution of the Roxolana image in Western and Eastern Europe from the mid-sixteenth century to the present. The volume is divided into two parts: the first featuring seven critical essays, and the second, six excerpts and texts from never-before-translated works concerning Roxolana as a historical person or dramatic character. In addition, three Appendices provide valuable material related to the scope of this volume: the plot summaries of six plays discussed or translated in this volume, a brief essay of the origins of the names and a chronology of Hurrem’s life and major events of Suleiman’s reign.

Galina Yermolenko’s essay opens Part I to offer the readers a comprehensive evolution of the Roxolana image in Europe throughout the ages (from the mid-sixteenth century to the present) and cultures (Italy, France, England, Germany, Poland, and Ukraine). The purpose of such an overview is to demonstrate a common element in the perception of the Roxolana figure by the West, despite certain cultural variations of her image in specific Western European countries. This composite Western image largely follows the development of Europe’s relations with the Turkish “Other” throughout the ages, as the very concept of “Europeanness” was evolving against the image of the “Turk.”⁷⁷ The essay also

⁷⁵ André Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, trans. Matthew J. Reisz (New York: Saqi Books, 1992), 70.

⁷⁶ See Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 308 n.157.

⁷⁷ The scholarly research on Europe’s relations with Ottoman Turkey and Islamic countries, and the evolution of European identity against the image of the Turk, is immense. See, for instance, Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350–1700* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954); Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1967); Paul Coles, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe* (London: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1968); Denis Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968); M. E. Yapp, “Europe in the Turkish Mirror,” *Past and Present* 134 (Nov. 1992): 134–55; John R. Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994); Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels: A History of the Conflict Between Christendom and Islam* (New York: Random House, 2003).

shows that the development of the Roxolana image took a different shape in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland and Ukraine, due to their different historical fates and geographic locales. This chapter places in a larger context the remaining essays that deal with culture-specific and time-specific images of Roxolana.

The next two critical essays discuss the impact of the Roxolana figure on English history and drama. Claire Jowitt's chapter shows how Roxolana served as a prototype for Queen Tota, a character from Thomas Heywood's play *Fair Maid of the West* (Parts I and II), who is represented as a sexual predator and a manipulative and ruthless witch. The essay explores the ways in which Bess, "the fair maid of the West," simultaneously represents the antithesis of the famous Sultana and mimics the Moorish Queen. Judy Hayden's essay in Chapter 3 compares the depiction of the exotic Roxolana in two Restoration plays: *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665), by Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, and *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), by Elkanah Settle. This comparison allows Hayden to closely examine the historical context in which these two tragedies were written, focusing on the implications of the Roxolana figure for the court of Charles II, and the relationship between the King, his numerous mistresses, and his subjects.

Part I of the collection also features four essays on the continental European images of Roxolana from the sixteenth century onward. Beate Allert's chapter discusses the perception of Roxolana in four seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German tragedies: Daniel von Lohenstein's *Ibrahim Bassa* (1653), August von Haugwitz's *Obsiegende Tugend: Oder der Bethörte doch wieder Bekehrte Soliman* (1684), Christian Weisse's *Mustapha und Zeangir* (1761), and Gotthold Lessing's unfinished *Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron* (1748). The first two plays elaborated on the Ibrahim murder, while the latter two drew on the Mustapha murder. Allert compares and contrasts the Baroque images of Roxolana featured in Lohenstein's and Haugwitz's plays with the Enlightenment response to her manifested in the tragedies of Weisse and Lessing. Allert claims that Roxolana remained a figure of much interest for the German Baroque and Enlightenment dramas, where "her depiction move[d] between a fascination with the unknown and exotic to a consideration of philosophical and ethical issues."

Two essays covering Roxolana in Ukrainian culture illustrate the shifts in the perception of her figure from the nineteenth century to the late twentieth century and the present. Oleksander Halenko's chapter discusses the emergence of a romantic image of Roxolana during nineteenth-century national revival in Ukraine. Halenko connects this phenomenon with the 1856 discovery and publication of an early modern poem "Marusia of Bohuslav" which told a story of a heroic Ukrainian woman freeing Ukrainian Cossacks from Turkish captivity. Halenko's essay also throws an interesting light on the perception of Turkish captivity by early modern Ukrainians: namely, the different gender expectations and models of behavior that were projected for Ukrainian men and women.

In contrast to this idealized image, Maryna Romanets presents, in Chapter 6, an iconoclastic Roxolana that has appeared in recent Ukrainian literature, an image that "demythologizes and demystifies" her through its "hybridization with the

conventional Orientalist fantasies of Western libertine pornography.” As a case in point, Romanets analyzes Yuri Vynnychuk’s erotic novel *Zhytiie haremmoie* [*Life in the Harem*] (1996) that fabricates a pseudo-autobiographical manuscript of Roxolana. Romanets finds in this novel a “subversive postcolonial stance of post-independence Ukrainian writing,” which reflects the process of “artistic and literary decolonization” of Ukraine. Such an irreverent approach aims at deconstructing “grand old narratives” and at revising and rewriting established historical texts.

Part I closes with an essay by Turkish scholar Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu discussing Hürrem’s images in modern Turkish historical and literary works. Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu compares the works of the early Republican era and the 1950s—such as the historical novels by M. Turhan Tan and Feridun Tülbentçi, and a cycle of history plays by Orhan Asena (from his *Suleiman the Lawgiver Tetralogy*, 1950s)—with the more recent writings by Adnan Baykal (*Interview with Hürrem Sultan*, 2004) and Özen Yula (*Unofficial Hürrem*, 2005).⁷⁸ Although the twentieth-century works examined the ways in which Hürrem challenged the patriarchal and hierarchical order of the imperial court, the recent works approach the figure of Hürrem along postmodern lines, presenting her as capable of de/reconstructing and transforming herself continuously.

Interestingly, both Romanets’s and Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu’s essays examine contemporary alternative and untraditional readings of the Roxolana/Hürrem figure, which manifests a postmodern tendency for probing into the issues of truth, representation, and identity. At the same time, they both deal with the texts that simultaneously appropriate and criticize western fantasies of the Orient and other clichés associated with the Self/Other dichotomy.

Part II of the volume contains a number of never-before-published translations from continental European texts involving Roxolana. The first five texts largely represent several widely known plots involving Roxolana that circulated in early modern European history and drama: 1) how she tricked Soliman (Suleiman) into marriage (Desmares’s *Roxelane*); 2) her extreme beauty and Soliman’s great love for her (de Vega’s *La Santa Liga*); 3) her part in the fall of Ibrahim Bassa (Illescas’s chronicle); and 4) her part in the execution of Prince Mustapha (Bonarelli’s *Il Solimano*) and the ensuing suicide of Mustapha’s half brother Jhangir (Lessing’s *Giangir*).⁷⁹

⁷⁸ The titles of these works are translated here into English.

⁷⁹ Three of these plots are rooted in the events of Hürrem’s real-life career described above. The story of Roxolana’s tricking Soliman into marriage does not appear in Ottoman or western historical sources. It is rather an anecdote (possibly based on an Istanbul rumor) that first circulated in European diplomatic documents, political pamphlets, and compilations and then found its way into dramatic plays. The anecdote is summed up in the discussion of Moffan’s pamphlet in Chapter 1 of this collection. For a comparison, Clarence Rouillard distinguishes four basic plots in the “cycle of Soliman”: the Soliman-Mustapha story; the Soliman-Ibrahim story; the Soliman-Roxelane story; and the Soliman-Bayezid-Selim story. See *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature, 1520–1660* (Paris: Boivin, 1938), 421ff.

Ana Pinto's translation of an excerpt from a Spanish historical chronicle *Segunda parte de la Historia pontifical y catholica* (1606), by Gonzalo de Illescas, relates the story of Ibrahim Bassa's fall. In an account very similar to Paolo Giovio's in his chronicle *Historiarum sui temporis* (1552), Illescas connects Ibrahim's fall with Roxolana's intrigues. The excerpt thus demonstrates the pan-European "recycling" and proliferation of the negative Roxolana image (associated with her interference into Ottoman state affairs) in early modern Western chronicles and compilations.⁸⁰

Pinto's translation of several scenes from Lope de Vega's play *La Santa Liga* (1598–1603) provides a glimpse into early modern Spanish literary constructions of Roxolana (*Rosa Solimana*), a little known page in the evolution of her Western images. In contrast to Illescas's chronicle and the French and English Senecan tragedies that demonized Roxolana as a law-breaker and a witch, *Rosa Solimana* appears as a positive character here, as her sensible advice to the Sultan and her excessive beauty are highly praised.⁸¹ It is rather Sultan Selim (Selim II), the quintessential Turkish sultan and Rosa's typical husband in Spanish literature of the Golden Age,⁸² who is portrayed as an idle and lustful "Turk." *La Santa Liga* features an early modern *topos*—the conflict between love and duty in a male ruler, and the danger that a beautiful woman poses for him. The play also manifests the importance, for the Spanish cultural memory, of the Battle of Lepanto and Spain's leading role in the Western Christendom's victory over the Turks.

Virginia Picchiotti's translation of Acts IV and V of Prospero Bonarelli's neoclassical tragedy *Il Solimano* (1620), featuring the Mustapha-Roxolana plot, gives the readers an opportunity to witness a shift in the early modern dramatic representations of Roxolana. Here she emerges as a genuinely tragic heroine. The reader will also be able to experience the neoclassical atmosphere of the play, as the events are related in a tone evocative of the fatalism permeating ancient Greek tragedies, such as *Oedipus Rex*.

In contrast, Roxolana appears in a much lighter context in Andrzej Dziedzic's translation of Acts II and V of Jean Desmares's tragicomedy *Roxelane* (1643), which dramatizes the anecdote of Roxolana's clever ruse in getting Soliman to marry her.⁸³ This tragicomedy suggests a more tolerant attitude toward women's participation in governing a state: at the end the Sultan welcomes Roxolana (*Roxelane*) as his "legitimate wife." One can also view Soliman here as a new

⁸⁰ For the list of such sources, see n. 5 in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

⁸¹ This is particularly evident in the Venetian Senate scene, at the end of Act I, where the doges admire Titian's portrait of Rosa. A copy of this portrait is featured on the cover of the present volume and is described in the Illustration list and at the beginning of Chapter 1.

⁸² See Albert Mas, *Les Turcs dans la littérature espagnole du siècle d'or (Recherches sur l'évolution d'un thème littéraire)*, 2 vols (Paris: Institut d'études hispaniques, 1967), 2: 404–6.

⁸³ See n. 79 above.

type of a ruler, who is capable of reconciling duty before the law with a passion for his wife, and is willing to share power with her.

Beate Allert's translation of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's unfinished fragment *Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron* (1748) gives the readers a glimpse into how the Enlightenment may have perceived Roxolana. This translation accompanies Allert's discussion of the response of the German Baroque and Enlightenment drama to Roxolana in Chapter 4.

Galina Yermolenko's translation of the libretto of a Ukrainian opera *Roksoliana*, composed by Denys Sichynsky in 1911, demonstrates how Roxolana was turned into a national heroine, even a martyr, by the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century national revival discourse. This translation differs from the preceding four translations of western plays in its radically different conception of the Roxolana figure while retaining the conventional figure of the "Turk" (Suleiman) as alternating between excessive cruelty, amorous passion, and mercy.

In exploring the allure and pervasiveness of the Roxolana figure in the European imagination, from the sixteenth century through the present, the collection delves into major anxieties Europeans have had in relation to the Self and the Other. As a woman of Eastern European descent, a former slave, a Muslim convert, and a powerful Asian queen, Roxolana stands at the crossroads of these concerns. A crosscultural and transnational figure, she represents the Exotic Female Other *par excellence*.

The collection also brings to the fore, and questions, the roles of various cultural and political representations in the ever-changing discourse on Roxolana. Representations of the past often reflect and respond to the concerns of the cultures in which they are produced. In doing so, representations can act as both "formations" and "deformations," to paraphrase both Roland Barthes and Edward Said.⁸⁴ European representations of the motifs and figures associated with the Ottoman Other are particularly marked by such "deformations," as they "did not necessarily refer to the real Orient but to the field surrounding the word."⁸⁵ In Said's famous statement, "the Orient is less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone else's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all of these."⁸⁶ Roxolana, in this respect, is like the Orient itself—less a historical figure than an amalgam and a site of various cultural fantasies and constructions.

⁸⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1979), 273.

⁸⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 203.

⁸⁶ *Orientalism*, 177.

PART 1

Critical Essays

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Chapter 1

Roxolana in Europe¹

Galina Yermolenko

Roxolana in Western Europe

Rumors about Roxolana reached Europe some time by the late 1520s or 1530s, and certainly after her marriage to Suleiman in 1533 or 1534, which shocked both the Turkish and the European public.² The chronicles of the Italian humanist historian Paolo Giovio, such as *Turcicorum rerum commentarius* (Parisiis, 1531, 1538, 1539) and *Historiarum sui tempores* (1552), published in several European languages and particularly well known in numerous French translations and editions,³ introduced to the western public the main players at the Ottoman court: Sultan Suleiman, his mother, “Rossa,” and Ibrahim “Bassa.” Giovio linked Roxolana to the 1536 execution of the Grand Vizier Ibrahim, stating that she hated Ibrahim for his opposition to her attempts to procure the throne for her son Bayezid (Bajazet).⁴ This story, single-handedly invented by Giovio, was later appropriated by other European historians and chroniclers.⁵

By the mid-sixteenth century, there appeared western European imagined “portraits” of Roxolana. According to some sources, Venetians habitually

¹ Some of the material discussed in this chapter appears in my article, “Reading the Other: Roxolana in European History and Literature,” in *National Social Science Journal* 32.1 (2008): 202–10; also available at <<http://www.nssa.us/journals/2009-32-1/2009-32-1-22.htm>>.

² For the description of Hurrem’s career at the Ottoman court, see my introduction to this volume.

³ *L’Histoire des empereurs de Turquie* (Paris, 1538); *Commentaire ... des gestes des Tyrz* (Paris: C. Wechel, 1540); *Histoires de Paolo Jovio*, trans. Denis Savage (Lyons, 1552, 1555, 1558, 1561; Paris, 1561, 1570, 1581).

⁴ *Histoires de Paolo Jovio* (Paris, 1570), 277–9, 287–8.

⁵ See Gonzalo de Illescas’s *Segunda parte de la Historia pontifical y católica* (Barcelona: J. Cendrat, 1606), 261v–63v, translated into English by Ana Pinto in Chapter 8 of the present collection. See also Michel Baudier’s *Inventaire de l’histoire generale des Tyrz* (Paris: H. le Gras et I. Guignar, 1641), 211–3, and the English translation of Baudier’s account in *The History of the Serrail and of the Covrt of the Grand Seigneur*, trans. Edward Grimestone (London: W. Stansby, 1633), 171–3, 176; Thomas Artus’s continuation of Chalcondyle’s *Histoire de la decadence de l’Empire Grec, et establissement de celvy des Tyrz*, trans. B. de Vigenère (Paris, 1612), 548ff.; and F. E. du Mézeray’s continuation of Chalcondyle’s *Histoire de la Decadence de l’Empire Grec*, 2 vols (Roven [Roven]: J. Berthelin, 1660), 1: 495–6.

decorated the walls of their palaces with such imaginary portraits of “la sultana Rossa.”⁶ Among these was “La Sultana Rossa” featured on the cover of the present volume. This oil painting (ca. 1552) is attributed to Titian or Titian’s school,⁷ and is presently located at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, but it was originally owned by the Ricardi family in Florence.⁸ Other early modern oils, drawings, and engravings portraying “Rossa Solymanni Vxor” [‘Rossa Solyman’s Wife’] are held in the museums of Florence, Vienna, London, and Paris. None of these portraits is believed to have been done from live Hurrem, as strangers were usually not allowed to see or to communicate with the imperial harem women. Some of these portraits may have been based on original Italian medals; others depicted imaginary beautiful women in exotic costumes. Yet such pictorial representations of Roxolana clearly indicated an interest toward the powerful sultana on the part of the early modern European public.

But it was the shocking news of the 1553 execution of Prince Mustapha (the conventional western spelling of the Turkish name “Mustafa”) that made Roxolana a notoriously fascinating figure in the early modern West. Through the reports of western diplomats at the Sublime Porte, travelers to Turkey, and escaped captives, the news quickly reached the European continent. One source in particular played crucial role in disseminating the Mustapha story around Europe—*Soltani Solymanni horrendum facinus in proprium filium*, by Nicholas de Moffan, a Burgundian noble and erstwhile Turkish captive and prisoner.⁹ Moffan put the wicked Roxolana (Rosa), whom he called the “vngratious,” “deuilishe,” and “pestilent” woman,¹⁰ at the very center of the intrigue against Mustapha, accusing her of poisoning Suleiman’s (Solyman’s) mind with female artifices and sorcery. Moffan vividly described how the Sultan was watching the strangulation

⁶ Godfrey Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women* (London: Saqi Books, 1997), 124.

⁷ This attribution is based on Giorgio Vasari’s remark in *Lives of the Artists* (1568; Penguin Books, 1965), 460. The veracity of the figure represented in this portrait and the authorship of the painting are highly debated issues among art critics. See Wilhelm Suida, *Le Titien* (Paris: A. Weber, 1935), 177; and Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, vol. 2 (London: Phaidon, 1971) 205, and pl. 270. Titian’s painting of Rossa figures in the Venetian Senate scene, at the end of Act I of Lope de Vega’s play, *La Santa Liga*, which was translated for this volume by Ana Pinto (Chapter 9). See also Pinto’s summary of the play in Appendix 1.

⁸ Oil on canvas; 99 x 77 cm (38 x 30 in.); inv. no. SN58. See Wilhelm Suida, *A Catalogue of Paintings in the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art* (Sarasota: John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1949), 59.

⁹ Nicholas de Moffan, *Soltani Solymanni, Tvrcarum Imperatoris, horrendum facinus, scelerato in proprium filium, natu maximum, Soltanum Mustapham, parricidio, anno domini 1553 patratum* (Basileae [Basel]: I. Oporini, 1555).

¹⁰ References are made to the English translation of Moffan’s pamphlet, which appeared as the thirty-fourth novella of William Painter’s *The Second Tome of the Palace of Pleasures* (London: T. Marshe, 1575; 395–432). See 403–4.

of Mustapha from behind a veil and even encouraged the mutes to finish off the resisting prince promptly, and how Gianger (Jihangir) stabbed himself to death out of sorrow.¹¹

To demonstrate Rosa's destructive effect on and abuse of the Ottoman laws, Moffan also recounted a story of how she tricked Solymán into marriage. She approached a Mufti (a chief Muslim juror) with a question of whether her erecting a mosque and a hospital for pilgrims would be profitable for her salvation. The Mufti replied that as the Sultan's bondwoman (that is, his property), she would not be credited with all her good deeds; they would rather be credited to her master. At this reply, Rosa fell into sorrow, and was soon manumitted by the besotted Sultan. Rosa's next trick was to refuse the Sultan physical intimacy on the grounds that as a free woman, possessing free will, she would be committing a carnal sin by going to bed with a man. This rebuff added more fuel to Solimán's burning passion for Rosa, and he married her in violation of the Ottoman tradition.¹²

Moffan's pamphlet became an instant hit; it was immediately reprinted by major European presses and translated into major European languages.¹³ Equally influential in propagating the Mustapha drama, and hence the negative image of Roxolana, around Europe in the later sixteenth century were *The Turkish Letters* of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq.¹⁴ Although Busbecq's letters, eloquently written and replete with his erudite comments and sharp observations, were a far cry from Moffan's misogynist diatribe, they uncritically transmitted to the West the Ottoman rumors about Roxolana's witchcraft and her vicious plot against

¹¹ Painter, *The Second Tome of the Palace of Pleasures*, 410–11.

¹² Painter, *The Second Tome of the Palace of Pleasures*, 401–2. This anecdote was first related in the diplomatic letters and reports of the French ambassadors at the Sublime Porte—namely, in the dispatch of a French *chargé d'affaires* Mr. Codignac to M. Ladève. Codignac's dispatch was first published in Girolamo Ruscelli, *Lettere di principi*, 2 vols (Venezia [Venice]: G. Ziletti, 1562), 1: fols 158v–64r, and in the 1570 edition of Ruscelli's letters; see 1: fols 169r–75v.

¹³ The first German translation of Moffan's pamphlet came out in the same year as the original, 1555. Another German translation, two French translations, and a Spanish translation appeared the following year, 1556. In England, Moffan's story was first published in Painter's *Second Tome of the Palace of Pleasure* in 1567, and reprinted in 1575 and 1582. Another English version, similar to Painter's, was appended to Hugh Goughe's chronicle, *The Offspring of the House of Ottomano* (London: T. Marshe, 1570), which was an adaptation of Bartholomew Georgievič's (Bartholomaeus Georgievic's) 1560 chronicle, *De origine Imperii Tvrcovm*. See Carl Göllner, *Tvrca. Die europäischen Türkendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts. II. Band: MDLI–MDC* (Bucarești [Bucharest]: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România; Baden-Baden: Verlag Librarie Heitz GmbH, 1968).

¹⁴ The first letter was published in Latin as *Itinera Constantinopolitanvm & Amasianvm ab Augerio Gislenio Busbequij ...* (Antverpiae [Antwerp]: Ch. Plantin, 1581); all four letters were published as *Augerii Gislenii legationes Turcicae epistolae quatuor* in Paris, in 1589.

Mustapha.¹⁵ Busbecq's *Turkish Letters* were repeatedly reprinted and translated into several European languages in the course of the seventeenth century due to their enormous popularity with the European public.¹⁶

The Mustapha story shook the Western world to the ground and became one of the biggest sensations of the early modern age. It was retold and dramatized, often with embellishments and juicy details, in countless compilations—the *Annales*, *Chronicles*, *Histories*, *Vitae*, *Vies*, and *Lives* of illustrious ancient and modern people, styled after Plutarch's *Lives*—that widely circulated around the European continent in various editions and languages. Among such works were the French “continuations” and revisions of Paolo Giovio's chronicles (*Histoires de Paolo Jovio*, 1561, 1570, 1581)¹⁷; Bartholomaeus Georgievic's *De origine imperii Tvrccorum* (1560; 1562); Hugh Goughe's *The offspring of the House of Ottomano* (1569/1570); Philipp Lonicer's *Chronicorum tvrccorum* (1578; 1584); André Thevet's *Les vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustres* (1584); Johannes Leunclavius's *Annales sultanorum Othomanidarum* (1588; 1596); Jean-Jacques Boissard's *Vitae et icones sultanorum Tvrccorum* (1596); Richard Knolles's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603); and Michel Baudier's *Inventaire de l'histoire generale des Tvrqs* (1617). Through these works, “Rossa” and “Roxolana” became household names across the European continent.

Suleiman's execution of Mustapha became an ultra-popular topic in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European drama, spawning numerous French, Italian, and English tragedies: Gabriel Bounin's *La Soltane* (1561); anonymous *Solymanidae Tragoedia* (1581); Georges Thilloys's *Solyman II* (staged in 1608; published in 1617); Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1609); Prospero Bonarelli's *Il Solimano* (1620); Antonio Cospi's *Il Mustafa* (1636); Jean de Mairet's *Le Grand et Dernier Solyman ou la mort de Mustapha* (1635); and Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668).

The fascination with this matter, with an added interest in the fate of Mustapha's hunchback half-brother, Jihangir (Cihangir, Gianger, Giangir, Zanger, Zeangir), continued well into the eighteenth century, in the tragedies of François Belin (*Mustapha et Zéangir*, 1705), David Mallet (*Mustapha*, 1739), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (*Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron*, unfinished fragment, 1748), Christian Weisse (*Mustapha und Zeangir*, 1761), Sebastien-Roch-Nicolas

¹⁵ Busbecq's specific comments on Roxolana are cited in my biographical sketch of Hürrem's life in the Introduction to this volume.

¹⁶ The first German translation appeared in 1596; first French translation, in 1646 in Paris; first English translation, *The Four Epistles of A.G. Busbequius, Concerning his Embassy into Turkey*, in 1694 in London. See Göllner, *Tvrccica. Die europäischen Tükendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts. II. Band: MDLI–MDC*, #2188; Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Octagon Books, 1937, 1965), 498 n. 1; and Clarence Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature, 1520–1660* (Paris: Boivin, 1938), 424 n. 2.

¹⁷ See nn. 3 and 4 above. On the history and significance of sixteenth-century French translations and adaptations of Paolo Giovio's chronicles, see Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature*, 68.

Chamfort (*Mustapha et Zéangir*, 1778), and Louis-Jean-Baptiste de Maisonneuve (*Roxelane et Mustapha*, 1785).¹⁸ Even the eighteenth-century European opera took an interest in the Mustapha story, as can be seen from Johann Hasse's *Solimano* (Dresden, 1753) and David Perez's *Solimano* (Lisbon, 1757; revived in 1768).

The interest in the Mustapha story reflected the West's fear of and fascination with the Ottoman Empire, feeding into the stereotypical images of the "cruel Turk" and the "lascivious Turk" that Europe conjured up in response to the Ottoman practices of fratricide (the custom of executing all the brothers and half brothers of a new sultan to prevent feuds between them) and polygamy.¹⁹ Suleiman's violent act against his own son and his excessive love for Roxolana gave the western world an opportunity to moralize on the tyrannical nature of the Ottoman system.

The issues of dynastic legitimacy and monarchic power were of paramount importance for the West, where several European courts were plagued by bitter dynastic disputes, such as the rivalry between the sons of Catherine de Médicis in France, or the Tudor dynastic struggle after the death of Henry VIII in England. Roxolana's central role in the Mustapha tragedy evoked the early modern European fear of a female ruler, as a number of powerful females—Catherine de Médicis, Mary Tudor, and Elizabeth Tudor—ascended to power in the sixteenth century. As these female sovereigns were struggling with the religious and political dissent in their dominions (e.g., the Huguenot opposition during Catherine de Médicis's reign and the Protestant opposition during Mary Tudor's reign), their ability to maintain order and to reign wisely was often challenged by male historians and writers, such as Jean Bodin in France or John Knox in England.²⁰

In such a context, Roxolana's disruptive influence on Ottoman state affairs was perceived as a female threat to the patriarchal system. In the Mustapha story,

¹⁸ See August Streibich, *Mustapha und Zeangir, die beiden Söhne Solimans des Grossen, in Geschichte und Dichtung*, diss. (Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1903).

¹⁹ The scholarly literature on the formation of the Turk image in early modern Europe is abundant. Listed below (in a chronological order) are only a few book-length studies that informed this chapter: Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (see n. 16); Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature*; Albert Mas, *Les Turcs dans la littérature espagnole du siècle d'or*, 2 vols (Paris: Institut d'études hispaniques, 1967); Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk, 1453–1517* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967); Alexandrine St. Clair, *The Image of the Turk in Europe* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973); Brandon H. Beck, *From the Rising of the Sun: English Images of the Ottoman Empire to 1715* (New York: P. Lang, 1987); and *European Perceptions of the Ottomans*, spec. issue of *Journal of Mediterranean Studies: History, Culture, and Society in the Mediterranean World* 5.2 (1995): 157–282.

²⁰ Addressing Mary Tudor's rule in his pamphlet, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (Geneva, 1558), John Knox wrote: "To promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire above any realm, nation, or city, is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, a thing most contrarious to his revealed will and approved ordinance, and finally it is the subversion of good order, of all equity and justice." See *The Political Writings of John Knox*, ed. Marvin A. Breslow (Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1985), 42.

Europeans saw a warning against a powerful woman whose machinations could subvert the existing order. Particularly offensive was the fact that Roxolana was not even of royal descent but a former slave of a barbaric origin, and a sorceress, to boot. Her witchcraft, then, was seen as the strongest manifestation of her illegitimate goals and the destructive effect of her actions upon the state. For instance, Jean-Jacques Boissard, in his popular compilation *Vitae et icones sultanorum Turcicorum* (1596), stressed Roxolana's use of magical potions with which she poisoned Suleiman's mind and weakened his will, thereby causing him to violate the Islamic law and act against the interest of the state.²¹ In a similar tone, English historian Richard Knolles denounced Roxolana's role in the execution of Mustapha.²² Knolles called her the "mistresse of his [Suleiman's] thoughts" and the "commandresse of him that all commaunded," and he blamed her deceptive beauty, mischievous designs, and sorcery for the disruption of the political order and eventual decline of the Ottoman state.²³ Knolles reprinted the portrait of Roxolana from Boissard's chronicle (see Figure 3) and accompanied it with a verse emphasizing the gap between Roxolana's beautiful appearance and her poisonous essence:

To fairest lookes trust not too farre, nor yet to beautie braue:
 For hateful thoughts so finely maskt, their deadly poisons haue.
 Loues charmed cups, the subtile dame doth to her husband fill:
 And causeth him with cruell hand, his childrens blood to spill.²⁴

Roxolana was further demonized in several sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century French and English plays. The predominantly Senecan drama of the time was chiefly concerned with matters of politics and statecraft, and their moral underpinning, and as such it was "drama in little but name."²⁵ Several Senecan tragedies, such as Gabriel Bounin's *La Soltane* (1561), the anonymous Latin play *Solymannidae Tragoedia* written at Oxford in 1581, or Fulke Greville's *Mustapha* (1609), focused on the dynastic ramifications of the Mustapha story and portrayed Roxolana as a cruel scheming machine and a major troublemaker. In psychological terms, these plays demonized Roxolana even more than early modern historical accounts.

Bounin's *La Soltane* (1561),²⁶ which was the first French play based on the Mustapha story and the first French tragedy based on a Turkish theme, largely

²¹ *Vitae et icones sultanorum Turcicorum* (Francf. ad Moen [Frankfurt am Main], 1596), 206–9. For the portraits of Soliman and his wife, "Rossa Solymanni Vxor," based on the engravings by Theodore de Bry and published in Boissard's chronicle, see Figures 1 and 2 in this volume.

²² Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London: A. Islip, 1603), 757–71.

²³ Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*, 757, 759.

²⁴ Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*, 759.

²⁵ Henry B. Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1946), 137.

²⁶ Gabriel Bounin, *La Soltane; tragedie* (Paris: G. Morel, 1561); ed. Michael Heath (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1977).



Fig. 1 *Sultan Soleiman Chan*; engraving by Theodore de Bry from Jean-Jacques Boissard, *Vitae et icones sultanorum Tvrccicorum* (Frankfurt, 1596). Courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

followed Moffan's account of the Mustapha execution. Bounin portrayed Roxolana ("Rose" in the play; the name also borrowed from Moffan) as a mastermind of the Mustapha intrigue, an ambitious sultana conducting a ruthless political scheme that posed a serious threat to the established political order. Bounin emphasized not only Rose's excessive jealousy and boundless ambition but also her use of sorcery, necromancy, and love philters for achieving her political goal (1.8.29–40).



Fig. 2 *Rossa Solymanni Vxor*; engraving by Theodore de Bry from Jean-Jacques Boissard, *Vitae et icones sylvanorum Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1596). Courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Similar interpretations of the Roxolana figure appeared in English Senecan drama at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1609), which was greatly influenced by Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, highlighted Rosa's utter ruthlessness and moral depravity. Greville's Rosa uses her friends and family to climb to power, and she literally stops at nothing to achieve her political goal—even at killing her own daughter,



Fig. 3 *Roxolana sive Rosa Solymanni Vxor*; from Richard Knolles's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes until this present Yeare 1603* (London, 1603); based on the engraving by Theodore de Bry. By permission of The British Library Board, RB.31.c.453. Image from Early English Books Online published with permission of ProQuest LLC.

who sides with her step-brother Mustapha. At the root of the problem are Rosa's disobedience and greed for power: "O werisome obedience, I despise thee, / [...] E're my delights or will shall stand in awe / Of God or Nature, common peoples lawe" (2.3.Cv).²⁷ In Greville's portrayal, Rosa's unruliness is dangerous in that it overthrows the laws of the empire.

As early modern historical works, Greville's play probed into the issue of women's power and rule. A staunch Calvinist, an Elizabethan courtier, and a writer prone to misogyny, Greville himself had many personal anxieties and frustrations about Queen Elizabeth Tudor's reign, disapproving of the constant courtship and sexual jealousies at her court in his *Life of Sidney*. It has been argued that through his representation of Rosa as an embodiment of "the internalized danger

²⁷ References are made to the first, quarto edition (1609) of Greville's *Mustapha*, which is different from the later, revised folio version (1633) of the play. See Fulke Greville, *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (London: N. Butler, 1609).

of femininity, the disruptive force within,” Greville “returns to and reevaluates the threat that Elizabeth’s gender represented to England.”²⁸

The image of Roxolana changed drastically when in 1619 Italian playwright Prospero Bonarelli wrote his tragedy, *Il Solimano*.²⁹ Bonarelli portrayed Roxolana (called “Regina” in the play) not as a villain and psychopath, but a person with rational dynastic ambition (hence her name, the ‘Queen’) and capable of intense emotional suffering. The plot against Mustapha is masterminded by the evil Rusten (Rustem), Soliman’s general and son-in-law acting out of jealousy of the Prince’s military glory. Despite her participation in Rusten’s plot, Regina is more a victim of cruel fate than an instigator of the scheme. She is drawn into it only because she is motivated by a rational dynastic interest—to save her own son from fratricide and promote him to the throne. To deepen the heroine’s drama, Bonarelli introduced the “exchange of the babies” motif: Mustapha is really Regina’s lost son, who was substituted at the moment of birth. Regina discovers this fact too late, and the tragic effect is enhanced by a realization that her own intrigues caused the death of her son. Unable to deal with this terrible discovery, she kills herself.

The change in Bonarelli’s characterization of Roxolana may be accounted for by a new type of drama that originated in Renaissance Italy—the neoclassical drama—which taught moral lessons and presented truth in its universal form.³⁰ As part of the neoclassical aesthetic, *Il Solimano* presented universal, timeless characteristics of human nature: human error and weakness, and human suffering from conflicting emotions. From this perspective, Roxolana’s actions were common follies of humanity, rather than heinous crimes of a villainous woman. Though a queen, she is also a mother, who becomes a victim of the fateful circumstances.

Il Solimano gave impetus to the development of the French classical tragedy, particularly with regard to the “Turkish” themes. Following Bonarelli, Jean de Mairet further developed the image of Roxolana as a powerful queen filled with strong emotions and capable of noble acts in his tragedy *Le Grand et Dernier Solyman ou la mort de Mustapha* (1635). Whereas Mairet’s Roxolana (“Roxelane,” in the French spelling) is a schemer in the first three acts of the play, her maternal fear of fratricide is presented as justifiable, and she even appears magnanimous in her suffering at the end.³¹

²⁸ Karen Raber, *Dramatic Difference: Gender, Class, and Genre in the Early Modern Closet Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 136–7.

²⁹ Prospero Bonarelli della Rovere, *Il Solimano; tragedia* (Firenze [Florence]: P. Cecconcelli, 1620). For the frontispiece of the 1620 Florentine edition of *Il Solimano* (etching by Jacques Callot), see Figure 4 in the present volume. See also my foreword to Virginia Picchiotti’s translation of scenes 10 and 11 of Act IV and the entire Act V of *Il Solimano* in Chapter 10, as well as the play’s plot summary in Appendix I of the present volume.

³⁰ John Allen, *A History of the Theatre in Europe* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 126.

³¹ Jean de Mairet, *Le Grand et dernier Solyman ov La Mort de Mvstapha* (Paris: A. Covrbé, 1639).



Fig. 4 Frontispiece of Prospero Bonarelli's tragedy, *Il Solimano* (Florence, 1620); etching by Jacques Callot. Courtesy of the Rosenwald Collection of The Library of Congress.

In addition to creating a more psychologically complex portrait of Roxolana, mid-seventeenth-century French drama provided two new developments in the Mustapha story itself. Charles Vion Dalibray significantly changed its tone by developing a happy resolution in his play, *Le Soliman* (1637). The Mustapha-Roxolana conflict became, for the first time in the history of literary representations of Roxolana, a matter of tragicomedy. Dalibray also downplayed Roxolana's ("la Reyne's," as she is called in the play) role in the plot against Mustapha by emphasizing her fear of fratricide and her eventual remorse.³²

Jean Desmares's tragicomedy *Roxelane* (1643) connected the Mustapha plot with the story of how Roxolana tricked Suleiman into marrying her. The latter anecdote was related by Moffan and many other early modern historical chronicles to condemn the wicked Roxolana for disrupting the established Ottoman tradition. Desmares's *Roxelane* is clever, strong-willed, and although calculating and hypocritical, not wicked. The play ends with Soliman's welcoming *Roxelane* to the throne as a legitimate co-ruler and declaring her children the successors to the Empire.³³

The changes introduced by the Italian and French drama of the seventeenth century—namely, the deepening of Roxolana's suffering in Bonarelli's and Mairet's classic tragedies, and the happy resolution of the conflict in Dalibray's and Desmares's tragicomedies—marked a definite shift in the evolution of dramatic representations of Roxolana. It is not entirely evident whether this shift reflected a new attitude toward the "Turk." Although these plays contained some Asian exotic details, they had very little to do with Turkish history and authentic atmosphere. On the other hand, several Turkish embassies to France (1619, 1669) may have triggered off a new interest in the Turks on the part of the French public, which was reflected on the theatrical stages.

A further step toward the softening of the Roxolana image was made when seventeenth-century French drama abandoned the Mustapha story altogether and turned to other plots involving Roxolana, such as the career of Suleiman's Grand Vizier, Ibrahim Pasha. The Soliman-Ibrahim plot grew out of an earlier Soliman-Perseda-Erastus plot, which was associated with Suleiman's capture of the Greek island of Rhodes in 1522. Soliman in this story embodies both the "cruel Turk" and the "amorous Turk," in that he besieges both the island of Rhodes and Perseda, a beautiful Rhodian woman married to Erastus. Perseda flatly refuses to accept Soliman's advances and remains faithful to her husband. The story ends tragically: Soliman executes Erastus for treason; Perseda, disguised as a man, challenges Soliman to a duel in which she dies; and the Sultan sorely repents his cruel deeds.

³² Charles Vion Dalibray, *Le Soliman; tragi-comedie* (Paris: T. Quinet, 1637).

³³ See Jean Desmares, *Roxelane; tragi-comedie* (Paris: A. de Sommaville et A. Covrbé, 1643), 102. See also my foreword and Andrzej Dziedzic's translation of Acts IV–V of Desmares's *Roxelane* in Chapter 11 of this volume, as well as the play's synopsis in Appendix I.

In other versions of the story, Soliman also dies at the end from a deadly wound received in the duel with Perseda.³⁴

Initially, Roxolana was not associated with this story, probably because at this early stage of Suleiman's fame, she was still unknown to European public at large.³⁵ But Madeleine Scudéry's 1641 novel, *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa*, turned the Erastus-Perseda plot into a story of Grand Vizier Ibrahim and his beloved Princess, Isabella, who becomes an object of affections for the lascivious Suleiman (Soliman).³⁶ As M. Scudéry's novel was heavily influenced by Paolo Giovio's and Michel Baudier's historical accounts of Ibrahim's career (which blamed Roxelane for his fall), Roxolana inevitably became part of Scudéry's story. The association of Roxolana with the fall of Ibrahim was further solidified in the 1643 dramatic version of Madeleine Scudéry's novel by her brother, George Scudéry, in his tragicomedy *Ibrahim ou l'illustre Bassa*.³⁷

Both Madeleine and George Scudéry depicted Roxelane as a ruthless schemer, the way she was portrayed in the earlier dramatic renditions of the Mustapha story. Yet, both works had a happy resolution, which was a new development in the history of literary representations of Roxolana.

But the winds of fashion were blowing in a different direction. When Englishman William Davenant staged his heroic opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*, at the Lisle's Tennis Court theater in 1661 (a revised version of an earlier performance of 1656),³⁸ it was a decidedly new outlook on Roxolana. Ibrahim was not part of the story, but Roxolana was introduced into Part II as Soliman's queen, who is jealous of her husband's passion for Ianthe, wife of Alphonso (the latter two characters are a version of the Perseda-Erastus (Perside-Erastes) couple discussed above). In a typical habit of the heroic drama, Roxolana embodies here the excessive passions of jealousy and sensual love (in contrast to Ianthe's pure love), but she is not an evil character. Davenant's acquaintance with the French classic theater and the burgeoning opera during his French exile (1642–1651) had undoubtedly influenced his treatment of the Roxolana figure, and his opera also reflected new

³⁴ This story first appeared in Jacques Yver's collection of five novellas, *Le Printemps d'Yver* (Paris: J. Ruelle, 1572). It was then popularized, with some variations, in the tragedy *Solyman and Perseda* (London, 1588) attributed to Thomas Kyd. It reappeared in two seventeenth-century French tragedies, by Pierre Mainfray and Nicolas Desfontaines. See Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature*, 441ff.

³⁵ Roxolana was not part of the sixteenth-century literary works on the Soliman-Erastus-Perseda cycle by Yver or Kyd. Nor did she appear in the seventeenth-century tragedies by Mainfray or Desfontaines.

³⁶ Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa*, 4 vols (Paris: A. de Somerville, 1641). The first English translation of the novel was published in 1652 and reprinted in 1674. See Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa*, trans. Henry Cogan (London: J. R., 1674).

³⁷ Georges de Scudéry, *Ibrahim ou l'illustre Bassa; tragi-comédie*, ed. Éveline Dutertre (Paris: Société des textes Français Modernes, 1998).

³⁸ On the complex staging and publication history of Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*, see Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 151–2.

English sensibilities about the Turks and themselves. As Susan Wiseman pointed out, the English operas of the late 1650s and early 1660s attempted “to legitimate the international ambitions of the English by presenting the audience with quasi-nationalist oppositions and juxtapositions,” such as “Englishness against otherness, Christian against pagan,” or “European against non-European.”³⁹ Davenant’s *Siege of Rhodes* manifested England’s new fascination with cultural difference by showing that Roxolana’s sexual jealousy was rooted in her Asian origin and the Islamic faith.⁴⁰ Although Roxolana is portrayed as inferior to Ianthe in moral qualities, she emerges as a powerful queen capable of noble acts. The high praise Ianthe bestows on Roxolana for setting Alphonso free at the end of the play accentuates this shift: “To all the World be all your Virtues known / More than the Triumphs of your *Sultans* Throne.”⁴¹

This image of Roxolana was continued in later heroic dramas, such as Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery’s *Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668) and Elkanah Settle’s *Ibrahim the illustrious Bassa* (1677). Boyle, returning the Mustapha plot, portrays Roxolana as a rather noble, just, and compassionate queen at the beginning of the play.⁴² She is later dragged into the Mustapha plot by the evil Rustan, but she acts not out of ambition but rather out of her motherly instinct (which reflects the importance of Nature for the heroic play) in an attempt to protect her only son Zanger from fratricide. Thus, the cruel Ottoman law and fate are blamed for Mustapha’s death. At the end Roxolana repents and seeks death; she is then banished by Solyman to repent in exile.

Settle, who elaborated on the events of the Soliman-Ibrahim-Isabella plot, also turned to the tragic genre, discarding both Madeleine Scudéry’s lighthearted tone and her portrayal of Roxolana as an unscrupulous opportunist. Instead, Settle made the evil Morat Bassa the villain of the play, while presenting Roxolana as a rather noble, loyal, and suffering woman. Roxolana’s love for Solyman (Suleiman) is exalted in this play. In Act II, Ulama, heir of Persia, urges Solyman to “Think of that dazzling form, so far above / Natures less lights, your *Roxolana*’s love.”⁴³ Other characters call Roxolana a “jewel in the Turkish Diadem,” and they consider her to be a paragon of nobility and faithfulness: “Pride of the World, in Beauty, Power, and Love / Great here below, and no less great above: / To *Solyman*’s Throne by Divine Justice led.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, 139.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, the conversation between Roxolana and Ianthe on the difference between European and Asian wives, in Part II, Act IV, in William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes. The First and Second Part; As they were Lately Represented at His Highness the Duke of YORK’S Theatre in Lincolns-Inne Fields. The First Part being lately Enlarg’d* (London: H. Herringman, 1670), 80.

⁴¹ Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes*, 95.

⁴² See Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, *The Tragedy of Mustapha, the Son of Solyman the Magnificent* (London: H. Herringman, 1668).

⁴³ Elkanah Settle, *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa, a tragedy: acted at the DUKE’S Theatre* (London: T. M. for W. Cademan, 1677), 20.

⁴⁴ *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa*, 21, 23. For a more detailed discussion of Orrery’s and Settle’s plays, see Judy Hayden’s essay in Chapter 3 of the present collection.

According to some scholars, English heroic plays, in general, tended to portray female characters as active subjects, exercising virtue, exploring their passions, and acting upon male heroes.⁴⁵ In this regard, they must have reflected new attitudes toward women that started to appear before or at the beginning of the Bishop's Wars in 1638 and intensified during the Civil Wars several years later.⁴⁶ By the Restoration period, "women had become newly important in English culture."⁴⁷ The preoccupation, on the part of the English culture, with women's growing influence and independence had led to a significant reinterpretation of female dramatic characters.

Specific concerns arose with regard to the influence of women on King Charles II. It has been argued that the heroic drama responded to the anxieties of the English society over Charles II's adulterous relationships with numerous mistresses and the debauchery of his court by downplaying women's threat to the male body politic. Heroic plays often represented women as powerful and positive forces in politics that prevented "men from becoming threats to the body politic."⁴⁸ From this perspective, Orrery's *Tragedy of Mustapha* is viewed as blaming the Sultan and his advisers for the execution of Prince, while excusing Roxolana as a mere tool in their hands.⁴⁹ In Settle's tragedy *Ibrahim*, the lustful Solyman served as a prototype for Charles II in that his lusts drew him away from his lawful wife and toward a potential mistress.⁵⁰ As Alex Garganigo has maintained, the heroic drama strived "to rewrite the figure of female transgression," and it managed to successfully "aestheticiz[e] away the threat of female influence."⁵¹

The popular image of Roxolana changed again by the late seventeenth century, when Europe started to develop a new attitude toward the Turks. After the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683 and the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, the Ottoman Empire was no longer perceived as a menace, but rather as a regime in decline.⁵² The increased travel to the East also brought about a re-evaluation of

⁴⁵ See Katherine M. Quinsey, *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 129–49.

⁴⁶ For the liberating power of the Bishop Wars in England, see Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), and Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper, 1977). For a different view, arguing that the liberating moment began prior to the Bishops Wars, with the petitions of the wives of Turkish captives, see Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), 78ff.

⁴⁷ Nigel, 9–10 qtd. in Alex Garganigo, "The Heroic Drama's Legend of Good Women," *Criticism* 45.4 (Fall 2003): 483–4.

⁴⁸ Garganigo, "The Heroic Drama's Legend of Good Women," 483, 489.

⁴⁹ Garganigo, "The Heroic Drama's Legend of Good Women," 488.

⁵⁰ Garganigo, "The Heroic Drama's Legend of Good Women," 489.

⁵¹ Garganigo, "The Heroic Drama's Legend of Good Women," 499.

⁵² See Alan Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East*, trans. Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1998), 20; Alexandrine St. Clair, *The Image of the Turk in Europe* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), 14. For eighteen-century and

major Asian institutions, such as polygamy and despotism. The West was now more interested in the sensuality and mystique of the Oriental seraglio than in Turkish atrocities or military prowess. The sultan's harem was now perceived as a fascinating and tantalizing place—a place of romance, passion, and sexual jealousy, a place of the “immense sexual lust,” “boundless jouissance,” and the “despot's endless copulation with an endless number of women”⁵³—but it was also closely linked to the political and moral corruption of Asian despotism. The new *sérail* fantasy found its most eloquent literary expression in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721).

As Western Europe began to form its Oriental harem fantasy, and as the “cruel Turk” image gave more room to the “amorous Turk” image, there also came a shift in the perception of Roxolana's personality. Her early modern image as a ruthless schemer was replaced with a more seductive and intelligent figure operating from the heart of the Turkish seraglio. That a former slave could subdue the invincible Oriental despot and virtually turn him into her own “love slave” imparted greater mystique and sensuous appeal to her personality, but it also made her figure sexually immoral. The name “Roxolana” (and alternately “Roxana”) became associated with upper-class European courtesans, who wielded great material and political success through their sexual power.

In a famous episode of Daniel Defoe's novel, *Roxana the Fortunate Mistress* (1724), the heroine, an upper-class French courtesan living in the London of the Restoration era, describes her pseudo-Turkish dance before a party of illustrious guests:

It was indeed a very fine figure, invented by a famous master at Paris, for a lady or a gentleman to dance single, but being perfectly new it pleased the company exceedingly, and they all thought it had been Turkish; nay, one gentleman had

later representations of the Orient in Europe, see also Edward W. Said's seminal study, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1979), as well as the following classic and recent scholarly studies (listed in a chronological order): Martha P. Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1966); Thomas B. Clark, *Oriental England: A Study of Oriental Influences in Eighteenth-Century England as Reflected in the Drama* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1939); Fatma M. Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gereon Sievernich und Hendrik Budde, eds, *Europa und der Orient, 800–1900* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1989); Naji B. Oueijan, *The Progress of an Image: The East in English Literature* (New York: P. Lang, 1996); and Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵³ Mladen Dolar, introduction to *The Sultan's Court*, by Alan Grosrichard, xiii. On the evolution of the harem fantasies in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western art and literature, see Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court*; Joan DelPlato, *Multiple Wives, Multiple Pleasures: Representing the Harem, 1800–1875* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002); and Ruth Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

the folly to expose himself so much as to say, and I think swore too, that he had seen it danced at Constantinople.⁵⁴

Although two other women—the real Muslim women from Persia—also perform their Oriental dance before the same audience, it is their European rival who receives the applause and admiration of the bedazzled spectators: “and one of the gentlemen cried out, Roxana! Roxana! by —, with an oath, upon which foolish accident I had the name of Roxana presently fixed upon me all over the Court end of town as effectually as if I had been christened Roxana.”⁵⁵ The eighteenth-century readers of the novel would have hardly missed the irony of this statement: it was not due to her dress and “Turkish” dance that the heroine was “christened” Roxana, but rather due to her status as a high-profile courtesan. Moreover, this passage suggests that the eighteenth-century European public was more interested in its own fictions of the Orient than in authentic Asian experiences. On the other hand, the Oriental allusions of Montesquieu’s and Defoe’s novels aimed at questioning Europe’s own institutions and sexual mores, such as the depravity of Charles II’s court depicted in *The Fortunate Mistress*.⁵⁶

By the second half of the eighteenth century, turcomania, or *turquerie*, came in full fashion in Europe, and Turkish music, costumes, tobacco, and candy flooded the aristocratic salons and theatrical stages of France, England, and Germany. Turkish themes moved from tragedies to comic operas and ballets.⁵⁷ Separate Turkish interludes and scenes were inserted in the operas, ballets, and plays that did not even deal with the Orient. In the late eighteenth century, several German-language musical theatres in the suburbs of Vienna specialized in producing numerous exotic/Oriental fairy tales and farces.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Daniel Defoe, *Roxana the Fortunate Mistress* (New York: The Bibliophilist Society, 1931), 169.

⁵⁵ Defoe, *Roxana*, 170.

⁵⁶ Cf. Grosrichard’s claim that the eighteenth-century seraglio fantasy marked a point when the West began “to question the principles of its political institutions, the goals of education, the role of the family, and the enigma of relations between the sexes.” See *The Sultan’s Court*, 125–6.

⁵⁷ See Eve R. Meyer, “Turquerie and Eighteenth-Century Music,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7.4 (Summer 1974): 482. On Turkish themes in eighteenth-century music and opera, see also Eve R. Meyer, “The Image of the Turk in European Performing Arts,” *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, eds Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis, 1993), 249–56; and W. Daniel Wilson, “Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage and European Political, Military, and Cultural History,” *Eighteenth Century-Century Life* 2.9 (1985): 79–92.

⁵⁸ It must be noted that in Italy and Germany the “serious” attitude to the Turks had persisted for the greater part of the eighteenth century, and their theatrical stages were dominated by the dark “Turkish” tragedies. As far as the Roxolana image is concerned, eighteenth-century Italian and German dramatists and composers mostly followed in the steps of Bonarelli’s *Il Solimano*, as did Hasse in his opera *Solimano* performed at Dresden in 1753, representing the famous sultana as a tragic character. The German Enlightenment drama also treated Roxolana in complex terms, acknowledging her great intellectual and rhetorical power. (For the discussion of Roxolana’s character in Gotthold E. Lessing’s

The “orientalization” of the East and the “domestication of the exotic”⁵⁹ led to the further softening of the Roxolana image in the later eighteenth century. By this time, Roxolana was completely exonerated—and significantly re-invented—in French fiction, drama, opera, and operetta. Jean-François Marmontel’s tale “Soliman II,” from his *Contes moraux* (1761), retold the story of Roxelane’s manumission and her marriage to Soliman in a humorous way, filling it with the ideas of personal liberty and equality characteristic of the Age of Enlightenment. In this story, the captive Roxelane emerges as a progressive French woman competing for Soliman’s (Suleiman’s) love with two other concubines, the Spanish Elmira and the Circassian Delia. The clever Roxelana conquers Soliman by selling him the ideas of gender equality (“You are powerful, and I am pretty; so we are even”) and by teaching him the gallant manners of a French gentleman. It is not her ruthlessness or wickedness, but rather her free spirit, wit, and her “little turned-up nose” that ultimately overthrew the laws of the empire and made her a powerful sultana.⁶⁰

Charles-Simon Favart converted Marmontel’s tale into a versified libretto for his comic opera *Soliman II, ou Les trois Sultanes* [*Soliman II, or the Three Sultanas*] (music by P. C. Gibert), which was first performed at the Comédie-Italienne in Paris in the same year, 1761. Its dazzling dialogue and spectacular musical numbers provided a light-hearted entertainment the public craved. The costumes were brought from Istanbul to add realism to the story, and Madame Favart’s triumphant performance of the Roxelane role had ensured the long-time popularity of this part among later French actresses.⁶¹ The comedy ended with a “Divertissement,” when all the odalisques and slaves of the seraglio came out to the stage to crown Roxelane, while dancing and singing: “*Vivir, Vivir Sultana; / Vivir, Vivir Roxelana*” [“Long live Sultana; Long live Roxelana!”].⁶² Roxolana’s marriage to Suleiman—a case of a woman’s law-breaking in the early modern age—was now perceived by the Western audience as a triumph of a woman’s wit and charm!

Favart’s *opéra-comique* enjoyed enormous popularity and was quickly adapted to German, English, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and other musical stages of Europe. In England, Isaac Bickerstaff remade Favart’s play into a farce, *The Sultan, or A Peep into the Seraglio* (1775), having turned Roxolana (“Roxalana”) into a feisty Englishwoman, who introduces the Sultan to the cardinal Enlightenment values of liberty, equality, reason, and free love.⁶³ Franz Xaver Süssmeyer’s

Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron and Christian F. Weisse’s *Mustapha und Zeanger*, see Beate Allert’s essay in Chapter 4 of the present collection, as well as her translation of the Lessing fragment in Chapter 12 and her summary of Weisse’s tragedy in Appendix I.) The change to a more lighthearted tone on the German dramatic and musical stages occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century.

⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 60.

⁶⁰ References here are made to an English translation of Marmontel’s tale. See *Marmontel’s Moral Tales*, trans. George Saintsbury (London: G. Allen, 1895), 10, 18.

⁶¹ For a nineteenth-century French representation of actress Mademoiselle Mars as Roxelane in *Les trois Sultanes*, see Figure 5 in the present volume.

⁶² Charles-Simon Favart, *Soliman second, comédie en trois actes, en vers* (Paris: J. Neaulme, 1762), 84.

⁶³ *The Sultan, or A Peep into the Seraglio; a Farce in Two Acts* (London: C. Dilly, 1788).



Fig. 5 *Mademoiselle Mars (1779–1847) in 'Les Trois Sultanes'*; nineteenth-century French school. Bibliotheque de la Comédie Française, Paris, France. Courtesy of Bridgeman Art Library.

(Süssmayr's) opera, *Soliman der Zweyte; oder Die drey Sultanninen* (libretto by Franz Xavier Huber), opened in Vienna in 1770.⁶⁴ After it was performed at Esterháza Palace in 1777, Joseph Haydn composed a set of variations on an old French melody, which presented a musical portrait of Roxolana and which was incorporated into Haydn's Symphony No. 63 as "La Roxelane" suite. In 1799, Beethoven wrote a set of eight variations for piano on a theme from Süssmeyer's opera.⁶⁵ In Sweden, Joseph Martin Kraus's opera *Soliman den andra, eller De tre sultaninnorna* (libretto by Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna) premiered in Stockholm on 22 September 1789, marking the beginning of the "Gustavian" (i.e., pertaining to the reign of King Gustav III) Opera and Ballet.⁶⁶ It was performed over 31 times

⁶⁴ See Franz X. Süssmeyer and Franz X. Huber, *Soliman der Zweyte; oder Die drey Sultanninen*; ein Singspiel in Zwey Aufzügen (Wien [Vienna]: J. B. Wallishausser, 1807).

⁶⁵ See Meyer, "Turquerie and Eighteenth-Century Music," 478–9.

⁶⁶ See *Gustav III and the Swedish Stage: Opera, Theatre, and Other Foibles*, ed. Bertil H. van Boer, Jr. (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: The Edwin Lellen Press, 1993).

up through 1817.⁶⁷ Italian composer Catterino Cavos brought *Les trois Sultanes* to St. Petersburg, Russia, where it premiered in French on 7 June 1798.⁶⁸ Some of these adaptations were still performed in the nineteenth century, and Favart's *opéra-comique* remained on the repertory of the Comédie Française well into the twentieth century.⁶⁹

The vogue for *Les trois sultanes* at the close of the eighteenth century must be viewed in a larger cultural context. A number of eighteenth-century French and German (Viennese) operas, most notably Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1781; libretto by G. Stephanie, Jr.), featured an abduction-from-the-seraglio plot.⁷⁰ The popularity of the theme of a European woman's liberation from the Oriental seraglio—whether through an escape/rescue arranged by her European lover or relative, or through her manumission by her Turkish captors (as in the case of Roxelane's marriage to Soliman)—in late eighteenth-century operas and musical dramas indicated the public's interest in the issues of women's rights and equality. These operas also manifested Europe's increased cultural tolerance toward the "Turk," as their Turkish characters often emerged as sympathetic or generous at the end. At least, the role of a villain was now relegated to minor Turks, while sultans or pashas invariably demonstrated great magnanimity.⁷¹

With the end of turcomania in Europe at the close of the eighteenth century and further weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the image of the Turk underwent yet another adjustment in the nineteenth century. The West's fascination with Turkey and the Near East⁷² resulted in the popularity of tales of romantic adventures of young European ladies and gentlemen in Turkish harems. Such romantic tales were abundantly produced by both high and low literary genres, ranging from Lord Byron's "Turkish Tales" (1813–1816) to the anonymous erotic novel, *The Lustful Turk, or Lascivious Scenes in a Harem* (1828).

During this time and in the later nineteenth century, the Roxolana character appeared in the revivals of Favart and other musical dramas featuring the "escape-

⁶⁷ Bertil van Boer, "Soliman II: The Musicologist's Perspective," *Gustav III and the Swedish Stage*, 11–2.

⁶⁸ See the Russian libretto of Favart's comedy, *Suliman vtoroi, ili tri sultanshi* (St. Petersburg, 1813).

⁶⁹ A popular remake of Favart's *Les trois Sultanes* was done even in the twentieth century: see Henri Busser, *Roxelane: comédie lyrique en 3 actes; d'après Favart*, représentée pour la première fois au Théâtre Municipal de Mulhouse le 31 Janvier 1948, dir. M. Roger Lalande (Paris: Choudens Éditeur, 1948).

⁷⁰ Some other "rescue-from-the-seraglio" operas of this period included Gluck and Dancourt's *La Rencontre imprévue* (Vienna, 1764), Jommelli and Martinello's *La schiava liberata* (Ludwigsburg, 1768; Dresden, 1777), Dibdin and Bickerstaff's *The Captive* (London, 1769), Vogler and Chamfort/Schwan's *Der Kaufmann von Smyrna* (Mannheim, 1771), and Mozart and Schachtner's *Zaïde* (1779–1780; unfinished). See Wilson, "Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage and European Political, Military, and Cultural History."

⁷¹ In Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*, this contrast can be seen between the generous Pasha Selim and his grotesquely ferocious overseer of the palace, Osmin.

⁷² See St. Clair, *The Image of the Turk in Europe*, 21–2.

from-the-seraglio” plots.⁷³ Yet, her popularity as one of the most favorite dramatic and operatic female characters on the theatrical stages of Europe began to wane gradually. On the other hand, the Roxolana image underwent a major makeover throughout the nineteenth century, due to a renewed interest in Ottoman history provoked by the increased travel to the East and scholarly publications of Ottoman histories and archival documents.⁷⁴ The latter rekindled the public’s interest in Turkish history, but they also revived the negative Ottoman image of Hurrem and the early modern Western stereotypes of Roxolana as a schemer. The new demand for historical and fictional tales about the Orient and Ottoman history catapulted Roxolana (or rather, Hurrem) into the realm of popular historical and fictional characters. In this new role, Roxolana began to lose her eighteenth-century European glamour and re-entered the domain of the Other, this time the Exotic Other, with all the conventional attributes of an Asian queen (the allure, exoticism, mystique, and cruelty). She was becoming known to Europeans by her Turkish name, Hurrem.

While she was still portrayed as a strong-willed and intelligent Roxolana, capable of succeeding under the oppressive circumstances of the Turkish harem,⁷⁵ or as an outrageously free-spirited and clever European “Roxelane,”⁷⁶ she was

⁷³ See, for instance, Henry Clinton’s tragedy, *Solyman* (London: J. Hatchard, 1807); Vincenzo Pucitta’s opera, *Il trionfo de Rosselane, ossia, Le tre sultane* (London, 1811); Eugène Scribe and Saintine’s (Xavier Boniface) *folie-vaudeville, L’Ours et le Pacha* (Paris, 1820) and its later revivals (1842, by Hervé; 1871, by François Bazin).

⁷⁴ The most notable of these publications were the histories of the Ottoman Empire published by J. von Hammer-Purgstall, J. Zinkeisen, L. Ranke, W. K. Kelly, and E. Creasy, as well as the early modern Italian and French diplomatic documents edited and published by E. Alberi and E. Charrière, respectively. See, for instance, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, 10 vols (Pest [Budapest]: C. A. Hartlebein, 1827–1835) and *Histoire de l’Empire ottoman*, 18 vols, a Paris: Bellizard, Barthés, Dufour et Lowell, 1835–1843); Johann W. Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa*, 7 vols (Hamburg/Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1840–1863); Eugenio Alberi, ed. *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ser. 3, 3 vols (Firenze [Florence]: Società editrice fiorentina, 1840–1855); and Ernest Charrière, ed., *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, 4 vols (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1848–1860).

⁷⁵ Johannes Tralow, *Roxelane: Roman einer Kaiserin* (Zürich: Scientia, 1944).

⁷⁶ The French retained an acute interest in the Roxelane figure, which is evident in numerous quasi-historical, biographical, and fictional novels, as well as plays, operas, and operettas produced in the course of the twentieth century. See in a chronological order: Claude Farrère, *Roxelane: Tragédie, l’édition originale illustrée*, B. Poggioli (Paris: Edouard-Joseph, 1920); Jacques Crévelier, “Roxelane: Variété inédit,” *Les Oeuvres libres: recueil littéraire ne publiant que de l’inédit*, vol. CIX (Paris: A. Fayard, 1930), 233–70; Henri Busser, *Roxelane: comédie lyrique en 3 actes; d’après Favart* [1948; see n. 69]; Michel Sokolnicki, “La Sultane Ruthène” *Belleten* 23 (1959): 229–39; Willy Sperco, *Roxelane: Épouse de Süleyman le Magnifique* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1972); Viorica Stircea, *La Sultane Roxelane* (Lausanne: Rencontre, 1976); and André Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, trans. Matthew J. Reis (London: Saqi Books, 1992).

also romanticized as an alluring Eastern European or Asian beauty in twentieth-century historical and fictional narratives. The circumstances of her origin were altered to create an aura of exoticism around her: she was sometimes presented as a daughter of a Ukrainian bishop⁷⁷ or the Crimean khan.⁷⁸ The old, negative image of Roxolana as a manipulative and ruthless *intrigante* proved to be irresistible for quasi-historical and biographical novel writers who were recreating her as an exotic/Asian queen, with a typical mix of allure and cruelty. Such narratives were replete with formulaic statements the likes of “she never forgave those who punished her” and she was as “hard as the diamonds she mocked.”⁷⁹ Recycling the misogynist commonplaces of early modern chroniclers and historians, modern men of letters also blamed Roxolana for the demise of the Ottoman Empire, as is evident, for instance, from a chapter title in Fairfax Downey’s 1929 novel, *The Grande Turk*: “How Suleyman Chose a New Favorite in His Harem to the Bane of His Empire.” This trend continued in later twentieth-century historical and biographical narratives.⁸⁰ Anthony Bridge, in his 1983 fictionalized biography of Suleiman the Magnificent, wrote of Roxolana as a “single-minded and ruthless woman,” who got rid of Mustafa mostly because she did not like competition. Bridge concluded, “Unluckily for Turkey, when Roxolana was determined to do something, she pursued her purpose with a relentlessness which knew no limits.”⁸¹

Contemporary novels about the Ottoman Turkey oscillate between sympathetic and negative representations of Hurrem, often mixing both.⁸² Some of these novels, however, fearlessly exploit Hurrem’s dark side and erotic appeal, and they unabashedly use “poetic license” to add more sensational details to her already eventful life story. For instance, Colin Falconer’s 1992 novel, *The Sultan’s Harem*, portrays Hurrem—the bold, free-spirited daughter of a Crimean khan, and a golden-

⁷⁷ Fairfax Downey, *The Grande Turk: Suleyman the Magnificent, Sultan of the Ottomans* (New York: Minton, Balch, & Co., 1929).

⁷⁸ See Tralow, *Roxelane*.

⁷⁹ Harold Lamb, *Suleiman the Magnificent Sultan of the East* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1951), 79.

⁸⁰ It must be noted that these comments do not pertain to serious scholarly studies on the Ottoman Empire by respected historians (A. Lybyer, R. Merriman, H. Inalcik, L. Peirce, and others). These objective, meticulous works lie outside the scope of this essay. My analysis deals with the cultural and imaginary realms populated by such entities as the Self, the Other, and the Exotic.

⁸¹ Antony Bridge, *Suleiman the Magnificent* (New York: Granada, 1983), 128–30.

⁸² See Aileen Crawley’s *The Bride of Suleiman* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981) and *The Shadow of God* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983); Colin Falconer’s *The Sultan’s Harem* (New York: Three Rivers Press/Random House, 1992; 2004); and Louis Gardel, *Dawn of the Beloved: A Novel of Suleyman the Magnificent and the Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Robert Davies (New York: Studio 9 Books & Music, 2003). A number of modern Turkish novels have been written about Hurrem, some of which follow Western European representations of Roxolana. For the discussion of several modern Turkish literary texts on Hurrem, see Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu’s essay in Chapter 7 of the present volume.

haired “fox,” with “cunning to match”—as diabolically clever and calculating, and even monstrous, in her relentless climb to power. In a memorable episode, after having spent her first and only night with Suleiman before his departure for a long-term war campaign, she resolves to ensure a pregnancy by seducing a harem eunuch Kapi Aga, who had somehow regained his virility [*sic*], and then cruelly disposes of him.⁸³ In this starkly innovative way, the author explains why Hurrem’s first son Selim (the future “good-for-nothing” Sultan Selim II) grew up to be fat, stupid, and idle, unlike her other children by Suleiman.

Behind such representations, one can see not only the Orientalist fascination with the Exotic Female Other, but also a timeless, misogynist fascination with a seductively beautiful and cruelly powerful woman—an archetypal woman standing for a whore by night, an *intrigante* by daytime, and a ravishing beauty always—a fascination that keeps us craving for more.⁸⁴ In the Western popular imagination, Roxolana/Hurrem has joined the pantheon of archetypal women, the likes of Cleopatra, Medea, and Lady Macbeth.

Roxolana in Eastern Europe

The Roxolana legend evolved based on a different scenario in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland and Ukraine, where it became associated with the most dramatic development of early modern history—the massive slave trade carried out by the Crimean Tatars and Ottoman Turks in the Black Sea and Mediterranean regions. During that time, Poland was a powerful kingdom (and part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) controlling large provinces in Western Ukraine, such as Ruthenia (or Red Russia), Podolia, and Volynia, which emerged separately after the fall of the Kyivan Rus. Nevertheless, thousands of Polish and Ukrainian people, nobles and peasants alike, were systematically captured and sold at the slave markets of the Crimea, Turkey, Italy, Spain, and the Barbary Coast.⁸⁵ It is believed that from the fifteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth century, approximately 2.5 million Ukrainians were kidnapped and sold into slavery.⁸⁶

The devastating effects of the Black Sea slave trade were powerfully recorded in early modern Polish chronicles⁸⁷ and folklore, particularly in Ukrainian songs and poems (*dumas*):

⁸³ *The Sultan’s Harem*, 20, 58–61, 63–5 (Chapters 16–17).

⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that Colin Falconer’s other popular novels, such as *When We Were Gods* (2002) and *Feathered Serpent* (2003), also deal with exotic legendary women—Cleopatra and Malinali (la Malinche), respectively—proving the fact that legendary tales of beauty, desire, power, and revenge are always in demand.

⁸⁵ Michael Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 161.

⁸⁶ Iaroslav R. Dashkevych, “Iasyr z Podillia v druhii polovyni 16-ho viku,” *Bibliografiia staroi Ukraïny, 1240–1800* (Kyiv: Prime, 2000), 4: 29.

⁸⁷ *Kronika polska Marcina Bielskiego* (1576) qtd. in Vladimir Antonovich and Mikhail Dragomanov, *Istoricheskiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 2 vols (Kiev: M. P. Fritz, 1874), 1: 73.

Great woes the Ukraine have befallen,
 No place there a haven affords:
 Hey, the children small have been trodden
 To death 'neath the hoofs of the horde!
 Oh, small ones to death they have trodden,
 The grown ones they've taken away,
 Their hands 'hind their backs they knotted
 And drove them to Tatar domains.⁸⁸

Roxolana's name became part of that tumultuous history, because she was one of the captives. But unlike many of her compatriots, she succeeded tremendously in Ottoman captivity.

Rumors of Roxolana must have reached her native land during her lifetime. Mikhalon Lituan, the Lithuanian ambassador in the Crimea, wrote in his 1550 chronicle that "the beloved wife of the Turkish emperor, mother of his eldest son and heir, was some time ago kidnapped from our land."⁸⁹ References to Roxolana can also be found in several early modern Polish documents.⁹⁰ Piotr Opalinski, the Polish Ambassador to Suleiman's court in 1533, claimed that through Roxolana's pleading, the Sultan forbade the Crimean khan to bother Polish lands.⁹¹ Samuel Twardowski, member of the Polish Embassy of Prince Krzysztof Zbaraski to Istanbul in 1621–1622, confirmed that Roxolana was born in the Ruthenian town of Rohatyn, not far from Lviv, as he was told at the Ottoman court.⁹²

Although these early references indicate that Roxolana's name was well known in Polish royal and diplomatic circles—which considered her as a "Polish sultana" (*polską sultankę*)⁹³—it is hard to estimate the extent of her general popularity in her native land at the time. Nor is there evidence suggesting that the eighteenth-century turcomania, which swept across Western Europe and made

⁸⁸ Qtd. in Yevhen Shabliovsky, *Ukrainian Literature through the Ages*, trans. John Weir (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1970), 17. For a wide selection of such folk legends and songs, see Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoricheskiia pesni malorusskago naroda*.

⁸⁹ Mikhail Litvin, "Otryvki o npravakh tatar, litovtsev i moskvitian. Izvlecheniie iz sochineniia Mikhaïla Litvina, 1550," trans. K. Mel'nik, *Memuary otnosiashchiesia k istorii iuzhnoi Rusi*, vol. 1, ed. Vladimir Antonovich (Kiev: Korchak-Novitskii, 1890), 19.

⁹⁰ Two extant letters of Roxolana (Hurrem) to the Polish kings Sigismund I and Sigismund II, August are held in Polish archives. However, these letters were not known to the public at large until the nineteenth century when they were discovered. See my article, "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Emperesse of the East,'" 240–241.

⁹¹ See *Kronika polska Marcina Bielskiego* (Kraków, 1597), in *Zbior dziejopisow polskich*, ed. Franciszek Bohomolec, vol. 1 (Warsawa [Warsaw]: Drukarnia J. K. Mci. Coll. Soc. Jesu, 1764).

⁹² See *Przeważna legacya i.o. Krzysztofa Zbaraskiego ... do Najpotężniejszego soltana cesarza tureckiego Mustafy, w roku 1621 ...*, in *Poezye Samuela z Skrzypny Twardowskiego*, ed. Kazimierz J. Turowski (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czas," 1861), 169.

⁹³ See Jan Reychman, *Historia Turcji* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolinski, 1973), 81 n. 13.

Roxolana's name popular on the French and Viennese theatrical stages, reached the European East. But there is sufficient evidence to believe that in Eastern Europe, the formation of the Roxolana legend began in the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century, in the wake of the national revivals that were taking place in Poland and Ukraine under the influence of Western Romanticism. In both countries, these movements entailed a heightened, and highly romantic, interest toward past history, particularly the dramatic early modern period.

The Polish national revival and Romantic movement (with Adam Mickiewicz as its major exponent) brought about a renewed pride in the glory of the early modern Polish state. But it also entailed a romantic interest in the old Ukrainian folklore,⁹⁴ which was considered to be partly Polish due to the fact that the western provinces of Ukraine were Poland's colonies at the time. Because Roxolana was born on the territory belonging to the Polish Crown, she was considered to be a Polish subject. For instance, in his 1864 poem "Podolia," Maurycej Gośławski expressed great pride in the fact that the celebrated Roxolana, before whom the entire East trembled, was a native of Podolia:

And what about Roxolana,
Who rocked the entire East?
She was ours, from Podolia,
A native of Chemerovtsy.⁹⁵

As proof of the close connection the Sultana maintained with her native Poland during her life, several Polish sources mentioned Roxolana's assistance in preventing the Tatar raids and slave trade in the region. The truces of 1525–1532, 1543, and 1553 between Turkey and Poland, as well as numerous Polish embassies to the Sublime Porte,⁹⁶ were attributed to Roxolana's influence. In the above-quoted poem, Gośławski also stated that Roxolana always remembered her beloved native land ("Drogić pól ojczystych pomna").⁹⁷

The pride in Roxolana's Polish roots and her imperial destiny was thus an extension of the Polish pride in its early modern statehood. This "imperial" theme was evoked with nostalgia in *Roxolana, the Podolian*, by L. N. H. Musnicki, published in London in 1832.⁹⁸ Roxolana is depicted in this high-spirited tale as a very ambitious woman, who even in her teenage years, prior to being kidnapped from her village and sold into the imperial harem, had had visions of her imperial

⁹⁴ See Hryhorii Verves, *Pol's'ka literatura i Ukraïna* (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1985), 84ff.

⁹⁵ "A oważto Roksolanka / Co to całym trzęsła wschodem? / Była nasza, Podolanka, / Z Czemerowiec rodem." See *Poezye Maurycego Gośławskiego* (Lipsk: F. A. Brockhaus, 1864), 19. Translation mine.

⁹⁶ See Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'empire ottoman*, 3: 258, 289, 315, 727.

⁹⁷ *Poezye Maurycego Gośławskiego*, 19.

⁹⁸ L. N. H. Musnicki, *Roxolana, the Podolian; A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1832), iv.

destiny.⁹⁹ As Musnicki explained in the introduction to his work, his purpose was to provoke an interest in Polish history by reciting one of its glorious moments.¹⁰⁰

The Ukrainian national revival also provoked a close examination of its early modern past—namely, the Tatar-Turkish slave trade, the Polish colonization, and the Cossack movement—and its reinterpretation in strong patriotic and heroic terms. It is during this time that the Ukrainian folklore, particularly songs and legends (*dumas*) reflecting the suffering of Ukrainian people from Tatar slave raiders, Ottoman slave masters, and from Polish nobles, was recorded and inventoried by the poets, historians, folklorists, and other cultural activists.¹⁰¹

As the nation turned to its heroic past to form a national vision, the Roxolana story received a strong patriotic treatment. Although no early modern folk songs about “Roksolana” or “Roksoliana” (the Ukrainian versions of the name “Roxolana”) were discovered, many old *dumas* featured young Ukrainian females who were kidnapped and forcibly married off to Turkish pashas. Once they had children by their Turkish masters, these women had no motive to return home and usually remained in captivity. As some early modern poems showed, these women managed to retain their Orthodox faith, even if in a clandestine way and despite their confined circumstances.

One such early modern *duma*, “Маруся Богуславка” [‘Marusia of Bohuslav’], closely resembles the story of Roxolana, as it portrays a daughter of an Orthodox priest, kidnapped and sold into a Turkish Pasha’s harem. Although Marusia feels cursed for having accepted the hateful “Turkish luxury” (“розкіш турецька”), she manages to free 700 Ukrainian Cossacks from her master’s dungeon on the eve of Easter Sunday.¹⁰² This *duma* eventually became associated with Roxolana,¹⁰³ projecting an image of her as a savior of her suffering compatriots.

How was it possible that a successful renegade, such as Hurrem Sultan, became a national heroine linked to the liberation of Ukraine from the Tatar-Turkish yoke? Roxolana’s case was probably not usual, given that she became so successful in captivity. Her triumph over a slave’s lot and the unprecedented power she wielded at the Ottoman court must have filled many Ukrainians with inspiration and a

⁹⁹ Musnicki, *Roxolana, the Podolian*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Musnicki, *Roxolana, the Podolian*, iii.

¹⁰¹ Among such activists were Mykhailo Maksymovych, Markiian Shashkevych, Amvrosii Metlynsky, and Ivan Vahylevych. A landmark in this phenomenon was the publication of a collection of poems *Kobzar* (1840), by Taras Shevchenko, which has become the premier Ukrainian epos. See Verves, *Pol's'ka literatura i Ukraïna*, 84ff.

¹⁰² An English translation of this *duma* is available in C. H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell, *The Ukrainian Poets, 1189–1962* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 24–6. There exist other English translations of this poem in various other sources.

¹⁰³ For more information on this poem, see Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoričeskiia piesni maloruskago naroda*, 230–40; and Olena Apanovich, “Marusia Bohuslavka—istorychna postat’,” *Nauka i zhyttia* 15.3 (1965): 9–13; 15.4 (1965): 27–31; 15.5 (1965): 13–5. For the crucial role of this poem in the glamorization of Roksolana by nineteenth-century national revival activists, see Oleksander Halenko’s essay in Chapter 5 of the present collection.

sense of national pride. Roxolana's local Ruthenian/Galician identity was thus transformed into a pan-Ukrainian, national identity.¹⁰⁴

Nineteenth-century Ukrainian writers compensated for the lack of factual evidence related to Roxolana with poetic imagination and license. Her maiden name, Anastasia Lisovska, which is etymologically close to the Ukrainian word *lis* ['forest'], in reference to the beautiful Carpathian forests, may have also been invented during this time, for historical studies have shown that this surname was not present in the Ruthenian and Podolian town records of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁵ By giving Roxolana a poetic Ukrainian name, nineteenth-century writers asserted her firm place in national memory and history. They viewed her dark actions—such as her plot against Mustafa and her support of her son Selim, who turned out to be a drunkard and a good-for-nothing sultan (nicknamed “Selim the Sot”)—as a kind of revenge on the Turks, as singular events that started the decay of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁶ Some nineteenth-century Ukrainian paintings even portrayed Roxolana as a martyr or an avenger with a dagger in her hands.¹⁰⁷

Fictional works praising Roxolana proliferated in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Among these works were the operetta *Роксоліяна* [*Roksoliiana*] composed by Ivan Lavrivsky (libretto by Ivan Husaleych) in the 1860s; a historical-political drama *Роксоліяна* [*Roksoliiana*] published in Kolomyia in 1869; a historical novel *Роксоліяна или Анастазія Лісовська* [*Roksolana, or Anastaziia Lisovskaia*] published in *Подольские Епархиальные Ведомости* [*Podolsk Diocese News*] in 1880; a poem by Liudmyla Starytska-Cherniakhivska, published in Kyiv (date unknown); a play by Hnat Yakymovych (date unknown); a historical novella, *Роксоліянка* ['Roksoliianka'] by D. Sharabun, published in Kolomyia in 1907; and a libretto of Denys Sichynsky's opera *Роксоліяна* [*Roksoliiana*] published in Kolomyia in 1911.¹⁰⁸

In the historical opera *Роксоліяна* [*Roksoliiana*] (libretto by I. Lutsyk and S. Charnetsky), Roxolana's sacrifice to the Ukrainian slaves in Constantinople became the central theme. When Suleiman, unable to win her love, gave her a chance to

¹⁰⁴ Serhy Yekelchuk, “Roxolana's Children: A Ukrainian Identity for the Modern Age?” Exploring Ukrainian Identity: Gender, Ethnicity, and Statehood, Graduate Student Symposium, University of Toronto, 12–13 March, 2004, <<http://www.utoronto.ca/jacyk>>), 5. Nineteenth-century Romantic reinterpretations of Ukraine's past often combined local folklore with the national agenda and the Romantic poetry of other Slavic neighbors. See Verves, *Po's'ka literatura i Ukraïna*, 85.

¹⁰⁵ Volodymyr Hrabovets'kyi, *Roksolana v istorii* (Ivano-Frankivsk, 1993), 17.

¹⁰⁶ Panteleimon Kulish, *Istoriia vossoiedinieniia Rusi*, 3 vols (Moskva [Moscow], 1877), 3: 349.

¹⁰⁷ See Apanovich, “Mariusia Bohuslavka—istorychna postat',” *Nauka i zhyttia* 15.5 (1965), 14; Irena Knysh, “Imperators'ka kariiera Anastazii Lisovs'koï,” *Novyi shliakh* (1966): 36–52, rpt. in *Vidhuky chasu* (Winnipeg, 1972), 217–81. A late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century romantic portrait of Roksolana is featured in Figure 6 of the present volume.

¹⁰⁸ See Osyp Nazaruk, *Roksoliiana: zhinka khalifa i padyshakha, Suleimana Velykoho, zavoioivnyka i zakonodavtsia* (New York: Hoverlia, 1955), 298–9; Knysh, “Imperators'ka kariiera Anastazii Lisovs'koï,” 266; and Volodymyr Sichyns'kyi, *Roksoliiana*, 57.



Fig. 6 *Roksolana*; anonymous Ukrainian artist; oil on canvas; late eighteenth-early nineteenth century. By permission of National Museum of Ukrainian Art, Lviv.

go back home, she stayed in the harem in order to help her captive “brothers and sisters.” During the performance, the chorus of Ukrainian slaves shedding tears in nostalgia for their motherland is constantly present on stage—in the foreground or background—to remind the audience, and Roxolana, of their suffering. Roxolana frequently faints at the sight of the captives’ plight and at the constant daydream visions of her beautiful native village. Suleiman is so mesmerized by her beauty that he grants life to all Ukrainian captives and takes them under his protection.

This radical act causes a rebellion on the part of the Turks, and the tragedy ensues. Roxolana dies, but in her death, she becomes a national martyr.¹⁰⁹

The tradition of depicting Roxolana as a national heroine continued in twentieth-century writings.¹¹⁰ Her Ukrainian origin became one of the central points of admiration. She was often seen as the “flower of Podolia”¹¹¹ or the “flower of the steppe”¹¹² that was torn away from its native soil and taken to Bosphorus for a greater destiny. Almost all twentieth-century fictional and poetic works give a great deal of attention and space to portraying Roxolana’s childhood and teenage years spent in Ukraine, and her education and adherence to the Orthodox faith, and they invariably emphasize her nostalgia for her homeland while in Turkey and her constant help to Ukrainian slaves.¹¹³ Even Roxolana’s conversion to Islam is not held against her. Rather, it is viewed as a condition that had enabled her to survive and assist her compatriots suffering in captivity.

Despite the lack of hard evidence, many twentieth-century Ukrainian writers maintained that during the 40 years of Roxolana’s power in Istanbul, neither Tatars nor Turks attacked Ukraine. They further argued that this circumstance gave the Ukrainian Cossacks time to consolidate their forces and organize resistance against the Turkish and Tatar raiders.¹¹⁴ Some of these works directly connected Roxolana’s imperial career with the rise of the Cossacks. Mykola Lazorsky’s 1965 novel *Сменова квітка* [*The Flower of the Steppe*] depicted Nastusia (the would-be Roxolana) as a veritable Cossack maiden, and the events of her life are closely intertwined with the nascent Cossack movement. For this reason, the author moved

¹⁰⁹ Denys Sichyns'kyi, *Roksoliana; opera istorychna v triokh diiakh z proliohom*; libretto (Kolomyia: W. Brauner, 1911). See my foreword and English translation of this opera libretto in Chapter 13.

¹¹⁰ See Hrabovets'kyi, *Roksolana v istorii*; Kis', “Lehendy i fakty pro Roksolanu,” *Arkhivy Ukraïny* 6 (1970): 25–31; Knysh, “Imperators'ka kariera Anastazii Lisovs'koï”; Iurii Kolisnychenko, “Sultansha z Rohatyna,” *Vitchyzna* 34 (May 1966): 213–7; Ievhen Kramar, “Slavetna ukraïinka v sultans'komu dvori,” *Rohatyns'ka zemlia: zbirnyk istorychno-memuarnykh, etnografichnykh i pobutovykh materialiv* (New York: Central Committee “Rohatynshchyna,” 1989), 1: 106–18; and Mykhailo Orlych, *Roksoliana, tsarivna soniachna Opillia* (Lviv: Triada plius, 2002).

¹¹¹ Mieczysław Opalek, *Roksolana* (Lwów [Lviv], 1928), 11.

¹¹² Mykola Lazors'kyi, *Stepova kvitka; istorychnyi roman pro Roksolianu* (München [Munich]: Dniprova khvyliia, 1965).

¹¹³ See, for instance, Lazors'kyi, *Stepova kvitka; istorychnyi roman pro Roksolianu*; Antin Lotots'kyi, *Roksoliana; istorychne opovidannia z XVI st.* (Lviv: Svît dytyny, 1935); Iurii Kolisnychenko and Serhii Plachynda, *Neopalyma kupyna; Roksoliana* (Winnipeg: Trident Press, 1970); Nazaruk, *Roksoliana: zhinka khalifa i padys'hakha*; Liubov Zabalita, “Divchyna z Rohatyna; dramatychna poema,” *Zemlia Anteiv: poezii* (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1971), 53–110; and Pavlo Zahrebel'nyi, *Roksolana* (Kyiv: Tast-M, 1979).

¹¹⁴ See Kolisnychenko, “Sultansha z Rohatyna,” 215–6. However, authoritative Ukrainian historians, such as Hrushevsky or Krymsky, maintain that Tatar raids on Ukraine continued during the 1540s and 1550s—the time of Roxolana’s strongest power. For the list of the Tatar raids on Ukraine between 1521 and 1558, see Pavlo Romaniuk, *Halyts'kyi memorandum* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1999), 177.

her birthplace to Poltava, closer to the area where the Cossack resistance to the Tatar and Turkish devastation was started.¹¹⁵

Attempts have been made to counter such romanticized and over-sentimental portrayals of Roxolana with more realistic and historically accurate accounts,¹¹⁶ and some authors have called for shifting attention from Roxolana's imagined patriotism onto her extraordinary individuality. In the afterword to his 1979 novel *Роксолана* [*Roksolana*], Pavlo Zahrebelny defended Roxolana's actions as her right to the "pursuit of happiness," the pursuit of her unique individuality, which is the ultimate measure and purpose of human life.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, present-day historical scholarship questions the existing idealistic conceptions of Ukraine's early modern history, thus attempting to reveal much more complexity in the phenomenon of the Ottoman slavery in Ukraine. Recent historians have argued that while the Ottoman slavery was undoubtedly a heavy burden on Ukraine, many Ukrainians became successful renegades in the Ottoman captivity—a fact that had been for the most part ignored or downplayed by the earlier scholarship. Moreover, they maintain that, in contrast to the traditional perception of the relations between the early modern Ukrainians and Tatars-Turks in terms of a religious and political confrontation, the borderline between the East and the West, which is believed to have passed through the early modern Ukraine, was "an area of intensive ethnic and cultural exchange," involving close personal, economic, and cultural contacts between Ukrainians, Tatars, and Turks.¹¹⁸ Such assertions are partly based on the nontraditional representations of slavery and attitudes to it that can be found in early modern *dumas* on slavery,¹¹⁹ which testify "not only to the tragic perception by the Ukrainians of their country's fate, when she suffered from being bled dry by the Tatar raids, but also to their awareness of a close kinship with the Crimean Tatars."¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Lazors'kyi, *Stepova kvitka*, 37.

¹¹⁶ See Roman Richok, "Pam'iatnyk Roksolani," *Narodna Volia* 24 April 1997: 5–6; Romaniuk, *Halyts'kyi memorandum*, 161–215.

¹¹⁷ Pavlo Zahrebel'nyi, *Roksolana* (Kyiv: Tast-M, 2000), 629–30; (Kharkiv: Ievroekspres, 2000), 628–31.

¹¹⁸ See Iaroslav R. Dashkevych, "Ukraïna na mezhi mizh skhodom i zakhodom," *Zapysky naukovoho tovarystva imeni T. Shevchenka* (Lviv: Piramida, 1991), 44.

¹¹⁹ Thus, some *dumas* featured Ukrainians involved in slave trade as merchants, rather than as captives, as, for instance, in the poem "At the Market of Tsarhorod," where a brother is selling his sister at a slave market in Istanbul. See Oleksander Halenko, "Pro etnichnu sporidnenist' ukraïntsiiv ta kryms'kykh tatar ranishe i teper," *Kryms'ki tatory—istoriia i suchasnist' (do 50-richchia deportatsii kryms'ko-tatar'koho narodu); materialy mizhnarodnoi naukovoï konferentsii, Kyiv, 13–14 travnia 1994 roku*, ed. Ivan F. Kuras (Kyiv: Institut natsional'nykh vidnosyn i politolohii NAN Ukraïny, 1995), 105.

¹²⁰ "не тільки про трагічне сприйняття українцями долі України, що терпіла від знекровлення через татарські набіги, але й про усвідомлення ними кровної спорідненості з кримськими татарами." Halenko, "Pro etnichnu sporidnenist' ukraïntsiiv ta kryms'kykh tatar ranishe i teper," 109. By this statement, the author means that there were closer family ties and cooperation between early modern Ukrainians and Tatars living in the Crimea than the Soviet anti-Tatar propaganda was willing to admit.



Fig. 7 *Roxolana is Coming Back Home*; bronze monument in Roxolana's birthplace Rohatyn, Ukraine; sculpture by Roman Romanovych, architectural design by O. Skop, 1999. Photo by Galina Yermolenko, 2004.

There have also been arguments that the Ukrainian folklore should not be viewed as an authentic early modern source, because it became known in its written form only in the nineteenth century and should therefore be regarded as a nineteenth-century phenomenon, that is, within the historical and cultural context in which it was recreated, rather than in the original context, which had ceased to exist.¹²¹

¹²¹ See Iurii Kochubei, "Do spetsyfiky ukrains'koho oriientalizmu," *Shkhidnyi svit* 8 (Feb. 1996): 137.



Fig. 8 *Roksolana*, Volodymyr Kostyrko, oil on canvas, 70 x 110 cm, 1995. Private collection, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. Courtesy of Volodymyr Kostyrko.

These critiques have not so far damaged the Roxolana image in present-day Ukraine. Whether she missed her native land or helped her captive compatriots will probably never be known, but in a sense, it is immaterial, because now her name belongs to national legend, rather than to history. As the country has gained its

independence from Russia, the Roxolana legend has become an important building block in Ukraine's identity-construction and nation-building. She has entered the pantheon of cultural icons. The names *Roksolana* and *Roksoliana* are widely popular among Ukrainian girls and women. Roxolana's name appears on seltzer water bottles and vodkas, on posters and stamps, on marriage and travel agencies, beauty salons, and boutiques. In 1999, a monument to Roxolana was erected by her compatriots in her native town of Rohatyn. The monument (sculpture by Roman Romanovych; architectural design by O. Skop), called "Роксолана повертається додому" ['Roxolana is Coming Back Home'], features a four-meter female figure, in a traditional Ukrainian costume, standing on a six-meter column, which rests on a wave-shaped foundation. The design thus represents Roxolana's symbolic return home via the Black Sea.¹²² A 20-series film, *Roxolana*, was aired on Ukrainian and Russian television in 1997, and a 26-series sequel, *Roxolana—the Imperial Sovereign*, followed in 2003,¹²³ both tremendously popular with the Ukrainian and international audiences (Russian, Turkish, and Arabic), despite being what Pavlo Zahrebelny called "soap opera[s] tinted with Ukrainian hues."¹²⁴ More publications on this famous woman, including children's books, film scripts, and newspaper articles continue to come out annually.¹²⁵ Despite the current criticism of this "new religion of Roksolana"¹²⁶ and the attempts to demythologize her image, the "passion for Roksolana continues."¹²⁷ In the popular memory, Roxolana's name is connected with the fate of Ukraine, because it offers redemption of the tragic past, no matter how much a fantasy it is. Time will show how long this legend will endure in the Ukrainian imagination.

¹²² See Figure 7 in the present volume. See also Anatolii Zubkov, "Roksolana povertaet'sia dodomu," *Molod' Ukrainy* 13 March 1997; and Vasyli Selezinka, "Nastia-Roksolana povertaet'sia dodomu," *Chas* 16 May 1997: 2.

¹²³ *Roksolana*, dir. Borys Nebiieridze, perf. Ol'ha Sums'ka and Anatolii Khostikoiev, Ukrtelefil'm, 1997; *Roksolana—volodarka imperii*, dir. Borys Nebiieridze, perf. Ol'ha Sums'ka and Anatolii Khostikoiev, Ukrtelefil'm, 2003.

¹²⁴ Tetiana Polishchuk, "Passion for Roksolana," *The Day* 28 Sept. 1999. 26 March 2007. <<http://www.day.kiev.ua/253341/>>.

¹²⁵ See, for instance, Serhii Diachenko, *Oksamyt i zalizo; kinolehendy pro Roksolanu ta Dovbusha* (Kyiv: Renesans, 1994); and Lesia Pylypiuk, *Roksoliana; poema dlia ditei* (Kyiv: Dzvinochok, 1997).

¹²⁶ Romaniuk, *Halyts'kyi memorandum*, 166. See also Maryna Romanets's essay in Chapter 6 of the present collection. For a postmodern pictorial representation of Roksolana in today's Ukraine, see Figure 8 of the present volume, where she is portrayed as a variation of the portrait, by Bartolomeo Veneto, of Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI and a controversial sexual and political intrigante of the Renaissance period. In her right hand, she is holding a "вареник" (*varenyk*) ['dumpling'], a traditional Ukrainian food, which serves here as a manifestation of her Ukrainian "patriotism."

¹²⁷ Tetiana Polishchuk, "Passion for Roksolana."

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Chapter 2

East versus West:

Seraglio Queens, Politics, and Sexuality in Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West*, Parts I and II

Claire Jowitt

This chapter focuses on the ways Roxolana, first bondswoman and later the wife of Sultan Suleiman I, is imaginatively recreated in the figure of Queen Tota, wife to Mullisheg, King of Fez, in Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West, or A Girl worth Gold*, Part II. Heywood wrote *Fair Maid of the West* in two parts, the first in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign, and the continuation about 30 years later and, in order to understand the political resonances of the play's representation of Queen Tota and the complexities of its depiction of queenship, the first part of my discussion considers the Muslim Queen's love-rival for her husband's affections, the queen-like English tavern maid Bess Bridges. As we shall see, the political and sexual anxieties clustering around Bess and Mullisheg in Part I are, in Part II, focused on the newly introduced character of Queen Tota, who is represented as sexually predatory, manipulative, ruthless, and bloodthirsty, and a witch—all descriptions used by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Western sources to describe Roxolana. According to Richard Knolles's 1603 description in *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*, Roxolana became "mistresse of his thoughts" through her manipulation of the "amorous" Sultan and, ultimately, "the greatest emprise of the East."¹ This chapter explores the ways in which the Moorish Queen simultaneously represents the antithesis of Bess Bridges, "the fair maid of the West," but, more dangerously, Tota also provides a role model for the queen-like tavern maid.

There are marked contrasts between the representation of Bess between Parts I and II of Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West, or A Girl worth Gold*. The difference (indeed transformation) between her in two parts is a useful barometer of the modifications to ideological formulations of queenship.² This chapter explores the reasons behind, and implications of, these changes, particularly in terms of

¹ Richard Knolles, *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London: A. Islip, 1603), 757, 759.

² Charles Crupi, "Subduing Bess Bridges: Ideological Shift in the Two Parts of *The Fair Maid of the West*," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 54 (1998): 75–87; Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589–1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 39–54.

the ways anxieties about female rule are displaced in both plays onto despotic “Ottoman” characters, Mullisheg, the King of Fez in Part I, and in Part II, this unease is also focused on his tyrannous and lascivious wife, Tota. In Part I Bess is both honorable and militaristically impressive, but nevertheless sexual anxieties concerning female rule are focused on Mullisheg’s eroticized court: the King of Fez’s “cutting honour” functions as a displaced fear concerning the castrating potential of queenship as it is capable of rendering Englishmen impotent.³ In Part II Bess has “dwindled to a wife” as she becomes a consort-style Queen lacking agency, even as another powerful and ambitious female figure, Tota, appears dangerously dominant in the North African kingdom.

In the following pages, then, I argue that Heywood’s geographic drama, *The Fair Maid of the West*, offers different political opinions about the dangers of female rule in Part I and Part II, both of which are connected to depictions of race, specifically Mullisheg in Part I, and Mullisheg and Tota in Part II. The composition of Part I of *The Fair Maid of the West* most likely occurred in the last years of Elizabeth’s reign, probably between 1596 and 1603, with the second part being written by 1630.⁴ The temporal gap in the composition of the two parts is significant, since changes in the representation of Bess reveal the ways that powers of queens were, after the death of Elizabeth I, revised, remodeled, and reduced. In the first part of the drama, Heywood’s character Bess—short, of course, for Elizabeth—is on one level an allegory of Elizabeth I.⁵ Jean Howard has argued that Bess “owes much to representations of Elizabeth I,” given that the problems Bess experiences—she is both desired by and threatening to the male characters in Heywood’s text—are precisely identical to the oscillating and anxious representations of Elizabeth produced in the last decades of her reign. In the second part of *The Fair Maid of the West*, Bess’s character is considerably different from her earlier incarnation, though still possessing some resonance with Elizabeth. Heywood’s revised treatment reveals the historically contingent nature of perceptions about appropriate female “queenly” behavior. In the later text, Bess abdicates all desire to rule, becoming a reflection of the type of more passive consort-style queenship

³ Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West*, ed. Robert K. Turner (London: E. Arnold, 1968), Part I, 5.2.131. All references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

⁴ For information about the dating of the separate parts of the play, see Robert Turner, “Introduction,” *The Fair Maid of the West*, xviii; Gerald Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 568–71; see also Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 222; Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 416–36. For arguments in favor of a later composition for Part I, see Arthur M. Clarke, *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), 110–2.

⁵ On this issue see Jean E. Howard, “An English Lass amid the Moors: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and National Identity in Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West*,” in *Women, “Race” and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, eds Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 107–9.

recommended for Henrietta-Maria in the 1620s and 1630s.⁶ Yet the introduction of another ambitious queenly figure, the darkly beautiful Tota, who ruthlessly schemes to achieve her desires, further complicates the geographical frame of reference because the Muslim Queen's behavior resembles well-known depictions of the Ottoman sultana Roxolana. Tota is designed to be a foil to the "fair" Bess, and as we shall see, the play develops troubling parallels between the women. *The Fair Maid of the West* dramatizes contemporary perceptions of the problems attendant upon, and perceived limitations of, female rule and political ambition. In order to explore the different ways queenship is ideologically positioned, Part I and Part II are discussed separately first, and compared in the later stages of my chapter.

Race, Gender and Sexuality in *The Fair Maid of the West* Part I

The Fair Maid of the West Part I follows the adventures of the upwardly mobile virtuous tavern maid Bess Bridges. At the beginning of the play, we see Bess besieged by male customers and suitors in the tavern, "The Castle" in Plymouth, where she works. The play is set on the eve of the Islands' Voyage of the English fleet to the Azores under Essex, and the town "swells with gallants" (Part I, 1.1.11). A fight occurs between rivals for Bess's attentions in which her favorite, Spencer, kills a man, Carrol, who has been harassing her. The lovers become engaged, and Spencer departs on Essex's mission whilst entrusting Bess with his possessions, including his picture and a tavern, "The Windmill" at Foy. News then arrives that Spencer has been killed at Fayal—though the audience knows he has actually survived. Spencer's compatriot Goodlack returns in order to test Bess's constancy to his friend, and inform her that she inherits Spencer's fortune. Believing Spencer to be dead, Bess determines to rescue his body from the Spanish and fits out a ship for the purpose. After trouncing the Spanish at sea, she rescues Spencer from captivity (though the lovers are still not reunited since Bess thinks she has seen a ghost, and Spencer fails to recognize her because she is cross-dressed). The final act finds Bess and her compatriots in the court of the Mullisheg, the King of Fez, and though he tries to court Bess, once Spencer and Bess recognize each other, Mullisheg withdraws his attentions, and the text ends with the lovers about to be married.

That Bess Bridges, the tavern maid turned avenging national heroine, is supposed to refer to Queen Elizabeth on some levels is explicitly indicated by the text. Part I, Act IV, scene iv describes the defeat of Spanish naval forces by Bess and her men. At Bess's mercy and about to be put into their "long boat" to row ashore, the Spanish commander and his fellows are commanded by Bess to "pray for English Bess" (Part I, 4.4.120). The Spaniard replies, "I know not whom you mean, but be't your queen, / Famous Elizabeth, I shall report / She and her subjects

⁶ For a discussion of Henrietta-Maria's political agency, see Karen Britland, *Drama at the Court of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

both are merciful” (Part I, 4.4.121–3). The Spanish captain’s misunderstanding over the identity of “English Bess,” then, is not unreasonable, as Bess appears in disguise in men’s clothes at this point. However, there is little doubt that Bess alludes to herself since, in an earlier encounter with some captured Spanish, she commanded them, on their release, to “Pray for Bess Bridges, and speak well ‘o’th’ English” (Part I, 4.4.59). Bess Bridges, as she aggressively but mercifully scuppers the Spanish fleet, acts in a manner reminiscent of accounts of Elizabeth’s Tilbury performance on the eve of the arrival of the Spanish Armada in 1588. She is an extension of the militaristic Queen involved in a just war against a threatening and treacherous enemy.⁷

The parallels between Bess and the Queen continue to be explicitly drawn until the end of Part I. The Chorus between Act IV and Act V informs the audience of Bess’s continued naval success: “Much prize they have ta’en. / The French and Dutch she spares, only makes spoil / Of the rich Spaniard and the barbarous Turk, / And now her fame grows great in all these seas” (Part I, 4.5.6–9). Forced to land in order to re-provision the ship in Barbary and weary of wearing men’s clothes, Bess is wooed by Mullisheg, the King of Fez. Mullisheg, on being told Bess’s name is Elizabeth, describes the English Queen in terms remarkably similar to those that the Chorus has just used to describe Bess:

There’s virtue in that name.
 The virgin queen, so famous through the world,
 The mighty empress of the maiden isle,
 Whose predecessors have o’errun great France,
 Whose powerful hand doth still support the Dutch
 And keeps the potent King of Spain in awe, is not she titled so?
 (Part I, 5.1.88–93)

However, despite these celebratory, jingoistic representations, Bess is also simultaneously a figure that exposes contemporary anxieties about masculine potency. In *The Fair Maid of the West* Part I, Bess is considerably more able than most of the male characters that surround her. Even Spencer—who impetuously kills Carroll, is wounded in Essex’s service, and is then held captive—appears helpless for most of the drama, compared to the resourceful Bess. Since Bess’s abilities are better than those of the men in the play, she is able to manipulate them, making them appear stupid or weak or both as a result. In *The Fair Maid of the West*, Bess demonstrates far more prowess in the diverse roles of swordsman, politician, privateer, and diplomat than do any of the men in the play. Whilst at sea, in Act IV, for example, Bess is considerably more accomplished at swashbuckling than either Spencer or Goodlack. Spencer has been humiliatingly incarcerated in a Spanish vessel. Goodlack, despite being in charge of “the manage of the fight” (Part I, 4.4.86) against the Spanish and trying to stow Bess away from the danger (“Fair

⁷ See Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), 105–6.

Bess, keep you your cabin"; Part I, 4.4.90), is so seriously injured in the fray that he can "no longer man the deck," leaving Bess to lead the assault ("Advance your targets, And now cry all, 'Board, board! Amain for England!'""); Part I, 4.4.104–5). Bess here demonstrates a good deal more military prowess than Goodlack, who, in a sexual pun, finds himself, according to Roughman, "shot i'h'thigh" unable to "rise to greet your victory" (Part I, 4.4.107–8). Bess's skills are so impressive throughout the play that there is always the potential that she might "unman" the men before her and undermine the sexual integrity of her male subordinates. Not only is she powerfully eroticized but, simultaneously, she provokes a crisis in the sexual performance and identities of her male subjects. As Howard has usefully argued, the emphasis on Bess's sexuality, which seems to "magically overcome [...] the divisions and antagonisms internal to the body politic of England," also reveals her to be "a figure of crisis" since she "continually evokes men's fears of women's power and sexuality."⁸

These fears are most graphically played out in Act V of Part I of *The Fair Maid of the West*, when Mullisheg's eroticized court (Part I, 4.3.27–34) functions as a mirror of Bess's alarming sexuality since, as Jean Howard argues, "the Moorish King [...] actually *displays* the rapacious sexual appetites so feared in Bess."⁹ For instance, in response to Bess's white beauty (she abandons her cross-dressing to appear in female clothes again), the sexually predatory King becomes effeminized himself. In effect he functions as a mirror, or displaced version, of the gender and sexual anxieties previously solely focused on Bess. He is unable to turn down any of her demands ("We can deny thee nothing, beauteous maid"; Part I, 5.2.78), since he is so enthralled by her sexually explicit, wanton, behavior: "'Tis no immodest thing / You ask, nor shame for Bess to kiss a King" (Part I, 5.1.65–6). Furthermore, anxieties about the consequences of Bess's sexuality on the men around her also surface in Spencer's threatened and Clem's apparent actual castration (Part I, 5.2.86–100, 126–31), which is to be inflicted as a sign of Mullisheg's favor (Spencer "shall have grace and honor [...] He shall be our chief Eunuch"; Part I, 5.2.91–3), and in the way that the Englishmen are scattered and peripheral to the action between Mullisheg and Bess. In fact it is Bess, rather than any of the men, who intervenes to save Spencer's testicles from Mullisheg's "cutting honor" (Part I, 5.2.131). Her intervention only succeeds because she distracts the King with flirtatious promises, offering "what I have" to him and requesting that the King "Leave naught that's mine unrifled," if only he will "spare me him [Spencer]" (Part I, 5.2.96–7). In other words Bess's aid, which saves Spencer's manhood, simultaneously threatens to unman him. Both her wanton flirtation with the King and Clem's apparent castration indicate that her sexuality is not merely provocative but is also capable of undermining male sexual performance. The threat to the Englishmen's masculinity is, on one level, averted at the end of the play as the men take charge in the last few lines. Spencer, Goodlack, and

⁸ Howard, "An English Lass among the Moors," 109.

⁹ Howard, "An English Lass among the Moors," 115–7.

Roughman finally manage to regroup and successfully persuade Mullisheg to embrace “an heroic spirit” (Part I, 5.2.118), and release *them* unharmed with Bess. Once the Englishmen take charge, Bess and Mullisheg’s influence immediately wanes. However, the aggressive sexuality of both the Moorish King and the “maid of England” who appears “like a queen” (Part I, 5.2.7) widely threaten the integrity of English masculinity until the very last lines of the play.

This text, then, in its representation of queen-like Bess’s sexuality, reveals the problems and limits of Elizabeth’s rule. In the character of Mullisheg we have articulated fears about the aggressive, castrating potential of queenship as it is capable of rendering Englishmen literally impotent. The threat is finally overcome with only one casualty, the low-class character of Clem, and Mullisheg and Bess appear tamed. However, this conclusion does not fully disperse the risk that both these monarchical, but “female” characters present to the integrity of English manhood.

Furthermore, the description of the King of Fez from the Barbary Coast in North Africa as threatening to unman Englishmen, though later he appears effeminized, can be seen to possess another layer of political and diplomatic meaning regarding English interactions with the Muslim world. The figure of Mullisheg of Fez is, as Nabil Matar suggests, resonant of that of Mulay al-Mansur, also known as Ahmad I al-Mansur, King of Morocco, who in the 1590s entered into a diplomatic alliance against Spain and trade treaty with Elizabeth I.¹⁰ The negotiation of this relationship was a delicate, protracted, and tricky business—which provoked considerable anxieties amongst English commentators concerning the wisdom and implications of establishing a close relationship with a culturally and technologically sophisticated non-Christian nation—and the conclusion to Heywood’s play can be seen “to celebrate the success of his monarch in dealing with Mulay al-Mansur.”¹¹ The character of Mullisheg thus serves simultaneously to represent twin threats; the anxiety concerning the potential of the Muslim world to “unman” Europe through subordination, and the consequences of female power upon male prowess and potency.

Lascivious Queens: Tota, Roxolana, Bess, and Henrietta-Maria

For the rest of this chapter, I focus on the sequel to *The Fair Maid of the West*, written long after the death of Elizabeth, in order to examine the ways in which the text’s representations of Fez and its rulers reveal how discourses of queenship were modified in the period between the first and second part. Part II of *The Fair Maid of the West* picks up the story at exactly the point where Part I ended. It is Spencer and Bess’s wedding day. However, instead of being supportive of the English couple, Mullisheg now appears so jealous that he determines to deprive

¹⁰ Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), 33–6.

¹¹ Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 33.

Spencer of the first night with his wife and enjoy her himself. Mullisheg's wife, Queen Tota, furious at her husband's neglect, becomes infatuated with Spencer and also hatches an adulterous plan. They enlist Bess's followers in their schemes as, through a mixture of bribery and threat, the Queen forces Roughman and the King coerces Goodlack to arrange sexual access to their respective objects of desire. Though initially appearing to be unable to think of a way out of their difficulties, Roughman and Goodlack confer about the situation in which the English find themselves. After informing Spencer and Bess of the Moors' duplicity, the English plan a bed-trick to fool the King and Queen into sleeping together whilst thinking that they are in fact with Bess and Spencer. Whilst the King and Queen are enjoying their night of passion, Roughman, Goodlack, and Bess escape to their ship, but Spencer is less fortunate. He is defeated in combat by one of the King's men, Joffer, and only manages to rejoin Bess—who will think him dead unless he meets her onboard the ship by a certain time—by promising to return to Mullisheg's court. For the first time in *The Fair Maid of the West* Bess does not appear to advantage since, not understanding the honorable nature of Spencer's promise to Joffer, she violently chastises her husband. When Spencer returns to Mullisheg's palace, the King finally understands the integrity of English behavior and relents; harmony is finally restored when Bess too returns and is reconciled with her husband. At the end of Act III the English depart from Fez but are beset by disaster once more since they are attacked by pirates, shipwrecked, and dispersed so that husband and wife are separated again, and after a series of misunderstandings and adventures in Italian city states, they are finally reunited. The most important misunderstanding occurs over whether Spencer has feelings for Bess because, having promised to woo Bess for the Duke of Florence, he is forced to publicly deny his feelings for Bess with the result that she becomes incensed at such treatment. She appears tyrannous, accusing Spencer of stealing, and exacting a promise herself from the Duke to do with the thief as she pleases, she threatens to have him killed. Tragedy is averted only when Bess thinks better of her vengeful actions, and all the misunderstandings between the couple are finally explained. The Duke and Spencer are reconciled, and the last action of the play is to bring in the noble Moor Joffer (who has meanwhile been captured by the Italians) allowing the men to admit him into their chivalric group.

There is a considerable difference in the overall tone as well as in the treatment and actions of Bess between the two parts of *The Fair Maid of the West*. As Kathleen McLuskie observes, the focus of Part II is on "women and their chastity" and "sexual exchange," and, as she also notes, "Bess has lost her active role, and is the subject of others' passions."¹² But the shift is more significant. In Part I Bess was a "girl worth gold" because she possessed many virtues, including honor, bravery, skilful management and diplomacy as well as chastity. By contrast, in Part II Bess has lost all these qualities except chastity. These changes are revealed by

¹² Kathleen McLuskie, *Dekker and Heywood: Professional Dramatists* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 140–1; see also Turner, "Introduction," xvii–xviii.

her consistent helplessness through Part II as the male characters make decisions for her and rescue her from difficult situations. As Charles Crupi has suggested, Bess is reduced to a “damsel in distress,” passively awaiting rescue in Part II.¹³ But there is another more dangerous aspect to her character in Part II: she also appears, at times, to be a lascivious and bloodthirsty despot, threatening revenge if things fail to go her way.

In Part II, Bess reveals herself to be utterly unable to appreciate male codes and standards of honor. After fleeing Mullisheg’s court, Spencer is only able to join her on *The Negro* because he has promised to return to Joffer in Fez once Bess is assured that he has not been killed in his escape attempt. When Spencer informs her that he intends to return and give himself up because of this commitment, Bess is at first incredulous: “Prize you my love no better than to rate it / Beneath the friendship of a barbarous Moor? / Can you, to save him, leave me to my death? / Is this the just reward of all my travels?” (Part II, 3.2.127–30). Spencer attempts to explain that he cannot break his word to the Moor since such behavior would be tantamount to allowing the Moors to appear to be superior to Christians: “I prize my honor and a Christian’s faith / Above what earth can yield” (Part II, 3.2.131–2). He states that he would rather “die a hundred thousand deaths” than allow Islam to appear nobler than Christianity (Part II, 3.2.135–6). Such honorable, if partisan, reasoning does not convince Bess, as her next speech, which dwells on her personal satisfaction rather than national or religious pride, reveals: “Was ever maid thus cross’d, that have of / Been brought to see my bless and never taste it? / To meet my Spencer living after death, / To join with him in marriage, not enjoy him?” (Part II, 3.2.137–40). Indeed, when he refuses to take her with him, Bess sulkily abandons him:

Then, false man, know
That thou hast taught me harshness. I without thee
Came to Mamorah, and to my country back
I will return without thee. I am here
In mine own vessel, mine own train about me.
And since thou wilt forsake me to embrace
The queen of Moors, though coining strange excuse,
E’en at thy pleasure be it; my way’s into
My country. Farewell, I’ll not shed one tear more. (Part II, 3.2.149–57)

Bess and Spencer’s respective understandings of the necessity of his return to Mullisheg’s court are presented as utterly at odds in this scene. For Spencer, failure to return would be a violation of his own sense of identity, which is based

¹³ Crupi argues for the similarities between Heywood’s text and the ideologies expressed by Rubens’s 1630 painting of Charles and Henrietta-Maria as St. George and a princess in need of rescue, “Charles and Henrietta Maria in a Landscape” or “St. George in a Landscape.” See “Subduing Bess Bridges,” 81–4. See Per Bjurström, “Rubens’ St. George and the Dragon,” *Art Quarterly* 18 (1955): 27–42.

on the innate superiority of Christian, English, chivalric, and male honor. Bess has no such code of honor here and, indeed, fails to understand Spencer's reasons, even after they have been explained, preferring to see his return as inspired by adulterous desires for Tota, Fez's Queen ("thou wilt forsake me to embrace / The queen of Moors"; Part II, 3.2.154–5). For Bess the honorable intentions Spencer outlines appear too ludicrous ("strange excuse") to be believed. Furthermore, her desire to behave as the independent woman ("I am here in mine own vessel, mine own train about me"; Part II, 3.2.152–3), that was so impressive in Part I, is here inspired by the less admirable emotion of jealousy of Tota. But the context in which she now articulates this desire for independence—based on irrational jealousy and a failure to understand male honor—makes clear that her pretensions are not to be applauded.

Though this misunderstanding between Spencer and Bess over conceptions of honor is overcome as Bess too returns to Mullisheg's court, the problems are not fully resolved, and they resurface towards the end of the play. When Spencer denies his feelings for her because of his prior promise to the Duke of Florence, Bess again sees this as evidence of sexual betrayal and desires revenge. She sees Spencer's denial of her as evidence of his inconstancy ("Hath some new love possess'd him and excluded / Me from his bosom?"; Part II, 5.2.75–6) and determines to make him pay for his neglect:

But I'll be so reveng'd
As never woman was. I'll be a precedent
To all wives hereafter how to pay home
Their proud, neglectful husbands. 'Tis in my way;
I've power and I'll do it. (Part II, 5.2.78–82)

Spencer's group comment on the change in her demeanor: "This cannot be Bess but some fury hath stol'n her shape" (Part II, 5.4.47); and "This cannot be Bess Bridges, but some Medusa / Chang'd into her lively portraiture" (Part II, 5.4.87–8). Bess's resemblance to a tyrannical queen is explicitly drawn in the text by Clem, who satirically comments on courtiers' fears concerning the waywardness of royal favor: "Now if she should challenge me with the purse she gave me / and hang me up for my labour, I should curse the time that ever I was a courtier" (Part II, 5.4.97–9).¹⁴ We have here, then, a mirror for princes(ses), as it is apparent that queenly interference in male domains is not to be encouraged. As the Hampton Court Prologue makes clear, Henrietta-Maria shall "be sovereign[s] ever" due to her "beauty" rather than the characteristics of "majesty" and skills of "best govern[ment]" possessed by her royal husband (Prologue, 5–12). Consequently, Bess's gender-specific failures of chivalric behavior can be seen as templates for Henrietta-Maria designed to school her into playing a consort role rather than actively interfering in matters of state. As Kevin Sharpe has argued, after the difficult early years of the marriage, Charles and his wife were settling into a

¹⁴ See also Clem's speech in Part II, 5.3.64–5.

companionate and loving relationship by 1630, but earlier problems had been caused by the Queen's Catholicism, her jealousy over the influence of Buckingham, the war with France, and the Queen's "headstrong" temperament.¹⁵

In Part II of *The Fair Maid of the West* the text attempts to rebut and neutralize queenly conduct. The play opened with Queen Tota's despotic and lascivious behavior as she tried to force Clem and Roughman to enact her adulterous schemes. At this point Tota's actions appear to closely resemble contemporary Western depictions of, as Galina Yermolenko puts it, "one of the most legendary women of early modern history," Hurrem Sultan, known to Europeans as "Roxelana" or "Roxolana," first favorite concubine of Sultan Suleyman I, the Magnificent (1520–1566), and later his wife.¹⁶ This woman fundamentally changed the ways, as Lesley Peirce observes, "reproductive politics" were conducted in the Ottoman court, since Suleyman, unlike other sultans, did not take a succession of concubines once his relationship with Roxolana was established, and, unlike previous mothers of the heir to the throne, she did not accompany her son to his princely posts.¹⁷ The successive Venetian and other European ambassadors to the court repeatedly reported the strength of Hurrem's power over Suleyman, from the birth of her first child in 1521 until her death in 1558, and the ways in which she was able to manipulate him. Indeed, according to Luigi Bassano, such was Roxolana's sway over Suleyman that "his subjects say she has bewitched him; therefore they call her *Ziadi*, which means witch," and 20 years later Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq noted that she was "commonly reputed to retain [Suleyman's] affections by love-charms and magic arts."¹⁸ Such accounts of Roxolana's power clearly influenced Richard Knolles's 1603 version of the Queen of the East. Roxolana, ambitious and ruthless concerning her own and her children's positions within the Ottoman dynasty, and jealous of her husband's eldest son, Mustapha, the offspring of another bond-slave, determines to secure her place and thus the succession of her children in the Ottoman dynasty:

To fairest lookes trust not too farre, not yet to beauty brave:
For hatefull thoughts so finely maskt, their deadly poisons have.
Loves charmed cups the subtile dame doth to her husband fill:
And causeth him with cruell hand, his childrens blood to spill.¹⁹

Furthermore, according to the version of George Sandys's *A Relation of a Journey begunne, Anno Dom. 1610*, published by Samuel Purchas in 1625 in *Purchas his*

¹⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 168–73; see also Britland, *Drama at the Court of Queen Henrietta Maria*, 53–89.

¹⁶ Galina Yermolenko, "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Empresse of the East,'" *Muslim World* 95.2 (2005): 231.

¹⁷ See Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 58–63.

¹⁸ Qtd. in Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 63.

¹⁹ Knolles, *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, 759.

pilgrims, the story of “the wickedly witty Roxolana” was used as a warning in the Ottoman court of 1610 to Ahmed I concerning the consequences of corrupt queenly behavior.²⁰ Her manipulation of the Sultan’s erotic appetite through refusal “to consent unto his pleasure,” once she was made a free woman rather than a bond-slave, which forces him to marry her and leads to the “succeeding Tragedies,” is here used as a warning concerning the present Ottoman domestic situation, since the current sultan “hath also married his Concubine.”²¹ It seems that Roxolana has become a recognized symbol of female ambition and unruliness, and in Sandys’s account there are concerns about whether Roxolana’s behavior establishes a model for other women to follow. Certainly English and continental dramas—such as Gabriel Bounin’s *La Soltane* (1560), an anonymous Latin play *Solymanndiae* (1581), and Fulke Greville’s *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1606)—used the story of Roxolana, or Rosa/Rossa, as she was also known, in order to explore the interaction between domestic and political themes, through their depiction of the connections between Senecan passion and statecraft.²²

Jealousy, concern to shore up their own positions, and the exploitation of their sexuality motivates Roxolana in Knolles’s, Purchas’s, and other dramatists’ accounts, and it can also be seen in Heywood’s character of Tota in *Fair Maid of the West*. The opening of Part II finds Tota scheming to regain Mullisheg’s erotic favor, considering “a thousand projects in my brain until finally one misshap’d embryon grow[s] to form” providing a plan with which she is satisfied: “I am ambitious but to think upon’t, / And if it prove as I have fashion’d it, / I shall be trophied ever” (Part II, 1.1.15–23). At this point in the play, however, it seems that Queen Tota, the Queen of the East, was intended as a foil for the virtuous and honorable Bess of Part I, representing all that was antithetical to “the Fair Maid of the West.”

As the play progresses, this apparent distance between Queen Tota and Bess is not maintained. During the course of the action Bess starts to behave in similar ways to Tota since, as we have seen, in times of crisis Bess also places her personal satisfaction above the honorable claims of nationality or religion. Indeed Bess’s vengeful speeches in the later stages of the play are remarkably similar to Tota’s ruminations at the beginning of Part II when she meditates on how to be revenged for her husband’s neglect of her in favor of Bess:

It must not, may not, shall not be endur’d.
Left we for this our country? To be made
A mere neglected lady here in Fez,
A slave to others, but a scorn to all?
Can womanish ambition, heat of blood,
Or height of birth brook this and not revenge? (Part II, 1.1.1–6)

²⁰ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrims*, 5 vols (London: W. Stansby for H. Fetherstone, 1625), 2: 1301–2. I am grateful to Claire Schen for this reference.

²¹ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrims*, 2: 1302.

²² For further details, see Geoffrey Bullough, “Introduction: *Mustapha and Alaham*,” *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke*, 2 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 2: 1–37.

In fact, the comic interchange involving Clem and Tota later in this scene concerning the similarities and differences between the women of England and Fez establishes that resemblances between Bess and Tota are to be expected. When Tota asks Clem about the differences between “ladies and choice gentlewomen” of the two nations, he replies:

- CLEM. You shall meet some of them sometimes as fresh as flowers in
May and as fair as my mistress, and within an hour the same
gentlewoman as black as yourself or any of your Morians.
- TOTA. Can they change faces so? Not possible.
Show me some reason for't.
- CLEM. When they put on their masks.
- TOTA. Masks? What are they?
- CLEM. Please you to put off yours and I'll tell you.
- TOTA. We wear none but that which nature hath bestowed on us
and our births give us freely.
- CLEM. And our ladies wear none but what the shops yield and they
buy for their money. (Part II, 1.1.77–89)

This exchange sets up the idea that female “Morian” behavior, already glimpsed in Tota’s stratagems, is like a black “mask” transferable to women “fair as my mistress.” Tota’s dark identity, both literal and metaphorical, may be assumed by Bess, Clem seems to imply, at any point. In other words, Tota’s behavior—indebted to the story of Roxolana—might transmit to the similarly upwardly mobile and ambitious Bess. The ways that gender and “race” are here being represented as performative must, of course, have been emphasized by the role of Tota being performed by a boy actor in blackface.

There is another layer of resemblances at work. Not only does the character of Tota appear indebted to contemporary perceptions of the “wicked woman” Roxolana,²³ but also Tota’s unhappiness with her royal marriage for which she left her own country can be seen to chime with the situation of Queen Henrietta-Maria, wife to Charles I. Both royal brides have been married for dynastic considerations and have left their home country to take up consort positions in the kingdom of their husband. Just as Tota is jealous of Bess, so too was Henrietta-Maria of the influence Buckingham exerted over her husband. The contrast between the letter the King wrote to Buckingham, when separated from him in July 1627 (“No man ever longed so much for anything as I do to hear some good news of you”), and the “dry, ceremonious” letter he received from his wife in February 1628, which he “answered accordingly,” clearly reveals the different tenor of the relationships.²⁴ Indeed, if the logic of Clem and Tota’s conversation about the potential transference of “black” identity onto “fair” characters is pursued *and* Tota is viewed as simultaneously resembling both Roxolana and Henrietta-Maria, then

²³ Knolles, *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, 760.

²⁴ See Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, 46–8.

it is possible that the play is invoking the dangerous possibility that Roxolana's style of behavior might be passed on to the English Queen.

Though Tota and Mullisheg are reconciled in Act III, scene iii, when Mullisheg now "quench'd" of all lust reverts to the correct order of things, as he "esteem[s] thee [Bess] next our queen [Tota] in grace," and Bess appears to embrace once more the role of dutiful wife at the end of the play, the challenge to English patriarchal control these characters represent remains. In the course of Part II, like Tota and Roxolana, Bess has repeatedly behaved in despotic and tyrannical ways—as she appeared as a kind of avenging "fury" or "Medusa" to the male characters. The end of the play—where the men align themselves together as honorable and elite, and reject Bess—is consequently crucial for reading this play's attitude to queenship. When Joffer appears, having also been coincidentally captured by the Italians, Spencer immediately abandons Bess to go to him: "Bashaw Joffer?—Leave my embraces, Bess,/ For I of force am cast into his arms,— / My noble friend!" (Part II, 5.4.155–7). Ferrara, Spencer, and Joffer recognize in each other virtuous, masculine honor of a kind that marginalizes Bess and her threatening erotic power. Ferrara's concluding speech—though it celebrates Bess as "the mirror of your sex and nation, Fair English Elizabeth"—ends with Bess rendered as a possession since she is now "a chaste wife" (Part II, 5.4.190–200). Bess has effectively been silenced through language that objectifies and neutralizes the threat of her sexual power over the men by constructing her in terms of her "chaste" relationship with Spencer. In these last speeches the focus of interest, then, is firmly on an elite based on male codes of chivalric honor, since Spencer prefers to embrace Joffer rather than Bess.²⁵

Part II of *The Fair Maid of the West* is considerably more limited in its conceptions of the parameters of queenship than Part I. In the earlier drama, written under Elizabeth, Bess's military and financial competence was celebrated, even though it is clear that, at times, her success undermined the masculinity of her followers. In Part II, by contrast, influenced by her contact with the ambitious and despotic Tota, Bess is represented as potentially fickle, tyrannical, and misguided in contrast to the male characters, whose code of honor she is unable to understand. In this depiction, we can trace contemporary fears concerning the influence Roxolana's story and behavior might have on English women. Her ruthless ambition and her ability to rewrite the rules of the Ottoman court represent a negative exemplar of what English patriarchy must not allow in the conduct of a queen.

Furthermore, because Roxolana's unchecked influence leads to a succession crisis in the Ottoman world, it becomes clear through the course of Part II that Bess must be domesticated. The play shows the way she learns to be guided by her husband. When her last lines imperfectly correspond to patriarchal conceptions of appropriate female behavior—as she imagines herself still in the active, dominant role—Spencer punishes her through aligning himself principally with the other

²⁵ See Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 136–41.

male characters on stage. Bess's judgment in Part II is consistently undermined by the text: she is shown to need schooling and guidance by the male characters. Independent action on the part of females is, it is clear, not to be tolerated because, as Tota and Bess both reveal, it is invariably motivated by personal ambition and potentially disastrous. What Part II reveals, then, is a patriarchal fantasy concerning the reduction of female power because national and religious values are successfully promulgated solely by men. Thus the Moor Joffer is converted to Christianity, because he is so impressed by Spencer and the Duke of Ferrara, and loads the English down with gold because he recognizes the value of the Englishmen's chivalric honor. Bess, though gratulated as a motivating factor for this gift, has, in fact, had little to do with it because she has, noticeably, not been able to embrace these male standards of chivalric honor. Part II of Heywood's text, then, seeks to moderate and manage female ambition; Roxolana's brand of queenship and patterns of behavior are shown by Tota to be dangerous and despotic, and when they emerge in Bess, are corrected and suppressed.

Chapter 3

The Tragedy of Roxolana in the Court of Charles II

Judy A. Hayden

Women have grossly snar'd the wisest prince
That ever was before, or hath been since.¹

In his introduction to Fulke Greville's *Mustapha* (1609), Geoffrey Bullough observes that for Greville, "Kings might be the Lord's Anointed, but they must remember their responsibilities to both Divine and human law [...]. The lesson seems to be that evil brings worse evil in its train. Misgovernment brings revolt and chaos."² The misgovernment in Greville's play, however, has largely been brought about through the machinations and greed for power exhibited by Rossa, more commonly known as Roxolana, wife of Suleiman the Magnificent.

Roxolana is a controversial historical figure, who "left an indelible mark on ... the European imagination."³ This mark was certainly made manifest in England through the Carolean plays in which she appears in a leading role, such as William Davenant's revised, two-part *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663), Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery's *Mustapha* (1668), and Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1677), as well as other dramatic texts which offer various references to her.

There has been considerable scholarship on the East-West dichotomy in the early modern and Enlightenment literary periods, whether, for example, to demonstrate the manner in which the West demonized Oriental rulers to denote their own ascendancy, or conversely, to use the Eastern ruler as a "a model for admiration and imitation, shaming or schooling the English into supremacy," as Burton has argued.⁴ Bridget Orr maintains that the playhouses helped to develop and disseminate "Orientalist views of Europe's predecessors and rivals in empire," and functioned as a contemporary mirror where issues such as succession and

¹ "The Fifth Advice to a Painter," *Poems on Affairs of State. Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660–1714*, gen. ed. George de Forest Lord, 7 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 1: 146–52, ll. 135–6.

² *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, 2 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 2: 37.

³ Galina Yermolenko, "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Empress of the East'," *Muslim World* 95.2 (April 2005): 231–48.

⁴ Jonathan Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamberlaine*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30.1 (Winter 2000): 129.

monarch-subject relations might be explored.⁵ Such studies of the East/West dichotomy have been seminal in developing an understanding of early modern and Enlightenment awareness of Self and “Other,” of the growth of nationalism, of political awareness, and of statecraft, as well as of the progress of empire. However, it is Roxolana herself who is of interest in this essay, which explores the Carolean construction of this strong-willed Sultana. Standing as she does at the intersection of state and court politics in Boyle’s *Mustapha* and Settle’s *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1677), Roxolana offers an opportunity to explore contemporary concerns about the court of Charles II.

In literary discourse, sexual politics and political power are intrinsically linked in constructions of the monarch, where unrestrained sexual desire brings about confusion to—or even the collapse of—masculine authority. As Pat Gill contends, “Sexual obsessions undermine potent leadership”;⁶ the political critique in response to such an “effeminate” leadership requires if not “depends on misogynous rhetoric.”⁷ Roxolana represents “boundless passion, whether in her ambition for political or sexual absolute power.”⁸ For Carolean playwrights troubled by Charles II’s unrestrained promiscuity, the figure of Roxolana offered a distinctive opportunity to present their concerns and anxieties about the relationship between the King’s mistresses on the one hand, and court and state politics on the other. Roxolana embodied “ambition, sexuality, revenge, exoticism; in fact in the eighteenth century, she came to personify womanhood herself.”⁹ In their respective plays, Boyle and Settle carefully reconfigure the Roxolana character to demonstrate the potential danger of female sexual power to the state.

Early accounts of Roxolana often focus on her dominance over Suleiman. As Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq records in his *Turkish Letters*, Roxolana desired to put her own son on the throne, and to this end she employed the advice of her

⁵ Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61. Orr notes that “between 1660 and 1714, at least forty plays set in Asia or the Levant appeared on the London stage” (61). For more on East-West relations, see, for example, Gerald MacLean’s *Reorienting the Renaissance Cultural Exchanges with the East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), Ros Ballaster’s *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), and Nabil Matar’s *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), to name but a few.

⁶ Pat Gill, “Gender, Sexuality and Marriage,” in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah P. Fiske (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206.

⁷ Harold Weber, “Carolinean Sexuality and the Restoration Stage: Reconstructing the Royal Phallus in *Sodom*,” in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater* eds J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne (Allen, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 70.

⁸ Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, 64.

⁹ Katie Trumpener qtd. in Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, 62–3.

son-in-law, “Pasha Roostem” (Rustem Pasha).¹⁰ Busbecq’s version of the tragedy of Mustapha emphasizes that it was the “calaumnies of Roostem and the spells of Roxolana, who was in ill repute as a practiser of witchcraft,” that brought about the estrangement between Suleiman and his son, Mustapha, a prince much loved by the soldiers.¹¹ Other accounts by Nicolas de Moffan, the translation and enlargement by Hugh Goughe, as well as William Painter’s own elaboration of Moffan, and Richard Knolles’s *Generall Historie of the Turkes* also point to Roxolana’s involvement in the execution of Mustapha.¹² In these texts, the writers exaggerate the sinister qualities of Roxolana, observing that she “pretended” at religion, establishing charitable foundations, mosques, and hospitals, for example, as part of her plan to entice Suleiman to marry her; that she sent poisoned clothing to Mustapha to effect his murder; and that she relied on a Jewish enchantress for her sorcery. Although Painter describes Roxolana as wicked, ambitious, and pestilent, Goughe is much more brutal in his description of the Sultana, referring to her as “craftye and deceitfull” and on occasion as an adulterous harlot and an unnatural stepmother.¹³

Linda McJannet argues that Painter’s text “anticipates the tendency of later historians, such as Knolles, to narrativize their sources, setting events in a master narrative of East-West enmity and Ottoman decline.”¹⁴ Painter’s text does indeed reflect a condemnation of the Turks in general, implying an inherent Western superiority, but in dealing with gender, the two men’s treatment of Roxolana differs

¹⁰ The standardized spelling of this name is Rustem Pasha. Rustem’s name is spelled in a variety of ways in both historical and literary texts, as are most of the persons named in this essay, including Roxolana, Suleiman, Jihangir, and a number of other less influential characters. Throughout this text, however, I have used the various spellings adopted by each of the writers, noting the standardized spelling of the name in parenthesis the first time it is given.

¹¹ Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Seigneur of Bousebecque, Knight, Imperial Ambassador*, eds Charles T. Forster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, 2 vols (London: Kegan, Paul & Co., 1881), 1: 113–4.

¹² Moffan, *Soltani Solymanni Tvrcarum Imperatoris, horrendum facinus, scelerato in proprium filium, natu maximum, Soltanum Mustapham, parricidio, anno domini 1553 patratum* (Basileae [Basel]: I. Oporini, 1555); Hugh Goughe, *The Offspring of the House of Ottomano ... Englished by Hugh Goughe* (London: T. Marshe, 1570; London, 1659). The text I used here was unpaginated. It begins with a lengthy description of Turkish customs, rites, and religion, purportedly by Bartholomej Georgijevic (Bartholomaeus Georgievic), to which is added the account of the execution of Mustapha in “The Horrible Acte of Solton Soliman,” which incorporates about 48 pages; William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575), ed. Joseph Jacobs, 3 vols (New York: Dover, 1966), 3: 395–415; Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes, from the First Beginning of that Nation to the Rising of the Ottoman Familie ... Until this Present Yeare 1603* (London: A. Islip, 1603).

¹³ For Painter’s comments regarding Roxolana, see particularly 3: 400–11.

¹⁴ Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks. Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

strongly. Goughe's unshakable hostility toward the Sultana cannot be overlooked. Even so, in both of these texts, Roxolana is largely the active agent in the plot, whereas Rustan carries out her commands.

McJannet argues that "the public demonizing of Roxolana and Rustan was a conscious strategy (perhaps even Rustan's own) to divert blame from Suleyman and to stabilize the political situation."¹⁵ This demonizing, proffered to an audience eager to learn about the exotic "Other," simply fed posthaste into an English culture of castigating women—a culture that had already demonstrated a keen appetite for such a practice. That Roxolana plotted Mustapha's demise is certainly recorded in a number of early modern correspondences and prose tracts; but if this is true, Roxolana continued to live as the Sultan's wife, apparently without harm, to the end of her natural life. As Ballaster notes, "The figure of the oriental woman in European narrative is, above all else, associated with the practice of plotting, whether for positive or negative ends."¹⁶ If the Sultan believed in her guilt, if she was punished, no record has been left to us. Yet in the literature which followed after Mustapha's death, Roxolana is typically implicated in the tragedy, along with her son-in-law Rustem, whom Suleiman removed from public office after Mustapha's death. Rustem's removal from office may have been done, as McJannet suggests, to appease the janissaries, who, furious over Mustapha's death, threatened to rise up in revolt. Once their uproar diminished, Rustem was reinstated, and Roxolana was neither divorced nor banished. In spite of these accusations of her political machinations, it was probably Roxolana herself who managed to keep her remaining two sons largely at peace until her death in 1558, when their rivalry intensified.¹⁷

Carolean playwrights developed a number of plots set in the Levant and may have been encouraged to do so owing to the number of tracts published in this period about the Ottoman empire, such as Henry Marsh's *New Survey of the Turkish Empire* (1663), Paul Rycaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668) (an expanded version of Richard Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, published numerous times during the Restoration), and Edward Spragge's *A True and Perfect Relation of the Happy Successe and Victory Obtained Against the Turks ... in this Memorable Action* (1671). The ongoing conflict in Europe over Ottoman incursions,¹⁸ particularly the Turkish desire to add Vienna to their vast

¹⁵ McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks*, 145. See also Busbecq, *Life and Letters*, 1: 118–9.

¹⁶ Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, 61.

¹⁷ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) 104–5.

¹⁸ In a letter to the Doge and Senate dated 11 November 1664, Giovanni Battista Bellarino, Venetian Grand Chancellor, writes of his concern about the growing insolence of the Turks. See *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* 1661–1664. On 14 November 1665, Francesco Bianchi, Venetian Resident at Florence, writes to the Doge and Senate that "The Sultan has issued an order for the seizure of all ships, native and foreign, in order to send reinforcements to Candia." See *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* 1664–1665. On 18 May 1669, Antonio Grimani, Venetian Ambassador at Rome writes to the Doge and Senate that

territories, as well as the difficulties the English were experiencing with the Moors of Tangier and the Barbary pirates, may have served as well to further playwrights' use of this often told Ottoman story.¹⁹

English playwrights had little difficulty in associating Charles II with the Sultan and the harem, owing to the King's own "sexual promiscuity and love of luxurious display";²⁰ nor could they have missed the manner in which descriptions of Suleiman and his court reflected the English one, that is, a magnificent monarch inordinately impassioned by a beautiful, fair-complexioned woman, who purportedly managed the Sultan. At least as early as 1660, Charles II had begun a long-term involvement with Barbara Palmer (née Villiers), Countess of Castlemaine, an auburn-haired, fair-complexioned beauty, who also concerned herself in state affairs. Many in the court of Charles II, much like the ministers in the court of Suleiman I, were concerned with the influence women exerted over the monarch, especially if the monarch seemed too enamored of them. This is certainly not to argue that Roxolana in these plays is constructed as a caricature or personation of the King's mistresses; rather, given the depiction of the dangerous sexual allurements of the Oriental woman, who, as Ballaster notes, is associated with political intrigues, dramatic plots about Roxolana presented an opportunity for playwrights to utilize the stage to offer their concerns about the King's unbridled amours.

One of the early Restoration playwrights who developed the tragic story of Roxolana and Mustapha was Roger Boyle, the Earl of Orrery, whose *Mustapha* is perhaps based on Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes*.²¹ Clark points out that Boyle took some of the suggestion for his plot from Madeleine de Scudéry's *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa*.²² The play, considered one of Boyle's masterpieces, underwent numerous performances in the early Restoration and remained a stock piece for decades after its initial run.²³ In Boyle's play, Solyman's (Suleiman's) vizier, Rustan (Rustem), finds Roxolana his chief obstacle to gaining further power at court; she maintains her influence over the Sultan owing to her ability to continually inflame his ardor. Rustan gains Roxolana's favor by heightening her fear for the safety of Zanger (Jihangir) should his half brother Mustapha come to power, for by Ottoman custom, the new Sultan must kill all his rivals, who

the Turks plan to assault Sicily and Malta as soon as Candia has fallen. See *Calendar of State Papers Venetian 1669–1670*. In fact, the Ottoman threat to the West was not relieved until their defeat at the Siege of Vienna in 1683.

¹⁹ For an extensive study on Barbary, see Nabil Matar's *Britain and Barbary 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005).

²⁰ Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*, 64.

²¹ Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, *The Tragedy of Mustapha, the son of Solyman the Magnificent*, in *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery*, ed. William Smith Clark II, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 1: 225–304.

²² Clark, "Editor's Preface," *Mustapha*, 226. See Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa*, trans. Henry Cogan (London: J. R., 1674).

²³ Clark, "Editor's Preface," 227–8.

are, of course, his brothers.²⁴ In true heroic fashion, Zanger concludes a pact with Mustapha whereby the elder brother promises that when he succeeds to the throne, he will not follow tradition and murder Zanger. In return, Zanger promises that he will not outlive the day Mustapha dies. Unaware of the pact, Roxolana colludes with Rustan to bring about Mustapha's downfall by making Solyman jealous of his son, which provides the impetus for the tragedy which follows.

Much of Boyle's plot does not align with historical events and is simply a construct of heroic drama. The hunchbacked Jihangir (the Zanger of Boyle's play) was never a serious contender for the throne.²⁵ Busbecq records that he was "disfigured by a hump, [and] had no strength of mind or body to enable him to resist the shock [of the death of his brother, Mustapha]."²⁶ The young man did not commit suicide, as in Boyle's plot, but rather, Busbecq claims, the thought that he, too, must die when one of his brothers succeeded to the throne so terrified him that he died of an illness brought on by his fear.²⁷

Linda McJannet argues that Boyle's Roxolana is not an malevolent, engineering woman; rather, she was encouraged in her design to divert the line of succession by the evil counselor, Rustem Pasha.²⁸ Evil counselors are the topic of a number of plays in the first decade of the Restoration, as playwrights point to the political chaos engendered by corrupt ministers. These dramatic designs were perhaps meant to reflect on Edward Hyde, the First Earl of Clarendon, Charles II's Chancellor, who, like Rustem Pasha, was viewed as corrupt and self-serving and purportedly suffered from avarice.

Although Boyle's plot may seem initially an uncomplicated redevelopment of so-called "historical events," his characters are not particularly straightforward—and Roxolana above all. The playwright gives this Sultana an inflated sense of her own authority and an intense craving for power. When Rustan questions her command that her mutes strangle him, Roxolana answers imperiously:

I'll not dissemble as you Viziers do.
A Viziers power is but subordinate,
He's but the chief dissembler of the State;
And oft for publick int'rests lies; but I
The partner of Supreme Authority,
Do ever mean the utmost that I say. (1.4.347–52)

Her comment on the integrity of court ministers and their place in the hierarchy may well be read as a reflection of Boyle's own dislike of Clarendon, but what

²⁴ Boyle does not mention Roxolana's two elder sons, Selim and Bayezid, in his play, nor do the earlier texts in the context of this particular incident.

²⁵ André Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, trans. Matthew J. Reisz (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 155.

²⁶ Busbecq, *Life and Letters*, 1: 178–9.

²⁷ Busbecq, *Life and Letters*, 1: 178–9. In the account of Jihangir's suicide, Boyle follows Goughe, Painter, and Knolles.

²⁸ McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks*, 164.

is of note here is that this observation is given by a woman, whose interests should be in the harem rather than in the court. The Sultana is deeply involved in politics and designates herself Solyman's *partner* of Supreme Authority, claiming to have the power to invoke the death sentence for the Sultan's viziers. When Achmet, Solyman's "eunuch bassaw," voices his relief that she has taken the safer road and simply sent Rustan away instead of executing him, Roxolana responds with haughty condemnation, "Can you your safety doubt whilst you are mine?" (1.4.373).

Because the Sultana does not hand over the infant Hungarian heir to Rustan, a subplot which I shall discuss shortly, Solyman must confront her himself, noting furiously that he has had to leave the siege of Buda to "beleague" her. Roxolana does not turn the child over to Rustan, she tells her husband, because, "I thought in gaining you, I gain'd the Field, / And therefore would not to your Subjects yield" (1.4.393–4). In the contest of love and politics at court, she is the victor and therefore has the ultimate word of authority, not only above all the subjects, including the ministers, but above Solyman himself. When Solyman will not back down from his demand for the child, Roxolana bursts into tears, and Solyman relents, assuring her, "You, Roxolana, are the conquerour. / What storm is not allay'd by such a showre?" (1.4.465–6).

Rustan observes the extent of Roxolana's influence over Solyman, noting apprehensively, "She o're his heart still more victorious grows / And faster Conquers him, than he his foes" (2.2.1–2). Literary texts in the Restoration resonate with sexual rhetoric intrinsically linked with political discourse in fashioning complaints about ambitious court ladies. As Rustan in Boyle's play understands, winning the approval of the powerful mistress(es) at court was paramount to gaining the monarch's ear. The Comte de Gramont, for example, points out that George Villiers, the Second Duke of Buckingham, endeavored to curry the affections of Frances Stuart that he might find further favor with the King.²⁹ Henry Bennet, the Earl of Arlington, Gramont writes, was also "anxious to dominate the mistress (Frances Stuart), in order that he might obtain control of her master"; and the ambitious Earl of Bristol, George Digby, who "knew that love and pleasure controlled a master," gave numerous parties for the court, to which he invited his two lovely relatives, Frances and Margaret Brooke, to display for the King.³⁰

Given Roxolana's power over the Sultan, Boyle insinuates, Rustan had little choice but to collaborate to survive. Rustan, then, assists Roxolana in her plot against Mustapha to save Zanger, but when the progress they make moves more slowly than the Sultana would like, she hints at a quicker end to the problem, "The Sultan's love gives me a power so high / That I to this could give a remedy" (4.1.125–6). The army has rallied around Mustapha, and Rustan, who has reason

²⁹ Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont*, trans. Peter Quennel, introd. Cyril Hughes Hartmann (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1930), 138–9.

³⁰ Hamilton, *Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont*, 139.

to fear for his life, experiences a change of heart, encouraging Roxolana to save herself and the “injured *Mustapha*” (4.5.603). Rustan and Pyrrhus hint at the consequences of Roxolana’s involvement in the plot and urge her to ask Solymán for government posts in Egypt and Babylon, but she refuses, pointing out that they have failed in their task—Mustapha has not yet been removed from the succession. Roxolana, who knows how to get what she wants, assures the men of her power and observes that while they will certainly suffer for their part in the plot, “a few tears will wash my guilt away” (4.5.615). Roxolana persecutes the two viziers until they finally agree to fulfill their promise that Zanger will rule after Solymán.

There were many in the court of Charles II who were concerned about the King’s mistresses, who, they believed, were too ambitious, too often plotting, and too involved in state affairs, much like Roxolana. John Evelyn, for example, claims that “the boufoones and Ladys of Pl(e)asure” contributed to Clarendon’s downfall.³¹ Pepys records a conversation with William Coventry in which Coventry reports that Lady Castlemaine’s faction participated in the removal of the Chancellor.³² In the second decade of the Restoration, John Resesby observes that “the Duke of Buckingham fell again into the King’s ill opinion by the means of the Duchess of Portsmouth,” another of Charles II’s mistresses,³³ while Narcissus Luttrell claims, “His majestie hath been prevailed with by the dutchesse of Portsmouth to remove sir Job Charleton from ... lord chief justice of Chester ...”³⁴

Complaints about the political influence the mistresses, wielded through their sexual power, found their way into a multiplicity of literary texts. In his “Last Instructions to a Painter” (1667), Andrew Marvell exploits a sexualized rhetoric for his satire’s political resonances.³⁵ In his poem, Frances Stuart, another mistress of the King, is represented as ruling the four seas, an observation which reflects the number of medals on which the King had her image struck: “But Fate does still accumulate our Woes, / And Richmond here commands, as Ruyter those” (763–4). While Frances rules the waves on which rides the ship of state, de Ruyter, commander of the Dutch fleet, is unassailable on the seas. In the anonymous “A Ballad Called the Haymarket Hectors,” the author draws a parallel between state affairs and sexual ones, for when the King proves ineffectual in his sexual

³¹ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. DeBeer, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 3: 493.

³² Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, eds Robert Latham and William Matthews, 10 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970–1983), 8: 415.

³³ John Resesby, *The Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. James J. Cartwright (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1878), 92–3.

³⁴ Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714*, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1858), 1: 39.

³⁵ Barbara Riebling, “England Deflowered and Unmanned: The Sexual Image of Politics in Marvell’s ‘Last Instructions’,” *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 35.1 (Winter 1995): 137–9. The poem was written in 1667, after England had suffered defeat in the end of the Second Dutch War. See “Last Instructions to a Painter” in *Poems on Affairs of State*, 1: 97–139.

prowess and leaves Nell Gwynn “dry-bobb’d,” he “Must lend her his lightening and thunder” in order “To repair the defects of his love” (22–3).³⁶ One of the best-known, and certainly the most quoted, satires on the relationship of state and sexual politics is that attributed to John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in which he remarks on Charles II, “His scepter and his p—k are of a length, / And she may sway the one who plays with t’other” (11–12).³⁷

Certainly a number of plays offer a picture of the political chaos ambitious women might provoke. One of the more interesting of the early plays is Robert Stapyton’s *The Stepmother* (1664), first performed in October 1663.³⁸ In this play, the termagant queen, Pontia, has gained such mastery over her husband, Sylvanus, that “she governs his very Soul / He cannot live without her” (1.1). Pontia usurps her husband’s authority and plots the demise of his children, hoping to unite his kingdom of Verulum to her own lands over which she would rule.

Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland’s *The Marriage Night* (1664) is set in Castile and boldly portrays a sexually decadent court in which the manipulative Duchess Claudilla plots with her lover, the Duke, to kill the king, an act which will “lift [them] to their wishes” (3.1.27) by putting them both on the throne.³⁹ Of the character of the Duchess, Sampayo explains:

She has no blood: From her first, an honest Trades-mans wife, who left her very rich and handsome: The Duke (as he still keeps a kennell for that purpose) had her presented to him for his Game: Remov’d her from the Cucko’os nest into another Sphere ... [where she] at length becomes the Courts discourse and wonder. (3.1.32)

The audience must have wondered at these lines, since in the autumn of 1661, the King had bestowed on Roger Palmer the title Earl of Castlemaine. About the time the Earl’s wife, Barbara, gave birth to the King’s second child, the Earl discretely separated from her, and shortly thereafter Lady Castlemaine was given her own apartments within Whitehall.⁴⁰ *The Marriage Night* ends with the Duchess

³⁶ “A Ballad Called the Haymarket Hectors (1671)” in *Poems on Affairs of State*, 1: 168–71.

³⁷ John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, “In the Isle of Britain” in *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 85–6.

³⁸ Robert Stapylton, *The Step-Mother* (London: J. Streater, 1664). The play was also performed before the court and includes a prologue addressed to the King at the Cockpit. Since there are neither scenes nor line numbers in this play, all references are to act and page number.

³⁹ Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland, *The Marriage Night* (London: W. G. for R. Croft, 1664). There are no line numbers in this play; therefore, all references are to act, scene, and page number. Derek Hughes suggests that the play “may seem not so much antithesis to the restored monarchy as images of what had been restored.” See his *English Drama 1660–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 37.

⁴⁰ Antonia Fraser, *King Charles II* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; London: Phoenix, 2002), 272.

murdered and the Duke arrested for treason. Ambition, the king in this play claims, is “the Grandame of all Sin” (5.1.52).

When Solyman suggests that Roxolana does not understand Mustapha’s own plotting, since “’tis far above a Woman’s art / To reach the height of an aspiring heart.” (3.2.213–4), Boyle’s audience must have enjoyed the irony. Even so, the Roxolana of Boyle’s play may be manipulative, she may be willful and arrogant, and even greedy for power, but she is not inherently evil. She realizes the situation in which she is caught; she must either condemn the innocent Mustapha so that he will be executed, or condemn her own son to a certain death when Mustapha inherits the throne. To turn Solyman against her son, she claims, is to turn him against Nature, yet she does so, she claims, for Nature’s sake (4.5.652–65).

After Mustapha is executed, Solyman learns from Zanger of the plot that had raged against his son. Although Zanger had not implicated his mother, Solyman is nevertheless aware of her complicity and vows that Roxolana is not safe from his revenge, “For they, without her int’rest in the deed, / [Rustan and Pyrrhus] Durst not at last have urg’d me to proceed” (5.6.417–8). Roxolana finds Zanger and Mustapha dead and in horror claims that it was his duty to friendship, to Mustapha, that brought about Zanger’s death (5.8.449).

When Solyman asks for her confession, Roxolana avoids acknowledging the plot in which she engaged and retells her rise to power, that is, that Solyman found her as a “Flow’r but newly sprung,” and from him she owes her growth (5.9.618). The contrition Roxolana offers is disingenuous, for she accuses as well the two viziers, Pyrrhus and Rustan, who have already been executed. Why should she shun truth and take the full blame, she asks. Her only crime was to save her son: “I have little through ambition done” (5.9.713). Even though her crime was so heinous that only by the forfeit of her life will justice be served, Solyman announces that “It is not fit our Priesthood or *Divan* / Should sit to judge the wife of *Solyman*” (5.9.652–3). Solyman alone sits in judgment. His words reflect powerfully on divine right and reify the notion that only God may judge a monarch, a manifest echo of Stuart ideology and one that reflects strongly on the trial of Charles I.

Tracey E. Tomlinson concurs with Susan Staves that Boyle may identify problems in the government of Charles II, but he offers no practical solutions.⁴¹ Certainly Boyle calls to attention a number problems within the government, as do many of his contemporary playwrights, but he does *indeed* offer a resolution, one couched within that very note of caution that Staves, and by her concurrence, Tomlinson, ask us to employ.

Few in Boyle’s audience could have missed the caution in Solyman’s pronouncement: “Thy progress, Love, was long, but it shall end. / By Beauty (which does even the wise delude) / The valiant ever soonest are subdu’d” (5.9.570–72). And in spite of his passion for the alluring Roxolana, the Sultan proclaims her banishment and sends her forth out of his sight forever: “I will to Beauty ever

⁴¹ Tracey E. Tomlinson, “The Restoration English History Plays of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery,” *Studies in English Literature* 43.3 (Summer 2003): 562.

shut my eyes, / And be no more a Captive by surprize” (5.9.792–3). Boyle clearly argues here that love must be cast within reason, even by monarchs (or perhaps *especially* by monarchs); because women are not capable of moderating their passion, the monarch must assert his authority, even in love.

Boyle’s plot differs distinctly from Knolles’s *Generall Historie* in that Boyle’s Solyman divorces and banishes Roxolana from the court, a rather strong suggestion to put forward, particularly given that the King attended the premiere of this play. Boyle’s resolution to the contemporary “crisis” at court—that is, the mistresses—is forthright and clear: politically minded, ambitious women must be “far removed” so that love, “the Ornament of Pow’r” (5.9.795) does not threaten the state.

The subplot of *Mustapha* includes a further historical event—Suleiman’s taking of Buda. Historically, Isabella, the daughter of the Polish King Sigismund, became the wife of John Zapolya, the sovereign of Hungary, in 1539. The unmarried Zapolya, who, it seemed, would not have an heir, had signed a secret treaty with the Hapsburg Ferdinand I in 1538, which stated that upon Zapolya’s death, Ferdinand would receive Hungary. Zapolya married shortly thereafter, but died the following year after the birth of his son, John-Sigismund. Ferdinand immediately occupied Buda, refusing to acknowledge the child as the royal heir.⁴² Isabella sent to Suleiman for help, and the Sultan soon arrived in Buda with his troops. Suleiman commanded Isabella to send her son to him, which she did, accompanied by the infant’s nurse, two old women, and six of her counselors.⁴³ Clot adds that Suleiman took possession of Buda, but promised that when John-Sigismund reached the age of majority, he would give up the throne for him to rule Hungary.⁴⁴ Until that time, Isabella and her son were sent to Transylvania where he was to rule as a vassal of the Porte.⁴⁵

In Boyle’s play, however, Roxolana journeys with Solyman and his forces to Buda and is set up in her own pavilion in the camp. Buda is besieged by Solyman’s forces, and the Queen of Hungary has been sent a demand: surrender her infant son, the legitimate king, whom Solyman intends to put to death. The Queen sends the child instead to Roxolana, having been advised by her cardinal that “In gaining her you make the sultan sure” (1.2.123). Again, Boyle makes manifest that the route to the monarch is through his women. Roxolana accepts the infant, pledges him her protection, and firmly opposes Solyman’s command to execute the young king. This subplot functions in ironic contrast to the main plot,

⁴² Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923* (London: J. Murray, 2005; New York: Basic Books/Perseus Books, 2006), 129.

⁴³ Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, 121–2.

⁴⁴ Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, 121.

⁴⁵ Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, 129; Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, 122. For more historical information on this event, see also Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354–1804* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 68–71, 150–4; and László Kontler, *A History of Hungary. Millenium in Central Europe* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 137–50.

for in the subplot Roxolana risks her own life to save the infant heir to Hungary, whereas in the main plot she collaborates in the death of her stepson, Mustapha, heir to the Ottoman Empire.

Ballaster concludes that the “figure of the plotting Roxolana is usually countered by the presence of another female who stands for virtues explicitly associated with the Occident within the narrative: temperance, wifely devotion, the rational pursuit of virtue.”⁴⁶ The counter-presence here is the Catholic Queen of Hungary, whose virtue is unquestionable. Roxolana’s, however, is debatable. She has not been remiss throughout the play to counsel and practice deceit. For example, she directs Rustan to “by fresh intelligence / Charge Mustapha with some new offence” (2.3.299–300), while, at the same time, she feigns support for Mustapha, telling Solyman that “You injure him whose virtues you conceal” (3.2.241).

Both Zanger and Mustapha have fallen in love with the Queen of Hungary, although Roxolana believes Zanger is the only lover. Well aware of the power of female sexuality, the Sultana angrily accuses the Queen of ingratitude, pointing out that she was “forc’d, when charg’d by the *Divan*, / To my last strength, the love of Solyman” to protect the Queen’s infant son (4.1.43–4). In return, the ungrateful Queen has inflamed the heart of Zanger: “You . have enslav’d my Son. / A Son, who never yet my will controul’d / Till he your fatal beauty did behold” (4.1.62–4).

The Queen’s love, however, is reserved for her deceased husband, and she had intended to flee the camp in order to dissuade Zanger’s passion. She counsels Roxolana to be patient with Mustapha for the friendship the two brothers share will prevent Mustapha from harming Zanger. Roxolana counters that the Queen should simply feign affection to Mustapha: “The Great should in their Thrones mysterious be; / Dissembling is no worse than mystery” (4.1.155–6). The suggestion here is that Roxolana feigns love to Solyman, having learned to her advantage how to exercise her sexual power. But the Queen has been raised without such art and therefore suffers from “un-courtly-ill-bred innocence” (4.1.175); she must be taught by Roxolana how to feign love: “You must dissemble love to *Mustapha*, / And make him think by what you often say, / that you for Love can mourn and languish too” (4.1.177–9). Roxolana offers the Queen further counsel—that she should take counsel from no subject, for once a subject earns such favor as to give counsel: “perswasion does the Throne invade” (4.1.189). Again, Boyle offers insight on contemporary attitudes about Charles II, who was well known to be subject to persuasion, particularly through the wiles of women, for which he endured much criticism.

Although the Queen is discomforted by the Sultana’s command that she should feign love to Mustapha, her Cardinal suggests that she continue in this direction since her son is safe and protected by Roxolana, whose influence at court is clearly “growing” (4.1.267). But as Mustapha’s execution becomes imminent, and as the country ultimately begins to fall into chaos, Solyman gives the Queen of Hungary permission to return to Buda. In response to the tragic deaths of both Zanger and

⁴⁶ Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient*s, 132.

Mustapha, the noble, heroic Queen announces that she will fulfill her duty to her son to see him on the throne, and “Then in a shady Cloister I’ll remain, / And, as a fatal Mourner, still complain / Of that which here both you [Roxolana] and I have lost” (5.7.517–9). While the Queen of Hungary may shut herself away from the world, Roxolana’s grief is fleeting. She informs her woman, Zarma, who has been sent by the Mufti, “I do not dying fear ... / Lead me this way, for I would shun despair” (5.7.535–8).

Historically, Roxolana never met Isabella nor the infant king; even Suleiman himself did not see Isabella, since by Ottoman law the Sultan could not present himself to her.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the incident at Buda happened in 1541, and Mustapha’s purported treason and subsequent execution occurred in 1553, a 12-year difference in these events. Boyle’s revision of historical events emphasizes the natural maternal disposition of women and thus the “monstrosity” of the act of killing one’s child (or step-child in this case). Roxolana’s complicity in the murder of Mustapha was outwardly a maternal desire to save the life of her own son; while her response was clearly wrong-minded, it is difficult to find her actions inherently evil. Even so, an historical event such as this offers the playwright an opportunity to intimate just what an ambitious woman might accomplish in satiating her greed for power.

Although in the first decade of the Restoration, Lady Castlemaine was Charles II’s foremost mistress, in the second decade he began a long relationship with Louise de Keroualle, whom he gave the title Duchess of Portsmouth. The public hated this new mistress intensely, in part because they believed she was sent over by Louis XIV to raise support for the French cause, but also because she was Catholic and, like Lady Castlemaine before her, greedy. Her reign was temporarily threatened in the winter of 1675 by the arrival of Hortense Mancini, the Duchess of Mazarin. A number of courtiers were pleased with the event, hoping Mazarin would diminish the French threat that Portsmouth represented. An anonymous satire entitled “Satire on Old Rowley,” in which Portsmouth is dubbed “Delilah,” notes that the King has abandoned his “French whore” for an Italian one.⁴⁸ This does not mean that Mazarin was greeted with general public favor, for the anonymous “Rochester’s Farewell” observes that Mazarin was a woman of “well-travel’d lust” (124)—the “queen of lust” (129), who “having all her lewdness outran, / Takst up with the devil, having tired out man” (154–5).⁴⁹

By 1676, when Elkanah Settle’s *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* came to the boards, the “King’s sexual habits continued to create a mixture of disgust and ribaldry and to sap confidence in the government in general.”⁵⁰ Like Lady Castlemaine and a number of other women at court, Portsmouth and Mazarin,

⁴⁷ Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, 122.

⁴⁸ “Satire on Old Rowley,” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 184–8.

⁴⁹ “Rochester’s Farewell,” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 217–27.

⁵⁰ Ronald Hutton, *Charles the Second: King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 338.

the French and Italian “whores” (as they were soon labeled), engaged in court intrigues. The author of the satire “A Bill on the House of Commons’ Door (1679)” claims Portsmouth was behind the King’s proroguing Parliament, while the author of “Satyr Unmuzzled (1680)” claims she was directly involved in the political fall of Secretary Joseph Williamson and “commands the court, the Dev’l and all” (74). In the anonymous “Oceana and Britannia (1681),” the ladies form a cabal at court (156–9), and hence are force to be reckoned with.⁵¹ Given the contemporary public hostility to the mistresses and their political intrigues, it would be no surprise if Roxolana’s character as a plotter and manipulator acquired a new twist, and in this, Settle’s *Ibrahim* does not disappoint.⁵²

The source for Settle’s *Ibrahim* is probably de Scudéry’s text of the same name, and, like that of the French text, the focus of his play is largely on the heroic Ibrahim rather than Roxolana. In his plot of unrequited love, Solyman (Suleiman) gives his daughter Asteria to Ibrahim, his Vizier Bassa, but Ibrahim, “the Champion-Friend of Christendom” (2.1.58), refuses her, preferring instead the captive Christian princess Isabella, sent to the court by Rustan (Rustem Pasha). Although Rustan is clearly an evil conspirator in Boyle’s play, he is only mentioned in Settle’s as the procurer of Isabella, whom he sent to the Ottoman court to save Ibrahim from suffering “Love, Despair and Grief” (2.14).⁵³ Ibrahim, who had previously encountered the virtuous Isabella, had long pined for the princess.

When Solyman is informed of Isabella’s arrival, he makes the princess, already of royal blood, his adopted daughter so that Ibrahim will be his son once they are married; but when she is brought before him, Solyman finds himself so deeply affected by her beauty that he sends Ibrahim off to war, intending to obtain Isabella for himself. Ulama, the heir of Persia, encourages the Sultan to focus on his honor: “Your sleeping Reason wake and re-enthroned / What nature made most worthy of a Crown: / Repair her [Roxolana’s] injuries, and your lost Fame.” (4.1.584–6). But neither Solyman nor his henchman, Morat, has counted on the influence of Roxolana, who consistently comes to the aid of the lovers and attempts to obtain their freedom. In spite of the danger to his kingdom, Solyman is so bent on his lustful intentions for Isabella that chaos must eventually ensue, and so it does: Roxolana poisons herself, Asteria is murdered in her attempt to save Ibrahim, and Ulama, utterly in love with Roxolana, commits suicide.

In the French romance, Roxolana’s intrigues against Mustapha are more developed and sinister. For example, she causes Rustan to have all the “Sangiacks”

⁵¹ “A Bill on the House of Commons’ Door, April 15, 1680, Pursuant to a former Bill, Jan. 26, 1679, Fixed There,” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 345–6; “Satyr Unmuzzled,” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 209–16; “Oceana and Britannia,” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2:3 93–405.

⁵² Elkanah Settle, *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa, a tragedy: acted at the DUKE’S Theatre* (London: T. M. for W. Cademan, 1677). There are neither scene nor line numbers in this play. Therefore, all references are to act and page number.

⁵³ I might note here, however, that in Scudéry’s romance, *Ibrahim*, Rustan is indeed an evil vizier. Other than this particular scene, Rustan does not play a role in Settle’s play.

of Amasia, the province in which Mustapha was Governor General, write letters praising the prince; Roxolana shows the letters to Suleiman to heighten the Sultan's suspicion, while simultaneously reminding him of the coup his father had managed against his grandfather. Settle's plot detailing the machinations Suleiman orchestrates to win Isabella is also taken from Scudéry, although somewhat condensed and revised to fit the framework of the stage. In the French romance, Roxolana dies out of rage and madness, whereas in Settle's play, she drinks poison. Although Settle's play is a rhymed, heroic tragedy, which treats the love and honor of the main couple, Ibrahim and Isabella, the Sultana in his play is not only profoundly afflicted with a case of pride, as she is in Boyle's play, but she is indeed a vengeful woman, whose jealousy causes her to offer cruel advice and to make poorly reasoned decisions.

Settle's Roxolana is credited by her ladies with having broken the system of the seraglio and she is praised as having confined her husband's "wandering heart to one / And singly rule[d] the Conquer'd Solyman" (1. 2). Because the Sultan "forsook / The Rude delights [of his] wilde Fore-fathers" (3.38), Roxolana proudly assures her ladies that she has bound her "Royal Slave" to her; she rests assured that "the Siege I laid, an Age cannot remove. / His Constancy's as great as is His Love" (1.2). To her ladies at court, she claims to have conquered Solyman, but to her husband, when he comes home from the wars, she fawns, "Welcome the Worlds great Conqueror & mine" (1.3). Solyman acknowledges her the conqueror and his captor—if not his goddess—in that he brings her tribute and pay vows (1.3–4). One of the prizes Solyman offers is the vanquished Ulama, the Sophy's son and heir of Persia.

Once the beautiful Isabella is delivered to the Ottoman court, however, Solyman falls in love with her and, with the help of the evil Morat, plots to win her by murdering Ibrahim. However, having pledged earlier that Ibrahim would not die as long as Solyman lives, the Sultan calls for a Mufti to resolve the problem. The Mufti assures Solyman that "Sleep's a short Death—Death an Eternal sleep; / If then whilst you are sleeping, he receives / The blow, he does not dye whilst *Solyman* lives" (4.51).

When Ibrahim refuses Asteria, the Sultan's daughter, she seeks counsel from Roxolana, who instructs her to "abuse yourself no more; / Think of Revenge, and those fond tears give o're" (2.22). Deeply in love, the honorable Asteria defends the "just and guiltless Ibrahim," while Roxolana retorts that Ibrahim's lack of honor is such that he owes her with his blood. Settle's Roxolana is much like Boyle's Sultana in that she has an inflated sense of her power, but where Boyle's Sultana sought a means to circumvent the traditional measures of succession to save her son's life, Settle's Roxolana simply counsels hate and revenge.

In spite of her inflated sense of power, Roxolana must eventually acknowledge the inevitable—that Solyman has fallen for another woman—and in due course she does confront her husband, accusing him of killing her. Solyman is not one to dissemble long: "I'll give you the true Picture of my Heart: / I love that Princess" (3.37). In spite of Roxolana's insistence that he "Vow'd an Eternity of Faith to Me / And call'd on Heav'n to witness that Decree" (3.37). He intends to remove the

crown from Roxolana's head and give it to Isabella. Although Isabella is loath to marry Solyman and reminds him repeatedly of his honor and his nuptial vows, he remains undeterred: "You shall in state be to a Temple led; / I'll take the Crown from *Roxolana's* Head. / Thus, you shall meet my Love—" (4.45).

The faithful Ulama, too, tries to reason with Solyman, although his motive is hardly altruistic as he has fallen in love with Roxolana, in spite of her efforts to dissuade him. When he sings her praises, she asks arrogantly, "Is Roxolana's power / Disputed, that it wants an Orator?" (3.24). When Ulama offers his sword on her behalf, Roxolana cries out:

Hold Angry Prince; your Zeal in my just Cause,
 Whilst it was Innocent, had my applause.
 Forbear then to pull down my hate; tho He
 Has lost his Vertue, broke his Faith to Me;
 I have not lost the Duty of a Wife:
 Tho I abhor his Crimes, I prize his Life.
 Who holds a Sword against his Breast, wounds me;
 His Foe is *Roxolana's* Enemy. (4.59)

The Sultana rages against any suggestion of regicide, defending her husband's actions with her own life. But is Roxolana truly as valiant and honorable as she seems here?

Roxolana hopes for her husband's change of heart and thus her own continuation in power. This is not to be for tragedy inevitably triumphs in the court. Asteria dies in an attempt to help her rival, Isabella, escape with Ibrahim, and Roxolana, certain that Ibrahim will be executed and Isabella crowned Sultana, drinks poison since "that's a sight I must not live to see" (5.66). In heaven, "No prjur'd Kings, no ruin, no despair / Come near that place—pow'r is immortal there" (5.66). Roxolana assures Solyman that he cannot have two wives anymore than he can "make two Suns together shine / And her new Greatness, not diminish mine" (5.71).

Although Roxolana claims that her love for Solyman is behind her anger and she berates him for his inconstancy, she occasionally offers a glimpse at another emotion—pride. Her empire "did so lately spread so wide" that she was the envy and the pride of her sex (4.54). When Solyman tires of Roxolana's arguments, he orders Morat to take her away, but Roxolana draws a dagger, telling him, "I've so much Pride for that which I have been, / No common hands shall touch the Worlds once Sacred Queen" (4.56).

But the ultimate display of her arrogance and pride comes when she tells Ulama:

When Empress of the World, I stood on hallow'd ground,
 With all my pomp and greatness circl'd round;
 Then what a train of Worshippers, what crowd
 Of Vassals at my Feet all prostrate bow'd.
 On humble Mortals I in state look'd down,
 Who gaz'd on glories sparkling from my Crown
 Life waited on my Smiles, Death on my Frown. (4.58)

Roxolana poisons herself, not out of her love for Solyman, but as a method to flee from scorn and shame (5.66). With her dying breath she informs Solyman that it has been her “Honour to command / The Worlds great Lord!” (5.68). She will not live as a vassal to Solyman’s Christian wife and a pageant queen. Solyman repents just before Roxolana dies, and so she ends her life pleased that she has conquered him once more.

Settle’s *Ibrahim* has much in common with Boyle’s *Mustapha*, also a rhymed heroic play that reconstructs the Ottoman court of Suleiman. In his dedication of *Juliana, or The Princess of Poland* addressed to the Earl of Orrery, John Crowne wrote of *Mustapha*:

It is from your Lordship’s pen, that Soleyman may be truly titled Magnificent, and you have made him succeed to the civility and gallantry of the Greeks, as well as to their Empire; nor was Mustapha ever so much the hopes of his barbarous nation, as in his image and the generous character you have given him, he is the delight of England, who weep the fate, not of Mustapha, but of murder’d virtue.⁵⁴

In many regards, the virtue murdered in these plays is not Mustapha’s, but by implication, women’s in general. A number of texts, such as Busbecq’s and Goughe’s, implicated Roxolana in the execution of her stepson, Mustapha. That she may have feared for her sons’ lives is certainly understandable, but her complicity was always conjecture, based perchance on court rumor, and no doubt owing to the resentment many in the Sultan’s court may have felt towards a woman with power. Or, as Busbecq acknowledges, rumor of Roxolana’s involvement may have been a political move to thwart a revolt from the janissaries.

Women’s sexual power is at once both magnetic and alarming, just as it is multiple and absolute. Rosa (Roxolana), Goughe claimed, was able to corrupt Suleiman’s mind with “effeminate allurements, and Flatterings (as she knew the wayes, few lyke unto her).” The Roxolanas of Charles II’s court incited curiosity, fear, anxiety—and certainly hatred, yet they were eroticized within the same discourse that sought to vilify them. Whereas Roxolana gained power over Suleiman through sexual dexterity, Lady Castlemaine practiced sexual tricks learned from the pornographic texts of Aretin to maintain her influence over Charles II. Francis Stuart on the other hand was a “cunning slut,” who maintained her political persuasion by refusing to submit sexually to the King,⁵⁵ and Nell Gwynn, the actress turned mistress, to whom the King lent his lightening and thunder, “crawled into the world without a maidenhead” (103).⁵⁶ The “French butter’d bun” (26),⁵⁷ that “Silly French Strumpet” (11),⁵⁸ the Duchess of Portsmouth, sat “in state

⁵⁴ John Crowne, *Juliana, or The Princess of Poland* (1671), in *The Dramatic Works of John Crowne*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: W. Paterson; London: H. Sotheran, 1873), 1: 18.

⁵⁵ Pepys, *Diary*, 4: 366.

⁵⁶ “Satyr Unmuzzled (1680),” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 209–16.

⁵⁷ “A Ballad on Sir Robert Peyton (1680),” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 305–11.

⁵⁸ “On Plotters (1680),” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 348–50.

to guide and steer the helm” (78);⁵⁹ and the Duchess of Mazarin, the Italian whore, whose “experience’d” lust had worn out all the men, was given place of rank in court, where all “homage pay, / Do all thy lecherous decrees obey” (127–8).⁶⁰

Whether the Ottoman literati wrote such lines as the English penned about their King’s mistresses is doubtful, but in spite of whatever they may have believed about Roxolana, Suleiman made clear his own deep affection for her, burying the Sultana near his own mausoleum. Although the Ottoman Empire did not recognize the western royal position of “queen,” Roxolana, by remaining in Istanbul during the reign of her powerful husband, came close to being such. Although historically she may have “prefigured the powerful women of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,”⁶¹ in literary discourse she became a social and political paradigm, understood at once as erotic and exotic, a figure who demonstrated the danger and the power of feminine allure.

⁵⁹ “Satyr Unmuzzled (1680),” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 209–16.

⁶⁰ “Rochester’s Farewell (1680),” *Poems on Affairs of State*, 2: 217–27.

⁶¹ Imber, *Ottoman Empire*, 90.

Chapter 4

Roxolana in German Baroque and Enlightenment Dramas

Beate Allert

Introduction

From 1600 to 1800, the Ottoman Empire was perceived as anything but the “sick man of Europe,” as it came to be known in the nineteenth century.¹ Ottoman forces were checked at the Second Siege of Vienna in 1683, and in 1699, they were further weakened after the Treaty of Karlowitz, which established the dominance of the Habsburg Monarchy. They were then never again to mount any major military offensive against Western Europe, although military action by Ottoman forces continued to be perceived as a potential threat.²

In general, it is not surprising—given the long rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe during these two centuries—that a considerable literature on the Empire developed, much of it historical and anecdotal, and that this material further inspired playwrights and novelists up until Romanticism and modern times.³ This essay will investigate the depiction in the German drama of the Baroque and Enlightenment of one of the most striking figures from Ottoman history: *Hürrem Sultan* (ca. 1510–1558), known in the West mainly as *Roxolana*,⁴

¹ The phrase is attributed to Czar Nicholas I (1796–1855).

² For an introduction to this period, see Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 192–225; and Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), especially the historical survey in Chapter 1 (1–86).

³ See Wilhelm Gerstenberg, *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Türkenchauspiels*, 1. *Die Anfänge des Türkenchauspiels im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Meppen: H. Wegener, 1902); Glenda G. Richter, “Daniel Casper von Lohenstein and the Turks,” diss., University of California-Berkeley, 1957; and Reika E. Ebert, “Vom Barbaren zum aufgeklärten Herrscher: Zur Entwicklung des Türkenbildes im deutschsprachigen Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts,” diss., University of Washington, 2000.

⁴ According to Michel Sokolnicki, the term *Roxolanes* is used to refer to young women from Ruthenia in seventeenth-century Polish texts. See “La Sultane Ruthène,” *Belleten* 23 (1959): 229–39. This matches with the spelling, *Roxolana*, used by Busbecq. See *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562*, trans. E. S. Foster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005). The name is spelled in various ways in the German texts considered here: *Roxelane* (Lohenstein), *Roxolane* (Haugwitz), *Roxalana* (Lessing), *Roxane* (Weisse), but except in

the wife of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1494–1566).⁵ I shall investigate her role in the context of four German plays: Daniel Casper von Lohenstein's *Ibrahim Bassa* (1653), August von Haugwitz's *Obsiegende Tugend: Oder der Bethörte doch wieder Bekehrte Soliman* [Victorious Virtue: or the Beguiled yet Later Recovered Soliman] (1684), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Giångir oder der Versmähte Thron* [Giångir or the Rejected Throne] (1748), and Christian Felix Weisse, *Mustapha und Zeangir* (1776).⁶ As Galina Yermolenko has shown, Roxolana crossed national boundaries (from Ukraine to Turkey), as well as class and gender lines (from slave to Empress, having assumed a role that until then had been exclusively restricted to male advisors to the Sultan), thus becoming a curiosity for many, often celebrated and even more often criticized.⁷

In 1641 Madeleine de Scudéry published her popular and influential romance, *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa*. A German translation by Philipp von Zesen appeared in Amsterdam in 1645, and was later reprinted several times.⁸ This in turn inspired *Ibrahim Bassa* (1653), by Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, and *Obsiegende Tugend: Oder Der Bethörte doch wieder Bekehrte Soliman* (1684), by August Adolf von Haugwitz (1647–1706).⁹

quotations, the form used in this essay will be *Roxolana*. On Hürrem's political importance, see Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), especially Chapter 4. On variation and spelling of Roxolana name, see Appendix 2 of this volume.

⁵ Although the spelling of the Sultan's name as *Soliman* (Lohenstein, Haugwitz) or *Solimann* (Lessing, Weisse) is relatively consistent in the German tradition, considerable variation occurs in the Western tradition (*Soleiman*, *Suleiman*, *Suliman*, *Solyman*). In this chapter, the Modern Turkish form of the name *Süleymân* (modified as *Süleyman*) will be used, except in quotations, adopting the usage of contemporary English writers on Ottoman history (cf., Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*; Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650*; and Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*).

⁶ Although the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German texts consistently spell Süleyman's son's name as "Mustapha," the contemporary Ottoman historians referred to above use the form "Mustafa," and since this spelling seems to be international convention that will be the form used here, except in quotations.

⁷ See Galina Yermolenko, "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Empress of the East'." *Muslim World* 95.2 (2005): 231–48. One must also assume Roxolana crossed religious lines from Christianity to Islam.

⁸ See Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahims oder Der durchleuchtigen Bassa ... Wunder-Geschichte*, trans. Philipp von Zesen, 2 vols (Amsterdam: L. Elzevir, 1645). The book was reprinted by Johann Franz in Zweibrücken in 1665 and 1667.

⁹ Of the three known variants of this first edition of Lohenstein's play, only a single copy of the A3 version survives in private hands, which was used by Klaus G. Just in his 1953 edition of the play. See David Caspar von Lohenstein, *Türkische Trauerspiele. Ibrahim Bassa. Ibrahim Sultan* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1953), 6–7; and Pierre Béhar, *Silesia tragica: Épanouissement et fin de l'école dramatique silésienne dans l'oeuvre tragique de Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683)*, 2 vols (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1988), 699–704. Haugwitz's play was published both separately and as part of his collected works. Bernhard Hübner, in *Die kleineren Dichtungen und Dramen des Prodromus Poeticus von August*

In Madeleine de Scudéry's narrative, Ibrahim Bassa is Süleyman's Grand Vizier, a Genoese nobleman, initially named Justinian, who was captured and enslaved by the Ottomans and who then worked his way into the Sultan's innermost circle. He is in love with Isabelle Grimaldi, countess of Monaco, and the romance details the twists and turns of their romantic fortunes until they return to Europe and marry. At one point, Isabelle is in Constantinople and being wooed by the Sultan. Roxolana, the Sultan's wife, according to Scudéry, is Turkish, having been given into "voluntary" slavery as a concubine to the Sultan by her father Bajazet, in place of a beautiful captive intended for the royal harem whom Bajazet took for himself.¹⁰

Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, *Ibrahim Bassa* (1653)¹¹

The earliest German writer to draw upon the German translation of *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa* was Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683). *Ibrahim Bassa* was Lohenstein's first play written when he was 15. Although he later wrote such plays as *Cleopatra*, *Agrippina*, and *Sophonisbe*, for the second volume of his anthology of representative German plays, *Deutsches Theater* [*German Theater*] (covering the period of 1600–1680), the German Romantic writer and critic Ludwig Tieck chose, surprisingly, *Ibrahim Bassa* from among all of Lohenstein's works.¹² Even though Lohenstein was to return to an Ottoman theme for his last play, *Ibrahim Sultan*, which concerns Sultan Ibrahim I (1615–1648), Tieck

Adolph von Haugwitz: *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kunstdramas im XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Neuweid: Heuser, 1893), 33–4, describes another version of the play, *Der Trew—und Tugend—Sieg* (Heidelberg: M. Frantz, 1686). This edition examined by Hübner appears to have been the single surviving copy, and it was destroyed during World War II. See Richter, "Daniel Casper von Lohenstein and the Turks," 29, and Pierre Béhar, "Obsiegende Tugend," in August Adolf von Haugwitz, *Prodromus Poeticus, Oder: Poetischer Vortrab*, ed. Pierre Béhar (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984), 113*–6*. Note that in references to the 1984 reprint of *Prodromus Poeticus* there are two sets of page numbers, the first set without asterisks refers to the pagination of the original edition of 1684, whereas the second set with asterisks refers to Pierre Béhar's notes and commentary, which conclude the volume. The prominent Baroque dramatist Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664) also planned to write a drama about Ibrahim, but did not live to see it completed. See Felix Bobertag, "Die deutsche Kunsttragödie des Siebzehnten Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Literaturgeschichte* 5 (1876): 159. On Lohenstein's considerable debt to Gryphius in this his first play, see Béhar, *Silesia Tragica*, 87–92.

¹⁰ See Richter, "Daniel Casper von Lohenstein and the Turks," 30–50, for a detailed discussion of Scudéry's sources.

¹¹ This play is not available in an English translation. For my synopsis see Appendix I.

¹² "Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, Ibrahim Bassa: Trauer-Spiel," *Deutsches Theater*, ed. Ludwig Tieck, 2 vols (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1817; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat, 1979), 2: 276–344. See also the Tieck, "Vorrede" ['Preface'], 2: xvii–xix.

was particularly struck by the style of the first “Ibrahim” play, claiming that it reached the heights that Lohenstein was never able to replicate. Lohenstein began to receive due recognition for his outstanding accomplishments as a writer of tragedies only in the 1960s, and only then did it become of interest to literary scholarship that Lohenstein “had a unique interest in the exotic historical settings of Turkey, Rome, and Northern Africa,” and that in *Ibrahim Bassa* he makes an important contribution to multicultural studies in German.¹³

Lohenstein offers what in my estimation is perhaps the most colorful and grotesque descriptions of the events surrounding the Roxolana figure in German, a stunning account of her stark influence on Süleyman. Although Isabelle has the last words in the play, and although Ibrahim is its title-figure, the major protagonist of the play is in fact Roxolana, who instigates the murder of Ibrahim. It was due to her clever rhetorical skills that she swayed the Sultan, the Mufti, and Rüstam to do exactly what she wanted. Her words cause several murders, yet all the anger of those left behind is directed towards her husband, while she remains in the clear, ironically uncontested and unharmed. Roxolana is a master of rhetoric, who knows how to use words in order to convince others to do what she wants. She stands in contrast to Isabelle, who has gained the erotic attraction of the Sultan in the beginning of the play, but not for long. Isabelle shows no interest in the Sultan, and even while he seems to deny Roxolana’s importance, as the action unfolds it becomes clear that in fact it is Roxolana who remains his right hand and the protagonist in the entire drama. She is already prefigured in the opening scene by the allegorical female character of “Asia,” who is tied up as a spectacle in an arena “in gestalt einer Frauen” [‘in the figure of a woman’] (16), lamenting that she, Asia, “nurtured” the Sultan “with her own milk” like a dragon that would then devour her.¹⁴ As the play unfolds, Süleyman is made responsible for murdering Ibrahim, but Roxolana is the one who actually manipulates him to act against his

¹³ See John Alexander, “Early Modern German Drama, 1400–1700,” *Early Modern German Literature 1350–1700*, ed. Max Reinhart (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), 370. On Lohenstein as a dramatist, see also Pierre Béhar, *Silesia tragica*; Pierre Béhar, “‘Ut Pictura Poesis’: Lohenstein ou la dramaturgie picturale,” *Pictura et Poesis*, TRAMES: Travaux et Mémoires de l’Université de Limoges, Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences humaines, Collection “Allemand” 3 (1989): 27–61; Bettina Müsch, *Der politische Mensch im Welttheater des Daniel Casper von Lohenstein: Eine Deutung seines Dramenwerkes* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1992); and Cornelia Plume, *Heroinnen in der Geschlechterordnung: Weiblichkeitsprojektionen bei Daniel Casper von Lohenstein und die “Querelle des femmes”* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996).

¹⁴ A link between Asia and Roxolana, or rather an allegorical equation between them, has also been interpreted by Sarah Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine: Gender and Orient on the German Stage 1647–1742* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 45. I find it interesting that Asia sees herself as a victim of crime, although she repents her wrongdoing by inciting the Emperor to cruel actions. She confesses to have become a “dethroned Queen” (“Entthronte Königin,” 16), thus conflating her role as Sultana with the continent of Asia in the same sentence.

better judgment. She is the real source of the power that rules the Empire, and everyone obeys her. She appears as a loving, caring wife in the Sultan's eyes, one who wants to help him, yet she uses him from the start. Noticing the Sultan's state of emotional unrest, she asks with great finesse:

Where? Why so upset? My Emperor, what does
This sad face reveal? What new commotion inflames
The heart with restlessness? Does Soliman wish anything more
Than that he would finally teach him [Ibrahim] the Ottoman ways?
Whoever adds more displeasure to the Emperor's heart
Swims on a high wave, until it finally drowns him
And in the ocean-bottom swallows him up, as soon as Osman [the Sultan]
unleashes
The last storm of anger and blows him out onto the death-ocean.¹⁵

The Sultan's emotions are inflamed by his strong desire for Isabelle, but he allows them to be interpreted by Roxolana as anger against Ibrahim. She tries to confuse him by shifting his feelings and by telling him to not get drowned in an ocean, but rather to gain safe ground again. By that she means doing away with the aggressor. Her eloquence channels the Sultan's private feelings, and she articulates them as if they were matters of the "Ossmanns Stul" ['the Ottoman throne'] (2.229), of political dimensions. Ibrahim becomes in her words an "Un-their," or a violent creature that is about to challenge the order, and he must therefore be killed by a strong emperor in order to rescue the castle ("Schloß") from the flames and to protect the country. Thus she challenges the Sultan as a statesman by invoking the usual clichés of heroism. He is swayed by her and thinks he must take control in a time of political unrest, giving in to her manipulation: "Be it then soon done whatever she wants, / the Princess, to whom we have no power to say no" ("Es sei denn, was sie wil straks bald in eil verricht / Prinzessin, der wir Macht was abzuschlagen nicht," 2.239–40).

Roxolana wins power at the expense of Isabelle, who is little more than a pawn in the intrigues at court. Through her subversive manipulation of others, Roxolana is revealed as the mastermind of Ibrahim's murder. She deserves punishment at the end, but like Medea she escapes unscathed, while Rüstam is beheaded for having killed Ibrahim, and Süleyman is cursed by Isabelle. But this view of Roxolana does not need to be negative. The play suggests, via its poetic devices, that perhaps Roxolana has also been wronged by the Sultan. Even if perhaps she did not mean things to turn out the way they did, and even if what happened was due

¹⁵ "Wohin? wie so bestürzt? mein Keiser, was entdäcket / Das traurige Gesicht? welch neuer Aufflauf stäcket / Das Hertz mit Vnruh an? Wünscht Soliman was mehr / Als daß Er endlich Ihn sein Ossmanns-pochen lehr? / Der der des Fürsten Brust mit un-lust noch behäuffet / Schwimmt in der Welle schon, bis sie ihn gar ersäuffet / Und in den Grund verschlingt, so bald als Ossmann läst / Den letzten Zorn-sturm loos und ihn aufs Tods-Meer bläst" (2.149–56).

to some awful misunderstanding or miscalculation of her own suggestive power over others, we, the readers or viewers, know after all that she was completely in command through her effective rhetorical skills. As soon as Rüstam is told to get Ibrahim ready for his execution, the Sultan finds himself doubting his decision, and he seems for a moment to revert to his earlier decision.¹⁶ The allegorical figure of “Mensch” [‘Humankind’] concludes the chorus, which ends the second act with comments on the immediately preceding debate between “Beghrde” [‘Desire’] and “Vernunft” [‘Reason’]. This typical human conflict between emotion and reason, dark desire and bright Enlightenment, frequently contested in Baroque drama, applies here to what has just taken place and to what the Sultan apparently now is experiencing. But when reason speaks in him, Roxolana’s control over the Sultan exerts itself. “Der Mensch” continues with a speech, in which a shifting use of the word “reason” occurs: on the one hand, it is associated with fluidity, and on the other hand, with desire and flame. The opposite poles seem to fluctuate, and there is no stable position between the similarly evoked binaries of dry and wet, light and dark, visible and invisible:

How much darker appears to the reasonable human heart,
When desire fogs up its enlightening-candle of reason.
Whoever follows desire, burns in its glow, melts in its flame,
And drowns in its flood.¹⁷

The rescue from desire that Roxolana offers to the Sultan is convincing to him, but it is also tainted with the very desire from which she claims to free him. Although Roxolana has set in motion that which will later lead to the killing of Ibrahim (and she therefore deserves condemnation), the last scene of the play shows her as a person who has been wrongly ignored by her husband and as someone who deserves to be noticed and listened to. As this poetic insertion and the implied problem of fluctuating poles in language seem to suggest, the Sultan’s actions are not only the result of Roxolana’s negative influence, but also a confusion that neither he nor she fully controls.

The figures in Lohenstein’s play are more nuanced than one might expect. Although earlier critics had argued that his characters are flat, John Alexander points out correctly that Lohenstein, unlike his predecessor and fellow Silesian, Andreas Gryphius, had a “fascination for the subtle interrelationships of human passions and rational action in politics.”¹⁸ Literature is never innocent of politics, and Alexander is also perceptive in drawing attention to the author’s own politically motivated intentions in writing his play, namely, his “desire” for reconciliation

¹⁶ See also the dialogue between “Beghrde” [‘Desire’] and “Vernunft” [‘Reason’] in 2.259–338.

¹⁷ “Wie vihl finsterer erscheint des vernünftgen Menschen Hertze, / Wenn Ihm die begihrd umb-nebelt, der Vernunft erleuchtungs-Kertze. / Wer der begihrde folgt, verbrennt in ihrer Glut / Verschmälzt in ihrer Flamm, ersäufft in ihrer Flut,” (2.341–4).

¹⁸ John Alexander, “Early Modern German Drama,” 370.

between Protestant Silesia and the Catholic Vienna court.”¹⁹ Without paying any attention to Roxolana (“Roxelane”),²⁰ Alexander interprets this *Ibrahim Bassa* as an exemplary parody of the Viennese imperial court, while focusing exclusively on the tyrant Süleyman.²¹ But as I show here, it is rather Roxolana who instigates the plot and, although wronged by the Sultan, she should be judged for her own action, for having instigated the murder of Ibrahim and for getting whatever she wants through her sophisticated use of words. The Sultan is shown to be at the mercy of his advisors among whom the most important is his wife. Although a modern audience would perhaps tend to view this as empowering for her, the contemporary audience was probably more likely to interpret it as his weakness. In any case, the crime is horrible considering that Ibrahim was not only once the Sultan’s best and most loyal friend, but also, if certain historical sources are accurate, a person who brought Roxolana to the imperial harem.

Approaching the play from an interesting but quite a different perspective, Gerald Gillespie does not link the allegorical figure of Asia with Roxolana, a connection that is key to my reading, and I find it surprising that Roxolana is mentioned at only one point in his entire book and then dismissed as a sketchy character that, as he claims, “does not appear to suffer.”²² But the Roxolana does indeed suffer emotional pain and is not a sketchy figure. She may exemplify “the bad,” “the criminal,” and “the Other” (that is, the Muslim world), but she also stands for the female, the eccentric, and “the witch,” for having transgressed into the realm of politics.²³ She is indirectly acknowledged as a real protagonist in this history whose power in fact supersedes that of her male counterparts due to her ability to shift levels of language as she likes.²⁴ I think that in Lohenstein’s notion of Roxolana there are signs of a fascination that may reveal more than just a value judgment. The reader can even trace a sense of sympathy and admiration for her.

¹⁹ Alexander, “Early Modern German Drama,” 371.

²⁰ In the 1665 edition of the play (Leipzig: J. Wittigau), the name is spelled “Roxelane,” but in the summaries of the action to the 1689 edition (Breslau: J. Fellgiebel), the name appears as “Roxolane” and “Roxellane.”

²¹ Alexander, “Early Modern German Drama,” 371.

²² Gerald Ernest Paul Gillespie, *Daniel Casper von Lohenstein’s Historical Tragedies* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965), 40–1.

²³ See Sigrid Brauner, *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: The Concept of Witch in Early Modern Germany* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). This role of Roxolana in the play can be compared to other “witches” in similar literature, as, for example, in the much later play *Agnes Bernauer* (Vienna, 1855), by Friedrich Hebbel, based on an historical figure (ca. 1410–1435) whose sole “crime” was that her husband loved her too much. Agnes, who was of humble origin, was secretly married to Albert III, Herzog von Bayern-München. In Albert’s absence, his father Duke Ernest, who had other marriage plans for his son, condemned Agnes as a witch to death by drowning in the Danube. If this analogy would hold, Roxolana’s “crime” would be mainly that the Sultan ignored the tradition for her sake, thus provoking the anger and frustration of his courtiers.

²⁴ See in particular Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine*, 83–104, although she does not specifically deal with Roxolana.

She knows the Sultan well, is empathetic with his emotional struggle to decide what to do, and is able to turn the argument in the dialogue with him, so that he thinks that getting rid of Ibrahim represents, ultimately, reason and peace of mind. He searches measure and balance and wants to let go of his anxiety and fear to become consumed by his passions. He worries about the loss of Ibrahim, who is charged with becoming a personal and political traitor, and about a potential future loss of Roxolana. He wants to please her and maintain his image as the one in power at all costs. Roxolana knows how to predict the feelings of others, especially those of the Sultan, and thus to turn them into words that will then change the order of things around her. Because of her astute intuition and persuasion, she really controls the Sultan.

August Adolph von Haugwitz, *Obsiegende Tugend: Oder der Bethörte doch wieder Bekehrte Soliman* (1684)²⁵

Like Lohenstein, August Adolph von Haugwitz bases his drama, *Obsiegende Tugend: Oder der Bethörte doch wieder Bekehrte Soliman*, on the German translation of Madeleine de Scudéry's *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa*.²⁶ However, Haugwitz's play is in many ways a response to Lohenstein's play, for which reason Pierre Béhar called it an "Anti-Ibrahim."²⁷ Whereas Lohenstein depicts the Sultan as a weak person who cannot control his own emotions and his own life, Haugwitz shows his conflict and emotional struggle, but virtues rescue him from his deception and present him as a reasonable person free from crime. In his preface, Haugwitz explains that the play shows that "finally reason wins after a successful mental battle over his desires / and virtue having awakened him from his sleep which was falsely taken for death, / he allows her [that is, Isabelle] the long requested freedom to return again to her fatherland / and therefore via his first actions makes visible the beguilement / in his later actions the recovered Soliman."²⁸ *Obsiegende Tugend*

²⁵ ['Victorious Virtue: Or the Beguiled yet Later Recovered Soliman']. The play is subtitled "Misch-Spiel in gebundener Rede," indicating that it is a tragicomedy in rhymed verse. This play is not yet available in any English translation. For my synopsis, see Appendix I.

²⁶ Haugwitz states that the play is based on Zesen's *Durchlauchte Bassa*, which in turn was based on a French novel, which Haugwitz erroneously calls *Isabelle* instead of *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa* (see Haugwitz's "Anmerckungen" ["Notes"], 80). He also adapted the ending of *Obsiegende Tugend* from George de Scudéry's tragicomedy, *Ibrahim ou l'illustre Bassa* (Paris: N. de Sercy, 1643). See Béhar, "Obsiegende Tugend," 93*–103* for the relationship of Haugwitz's play to Lohenstein's.

²⁷ Béhar, "Obsiegende Tugend," 93*.

²⁸ "endlich die Vernunft nach ausgestandenen Gemüts-Kampffe / seinen Begierden obgesiegt / und die Tugend ihn aus seinen fälschlich todtvermeinten Schlawfe auffgeweckt / die lang verlangte Freyheit wieder in ihr Vaterland zu ziehen verstatet / und folgbar also in seinen ersten Handlungen den Bethörten / in seinen letzteren den Bekehrten Soliman vorstellich macht" (8).

is also a work of Haugwitz's youth. In the introduction to the "Anmerckungen" ['Notes'] appended to the play, Haugwitz notes that it had been prepared, as a "Sprach-Übung" ['Language-exercise'] for a comedy troupe, many years before, while he was still a law student at the University in Wittenberg, which would place it before 1668.

In this play, agency is shifted away gradually from individual persons towards abstract forces of the "Reihen" (the ranks of the choruses), among which are the emotions and the virtues representing a metaphysical world, or the Divine, that actually control humans and deal with them as "subjects." In fact, these forces are in charge when others think that Süleyman and Roxolana rule:

Whoever knows us will have to say
That Süleyman as well as Roxolana
Lay at our feet,
Because he gets excited, angry, and loves,
Is saddened by fear and jealousy and
Completely conquered by us.
Süleyman's business is
Governed by our forces.²⁹

The play is mostly concerned with the Ibrahim-Isabelle-Süleyman triangle, and Roxolana does not make her first appearance until the beginning of Act III, although she was mentioned several times prior to that. She and Rüstam (Rustan) plot to get rid of Ibrahim, and when she makes the suggestion to Süleyman, he defends Ibrahim and still believes in his many positive contributions to the Ottoman Empire. At first he is not ridden by fear but is rather trusting, and he gives Ibrahim credit for his positive actions and military support before the mistrust sets in. Nevertheless, he finally allows himself against his own reasoning to be persuaded by Roxolana so that he consents that Ibrahim should be executed. At the beginning of Act V, Roxolana is seen once more plotting the death of Ibrahim, this time with the Mufti (the Turkish "High-Priest"). But all this intrigue will be in vain, as in the end the Sultan becomes "reformed" ("bekehrt") in such a way that his reason is restored. Nobody must die. Ibrahim and his family are free.

Béhar argues that in contrast to Lohenstein, Haugwitz does not demonize the Turks.³⁰ He attributes this perceived difference in attitude regarding the Ottoman Empire to the specific local situations on the conflicted map of Europe at the time. Because Haugwitz was not living close to the Ottoman Empire, he had, according to Béhar, a more tolerant view than writers geographically closer to the scenes

²⁹ "Wer uns kennt wird sagen müssen / Daß uns Soliman zum Füßen / Samt der Roxolanen liegt, / Denn er eifert, zörnt und liebet, / Wird durch Furcht und Neid betrübet / Und von uns durchaus besiegt. / Des Solimans Geschäft / Regieren unsere Kräfte" (2.317–24).

³⁰ Béhar, "Obsiegende Tugend," 91*–4*. See also Pierre Béhar, "La Répresentation du Turc dans l'Europe des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles et l'œuvre de Callot," *Jacques Callot (1592–1635): Actes du Colloque ... du musée du Louvre et de la ville de Nancy ...*, ed. Daniel Ternois (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1993), 305–30; Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine*, 43–55.

of action, such as Lohenstein, who spent a good deal of time in Vienna. Béhar thinks that Lohenstein made the ending of his play so violent (the decapitated head put on the doorpost, etc.) and that he charged Süleyman and Roxolana with the most heinous of crimes in the murdering of Ibrahim, because Lohenstein actually “hated the Turks,” whereas Haugwitz was able to maintain “a more balanced view” and keep the happy ending of de Scudéry’s *Ibrahim*. He overlooks that even in Lohenstein there is regret and a move towards virtue represented by the female Asia who requests, “machet von den umbfäßelnden Lastern mich loß” [make me free from the entangling vices].³¹ Béhar’s reductionist thesis has already been challenged by Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly³² and Sarah Colvin.³³ Certainly, the situation is more complex than Béhar allows. Even in the context of Lohenstein, not all Turks are portrayed negatively Lohenstein, and I think it would be wrong to draw conclusions on German attitudes about Ottomans at that time in general. Haugwitz in particular would have had the opportunity to see Turkish knights perform at tournaments sponsored by the Electors of Saxony in their Dresden court, where he served as the semi-official poet and “polyhistor” since 1690. Colvin challenges Béhar’s claim that Lohenstein concluded his play violently because he hated the Turks; instead, Colvin attributes the tragic ending of the play more to the rhetorical conventions of the theater than to any convictions on the part of the author.³⁴ I agree with Watanabe-O’Kelly and Colvin that any simplistic equation of a fictional statement with a personal political opinion of the author, as Béhar had claimed, does not hold. Again, I would like to shift attention to the importance of Roxolana, the female in this context, and take a critical perspective long ignored. One should also mention that the Sultan’s fear, indecision, and final consent to his Sultana make the Turkish protagonist appear human and vulnerable. Attention is given also to a world beyond the visible, to the reappearance of spirits, meetings after death, and powerful dreams that can intensely impact one’s life.

Süleyman and the Murder of Mustafa

Roxolana may be one among a long list of individuals who were selected as dramatic types because of their perceived infamy. This reputation resulted from the role she played in promoting the fortunes of her own sons at the expense of Prince Mustafa, Süleyman’s eldest son. The most influential account, supposedly based on the testimony of an eyewitness, is found in the first Turkish Letter, by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador to the Sublime Porte.³⁵ The

³¹ “Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, Ibrahim Bassa,” 19.

³² Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Lohenstein, Haugwitz und das Türkenmotiv in deutschen Turnieren des Barock,” *Begegnung mit dem “Fremden”: Grenzen—Traditionen—Vergleiche, Akten des VIII. Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses Tokyo 1990*, gen. ed. Eijirō Iwasaki, 11 vols (München [Munich]: Iudicum Verlag, 1991), 7 (ed. Yoshinori Shichiji): 348–55. See also Ebert, “Vom Barbaren zum aufgeklärten Herrscher.”

³³ Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine*, 43–55.

³⁴ Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine*, 285–6.

³⁵ Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters*, 28–33.

account reveals that Mustafa, the oldest son and legitimate heir of the Sultan, was killed by him under the influence of his powerful second wife Roxolana, who wanted to have the throne for her own son. In the German tradition, another particularly influential version of the story can be found in Book 12 of the *Historia sui temporis*, by Jacques-Auguste de Thou.³⁶

Mustafa was identified by European observers as the most amenable of Süleyman's sons to European interests. The outrage of the Turks expressed in response to his death was enormous and not only a sign of political instability, but also a call for internal justice.³⁷ European accounts suggest that Roxolana conspired with Rüstam Pasha to bring about Mustafa's downfall by convincing Süleyman that Mustafa was preparing a rebellion against him. Mustafa was strangled in his father's presence in 1553. Cihangir, Mustafa's stepbrother, was so distressed at his brother's murder that he died shortly afterwards, and the bloodbath continued, as Roxolana was believed to have also engineered the murder of Mustafa's infant son. Lohenstein alluded to these horrible events in the ghost sequence of Act 5 of *Ibrahim Bassa*, and they were to be the source material for two eighteenth-century German plays that featured Roxolana: the dramatic fragment *Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron* [*Giangir or the Rejected Throne*], by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, written around 1748,³⁸ and the tragedy *Mustapha und Zeangir* (1761), by Christian Felix Weisse, published in 1768.³⁹

³⁶ Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Historia sui temporis*, 3 vols (Paris: A. & H. Drouart, 1606–1609); 2nd ed., 5 vols (Geneva: Peter de la Roviére, 1620–1621). The first edition was translated into German as *Historische Beschreibung deren Namhafftigsten, Geistlichen und Weltlichen Geschichten*, 2 vols (Frankfurt: E. Emmel and P. Kopf, 1621–1622). On the German context, see August Streibich, *Mustapha und Ziangir; die beiden Söhne Solimans des Großen, in Geschichte und Dichtung* (Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1903); and Arnold Lehmann, *Das Schicksal Mustapha's des Sohnes Solyman's II in Geschichte und Literatur* (Mannheim: Mannheimer Vereinsdruckerei, 1908). Lehmann gives a thorough account of numerous English, French, and Dutch versions of the fate of Mustafa in addition to several German adaptations, including "Erzählung" ["Story"] by Erasmus Francisci (1665), Lessing's dramatic fragment (1748), and Weisse's play (1761). Francisci's narrative is the translation of a report by the Dutch historian Lambert van der Bos (1610–1698) and is without independent value. See Lehmann, *Das Schicksal Mustaphas*, 95.

³⁷ Alan Fisher, "Süleyman and His Sons," *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps. Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 7–10 March, 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: la documentation française, 1992), 119–20. See also his "The Life and Family of Süleyman I," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, eds Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), 1–19.

³⁸ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "Versuch eines Trauerspiels: Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron," *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Wilfried Barner et al., 14 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–2001), 1 (*Frühe Lustspiele. Werke 1743–1750*, ed. Jürgen Stenzel, 1989): 243–7.

³⁹ Christian Felix Weisse, *Mustapha und Zeangir: Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (Berlin: J. H. Rüdiger, 1768); *Theater der Deutschen*, 20 vols (Berlin: Johann Heinrich Rüdiger et al., 1766–1784), 6 (1768): 1–96. Quotations are from Christian Felix Weisse, *Trauerspiele*, 5 vols (Leipzig: Dyk, 1776–1780), 2 (1776): 128–244.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron* (1748)⁴⁰

Lessing's dramatic fragment opens with a monologue by Roxolana ("Roxalana") that anticipates the action and allows the spectator to get a sense of who she really is: "My daring stroke succeeds. Then I shall / govern — / A throne — for a throne — yes — everything I shall dare. / Once Mustapha is dead, then my son will be fortunate. / He reigns only first through me and soon I shall reign through him. / The Sultan arrives — How easily he lets himself be led."⁴¹ It is obvious that Roxolana is planning the murder of Mustafa in order to promote her son to the throne.⁴² She boldly says that she will use him for her own ends. She has confidence in her plan because she knows how easily the Sultan obeys her requests and how much he loves her. She says: "Me, and in me also himself, his fortune, and his fame" ("Mich, und in mir auch sich, sein Glück und seinen Ruhm," 244). This is the logic she wants the Sultan to believe, and when he enters, his first words are: "And finally I forced myself. My son is / not my son. The tender bond of blood connects him to me in vain, / as long as in his wild breast he suffocates nature and duty."⁴³ He is repressing his initial feelings for Mustafa, his love and respect, apparently already convinced by fear that his son has betrayed him. We learn indirectly that Roxolana has made Süleyman mistrust his son, even to the point that he denies his fatherly feelings for him: "Whoever hurts his father does not hurt him as a child. / Therefore, if a father punishes, he does not punish as a father either."⁴⁴ For a moment, he seems to have been inclined to forgive Mustafa anything, but then he turns to his wife who has, as he states, the final word on the matter: "Mustapha, even if you had strangled me a thousand times — / Mustapha, even while dying I would have forgiven you still. / Yet my spouse — ."⁴⁵ Roxolana makes a vague

⁴⁰ [*Giangir or the Rejected Throne*]. For my translation of this play, see Chapter 12.

⁴¹ "Mein kühner Streich gelingt. So werd ich noch / regieren — / Ein Thron — um einen Thron — ja — alles wollt ich wagen. / Ist nur Mustapha tot, so wird mein Sohn beglückt, / Herrscht er nur erst durch mich, so herrsch ich bald durch ihn. / Der Kaiser kömmt — Wie leicht, wie leicht lässt er sich führen" (243).

⁴² It seems implicit in Lessing's play and explicit in Weisse's that Cihangir is the only son of Süleyman and Roxolana and that he would be heir to the throne next after Mustafa.

⁴³ "Und endlich zwang ich mich. Mein Sohn ist / nicht mein Sohn. Des Blutes zärtlich Band vereinigt ihn mir vergebens, / Wenn er in wilder Brust Natur und Pflicht ersticket" (244).

⁴⁴ "Wer seinen Vater kränkt, der kränkt ihn nicht als Kind, / Drum, wenn der Vater straft, straft er als Vater nicht" (244). In other words the Sultan argues that the bond between a father and son is so intimate and so sacred that if a son betrays his father he in fact "is" no longer a son. Therefore if a father punishes this person who once seemed to have been his son, he does not punish "his son" at all. He punishes a stranger. This argument later creates for Lessing the basis to insist that the diverse cultures and world religions are in fact literally related to each other by such a sacred bond that must be respected at all times.

⁴⁵ "Mustapha, hättest du mich auch hundertmal erwürgt — / Mustapha sterbende hätt ich dir noch vergeben. / Doch mein Gemahl —" (244).

comment about an unspeakable crime that Mustapha “offered” to do for her, never explaining what that might be. In response, Süleyman promises Roxolana to have Mustafa beheaded that very day. Having reached her goal without much difficulty, Roxolana prefers to hide her true feelings of triumph by cleverly asking whether he intends to proceed so harshly, and she adds: “This I would not have believed” (“Das hätt ich nicht geglaubt,” 245). When her husband defends his harsh decision, Roxolana responds: “Who is this rare hero, in whom nature becomes silenced, in whom blood does not speak” (“Wer ist der rare Held, in dem Natur verstummet, / In dem das Blut nicht redt?” 245). Süleyman must now prove himself to his wife against her calculating expressions of doubt. She reminds him of a language of nature, beyond all human language, which should tell him what to do, thus reminding him of his conscience. By telling him to ignore what Mustafa did and to simply forgive him for the sake of his so-called bloodline, she in fact provokes her husband to do just the opposite, to proceed with punishment. Süleyman feels that generosity regarding Mustafa’s crime might bring fame to his wife, but only blame and shame to him, which is why he assumes he must proceed with his son’s execution against the doubts he first had, which were then articulated by Roxolana as if to silence his conscience. Lessing presents suggestive words and gestures rather than complete actions onstage. The audience learns that Mustafa will be killed and that Roxolana’s intrigue will apparently succeed. Yet the ending is missing, and we are left with a large number of unanswered questions.

The fragment of Act 3 opens with a dialogue between Süleyman and Mustafa’s former teacher Temir. Süleyman asks Temir: “Do you recognize my son in this sinner? / And do you recognize me in him? Does he manifest his blood? O this damned son to him nothing at all is sacred!”⁴⁶ He is obviously troubled by his son, but in reality wants to talk primarily about his own bad feelings. Temir also feels uncomfortable with his relationship to the accused, because Mustafa had been his student and he accepts a certain amount of responsibility for his influence on him, although he cannot understand what went wrong. He is afraid of what people may believe: “From his teachings he has drawn this poison — / This one should be punished instead of him — he who intends the Emperor’s death — Mustapha had to be only his suffering tool.”⁴⁷ There seems to be an implication here that Temir feels responsible for teaching Mustafa the crime of incest. He reflects: “All of this I imprinted while he was young on his impressionable heart” (“Dies alles drückt ich ihm jung in sein wächsern Herze,” 247). He questions whether Mustafa’s

⁴⁶ “Erkennst du meinen Sohn in jenem Missetäter? / Und kennst du mich in ihm? Beweiset er sein Blut / O der verfluchte Sohn! Dem nichts — nichts — heilig ist!” (246).

⁴⁷ “Aus seinen Lehren hat er dieses Gift gezogen — / Den strafe man statt ihm — der ging auf Kaisers Tod — Mustapha mußte nur sein leidend Werkzeug sein” (247). The word “poison” is used metaphorically here. The question is whether Temir has polluted the mind of his student by sharing with him world literature on incest (on the Oedipal triangle), which then the student Mustafa may have falsely emulated without drawing the necessary critical conclusion.

readings as a child had made such a deep impression on him that they falsely led to such behavior. Attention is shifted to the importance of education and critical reflection; thus, Lessing emphasizes the need for everyone to think for him or herself. Temir remains a consciously aware teacher, one who takes the actions of his student seriously, even if they resulted from a false application of his teachings. He tells the Emperor (“Kayser”) a parable of a young tree that once promised to be productive and fruitful, but then did not live up to its promise with the result that the gardener was punished. He adds: “Yet God shall be the witness” (“Doch Gott soll Zeuge sein,” 247), thus indicating his own innocence. Solimann answers with fairness and responds: “No — I shall testify. / How much devotion and diligence you have applied to this tree. / If a well taken care of tree withers because of a worm inside / One absolves the gardener just as I absolve you / And one lets the blazing fire devour the useless wood.”⁴⁸

What makes Lessing’s Süleyman much different from the same figure in earlier versions of this narrative is that he is a forgiving, generous person who liberates before he condemns. The question of whether or not he will actually light that fire, or whether such fire is only a matter of the rhetoric, remains open, since the play is unfinished. Lessing seems to imply here that whatever message is written in literature to be interpreted and applied, this is always a task to be solved by each person in an ethical manner. If one of the mottos of the Enlightenment was “sapere aude” [‘dare to think’],⁴⁹ Lessing’s text shifts focus to the recipient of a message, to the audience and the readers, who must then be critical and careful with its interpretation and application and who bear the weight of their own actions.

The Sultan in Lessing’s play is manipulated by Roxolana who has power over him, at least to a certain point, due to her remarkable rhetorical and psychological skills, especially through her empathy — her ability to anticipate his doubts, ambivalences, and fears, before they are expressed by him or anyone else, and thus to silence them indirectly. Attention is shifted to the power of intuition and of language that can articulate even the most subtle emotions.

Although Lessing’s early *Giangir* fragment has not been considered as an important work within his oeuvre, it anticipates the main ideas for his later works. The relationship between Cihangir and his teacher Temir is a new element added to the story of Mustafa, and it raises, as pointed out above, the question of agency. Are teachers responsible for their students’ actions and how must they account for their influence? How mature are the students? To what extent do people act individually, and to what extent do they reflect the influence of others and therefore a lack of control over their own actions?

⁴⁸ “Nein — Ich will es bezeugen, / Wie viel du Treu und Fleiß an diesen Baum gewandt. / Wenn ein gepflegter Baum durch innern Wurm verdorrt, / Spricht man den Gärtner los, so wie ich dich losspreche, / Und das unnütze Holz lässt man die Glut verzehren” (247).

⁴⁹ Horace, *Epistles*, Book 1, epistle 2, l. 40, qtd. in Immanuel Kant, “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?” *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 4.12 (Dec. 1784): 481.

Lessing does not refer to any external power or influence the way Haugwitz did; they are neither threat nor excuse. We find humor in Haugwitz and irony in Lessing's play. Neither Süleyman nor Roxolana, nor anyone else, is in complete control; shifting responsibility or blaming others for one's own actions does not work in any case. If the Sultan appears harsh to Mustafa, he absolves Temir. Whatever the young person wants or does counts equally to the ideas and actions of the older generation.

Christian Felix Weisse, *Mustapha und Zeangir* (1768)

Christian Felix Weisse and Lessing were well acquainted. Yet though Lessing became one of the pivotal figures of the Enlightenment, Weisse's considerable dramatic oeuvre has almost passed into obscurity. In the preface to the second volume of his collected plays, in which *Mustapha und Zeangir* appears, Weisse criticizes the situation of the German theater at the time. He comments that after some promising attempts, by Johann Friedrich von Cronegk and Joachim Wilhelm von Brawe, to revive the theater, there was some hope for an improvement of the German stage. But then he bemoans the fact that his friend Lessing, who had instilled in him the love for all dramatic art in the first place, had been silent for several years and seemed to have almost forgotten his muse for the sake of other occupations, finally waking up again to produce the immortal *Minna von Barnhelm* and the noble *Emilia Galotti*.⁵⁰ In response, Weisse remained quiet for some time thinking the German stage did not need him any longer, although he was not happy that the heroic drama seemed to have been replaced by the "Bürgerliche[s] Trauerspiel" ['bourgeois drama']. He comments that he knows of no other nation in all of Europe that would, as the Germans do, be dominated by only one single "Modegeschmack" ['style of fashion'] that would cancel out all other approaches. He offers his drama, *Mustapha und Zeangir*, as an alternative to the reigning fashion.

The play opens with a dialog between Roxolana and her servant Rüstam, from which it becomes clear that she wants Mustafa dead and that his popularity threatens her plans to have her own son Cihangir ("Zeangir") succeed his father as next sultan.⁵¹ She offers Rüstam her daughter in return for his support and states in no uncertain terms: "The law of inheritance determines Mustapha as the future heir of the crown. / But I am determined to give it to Zeangir, my son. / In order to achieve this, I am still, like you, too small. / So the corpse of the former must be the stairway for the latter."⁵² The chance to have Roxolana's daughter as wife

⁵⁰ Weisse, *Trauerspiele*, "Vorbericht" ['Preface'], 2: (unpaginated, Signature marks): (2^r to): (6^v, esp.): (2^v to): (3^v and): (4^r to): (6^r, as listed exactly in the "Preface" of Weisse's original.

⁵¹ Weisse notes that the subject matter of the play is taken from Thou's *History* and Busbecq's *Turkish Letters*. See *Trauerspiele*, 2: 128.

⁵² "Dem Mustpaha bestimmt das Erbrecht einst die Krone; / Doch ich bestimme sie Zeangirn, meinem Sohne. / Sie zu erreichen bin ich noch, wie du zu klein. / Des erstern Leichnam muß für den die Staffel seyn" (131).

is too great a temptation for Rüstam, and he suppresses his misgivings and agrees to help. He identifies Mustafa's weakness as "his feminine heart" ("sein weibisch Herz," 134), expressed in his devotion to his wife and child. When Cihangir enters, full of praise for Mustafa, Roxolana tries to turn him against Mustafa and to kindle in him the desire to succeed his father. She even hints that Mustafa might be got rid of to this end. But Cihangir refuses to hear any such talk and tells his mother to take the words back. When the Sultan enters, Rüstam and Roxolana speak against Mustafa so that the Sultan is convinced of his son's treachery. The plans for Mustafa's execution are already being put into place, but in Act 2, scene 3, the Sultan begins to have doubts: "I feel it, my heart consistently tells me: He is your son! / From the first moment he spoke openly — / (*reflecting for a while*). / And should he be deserving of punishment?—No, he has done nothing wrong!"⁵³ At this point Roxolana enters saying that she loves Mustafa, but that she loves the Sultan more, and she overpowers the Sultan's instinct for justice. He takes the flight of Ahmed as a sign of Mustafa's guilt. In a soliloquy, Roxolana gloats over what she has achieved: "Mustapha, Fatimah and also Zopyr will die, / so Zeangir will rule from this throne under me!" ("Es sterbe Mustapha, Fatim' und auch Zopyr, / So herrscht auf diesem Thron Zeangir neben mir!" 172). In Act 4, Roxolana plots that if Mustafa were to be spared, they will take revenge on Fatimah. Süleyman is still in doubt over ordering Mustafa's death, but he lets himself be persuaded by Roxolana that Fatimah should bear the brunt of his wrath. The plotters also arrange for the Sultan to come into possession of a letter in which Mustafa officially asks the Persian King for the hand of his daughter. All comes to pass as planned. Fatimah is killed, as is Mustafa. The Sultan, however, realizes he has made a mistake, and when Ahmed arrives, too late to save his friend, Süleyman blames Rüstam, whom Ahmed must now kill in order to become Grand Vizier in his place. Süleyman now begins to suspect the complicity of Roxolana. Roxolana then enters and acts surprised when she sees the corpse of Mustafa. But Süleyman is distraught at what has happened and claims to have been betrayed by Rüstam. Roxolana agrees that it must have indeed been Rüstam's scheme and begins extravagantly to lament Mustafa's death. Süleyman vows revenge on all those who ever spoke against his son. In a soliloquy Roxolana congratulates herself for putting the blame on Rüstam. She wonders momentarily if he might betray her, but consoles herself with the assertion that anyone who would betray her would deserve death. Cihangir enters and is beside himself with grief at his brother's death. Roxolana is enraged at what she perceives to be his weakness. He should be thankful that the way to the throne is now open to him. And he owes her, as she made everything possible by persuading Rüstam to act the way he did. How will Cihangir reward her? He responds by stabbing himself and sinking down by Mustafa's corpse. Roxolana cries out for help and asks where she could flee. Cihangir responds: "To remorse, if it is possible—" ("Zur Reu, wenn's möglich ist—" 244). At this point the curtain comes down.

⁵³ "Ich fühl's, mir sagt mein Herz noch stets: er ist dein Sohn! / Vom ersten Augenblick hat es ihm frey gesprochen—/ (*Einen Augenblick nachdenkend.*) / Und sollt' er stafbar seyn?—nein, er hat nichts verbrochen!" (169).

Conclusion

Roxolana became a figure of much interest in the German theater of the Baroque, as has been shown specifically in the plays of Lohenstein and Haugwitz. This character continued to play an important role in Enlightenment plays by Lessing and Weisse, and her depiction moves between a fascination with the unknown and exotic to a consideration of philosophical and ethical issues. Lohenstein vividly expresses Roxolana's power. His play is cruel and bloody and does not shun away from the voyeuristic. Roxolana reigns over the Sultan and persuades him to murder Ibrahim with the help of Rüstam and the Mufti. She exemplifies the Muslim world and at the same time stands for the strong female figure, thus placing herself outside the bounds of civil society. She has her own logical place in a Baroque universe, in which everything seems to be regulated by abstract interconnected forces and in which nothing turns out to be really predictable. Lohenstein has been called the "Sebastian Bach" of German literature, as he loves the style of polyphony in his poetic writing and the harmony of extremes in character description. He depicts Roxolana as a paradoxical figure, awful and attractive at the same time. She stands for reason and calculation, and while she is trying to calm down the Sultan, who is being consumed by his own anger and passion, she takes exactly those elements of desire to the highest extreme as her own attributes. She acts on multiple levels of language and is a master of metaphor-making alliances not only with Reason but also with Passion, and not only with the Sultan but also the Mufti. She is an exacting politician, but she demonstrates her own sense of religious faith by asking the Mufti how to proceed on the basis of Muslim law. The accomplices with whom she plots the action belong to various incompatible segments of society. She is never caught in the game because all her actions are executed via others whom she manipulates or wins over by words. Roxolana may not fare well with Lohenstein, if we look at the end of the play, but she also has her human and forgivable side. There are no contradictions or ambivalences in Lohenstein's depiction of Roxolana since they do not exist in the distinct polyphonic Baroque universe of his plays.

Haugwitz, in his tragicomedy, challenges Lohenstein's depiction of Süleyman and shows Roxolana as a less effective negative agent, for all her plotting comes to naught thanks to the Sultan's gaining control over his passions and returning to ethical rule. Haugwitz brings humor to the action and breaks the sad and cruel spell of the play. Haugwitz seems to have some distance from his subject matter, allowing a happy ending to the story of Isabelle and Ibrahim. He takes his inspiration from the French novel, from Italian political theoreticians of the Renaissance, such as Machiavelli, and from the dramas of Lohenstein and of Gryphius.⁵⁴ By returning to Gryphius, Haugwitz gives more say not only to the human figures, but also to the otherworldly figures, the allegorized voices in the Chorus after each Act. His "Misch-Spiel" ["Tragi-Comedy"] shows the Muslim Süleyman next to his

⁵⁴ On Haugwitz's debt to Machiavelli, see Béhar, *Prodromus Poeticus*, 106*–7*, and on his debt to Gryphius, 107*–10*.

Christian friend Ibrahim. Both are obviously not in control even when they think they are. Roxolana has reasons to be jealous, but in the end she cannot manipulate the Sultan into killing Ibrahim, and, of course, she does not have to. Things that first appear to be distorted tend to get settled and take care of themselves in time. There also is humor in the fact that when Süleyman demands the love of Isabelle, he tells her that she will be as respected as his Sultana Roxolana. In other words, it is his highest compliment to Isabelle that she would gain a position equal to his favorite Sultana. The play gains momentum from its love triangle more than from any political tensions. In the end, both Isabelle and Roxolana win back whom they love, and their positions are restored. Nobody gets killed in the process. Haugwitz prefers us to see reason and friendship prevail over any uncontrolled passion, thus using laughter via art and performance as an antidote to complicated history and as a medium directed towards humanistic education. Despite his innovations, he claims to have remained scrupulously concerned with the accurate portrayal of the real figures according to authentic historical sources in his esteem. The character of Roxolana is presented, he writes, “after the true facts and faithful to history” (“â rei veritate & fide historica”).⁵⁵

In Lessing’s dramatic fragment, Roxolana is again one who has the say, but what happens is not what she intended. Lessing uses irony and rather dark humor to get his message of peace across. Roxolana’s arguments make sense to Süleyman, who is apparently blinded by his own fears and passions. No otherworldly figures can be referred to as correctives. Humans are fully responsible, and death can indeed happen prematurely. If the title of the play is anything to go by, Cihangir presumably stands up in protest against Roxolana and questions her actions. He is apparently not interested in the throne and rejects being controlled by his mother. As mentioned above, Lessing does not elaborate on detailed descriptions but leaves things sketchy and open to imagination and interpretation. Roxolana is shown via her words and gestures as a multifaceted and interesting character. Her conflicting roles as a mother, a wife, and a political agent, the Empress of the Ottoman Empire, put her in the spotlight, while challenging the old-standing tradition surrounding the question of who should become the legitimate heir. She wants to set the stage differently but miscalculates everything. She fails because she underestimates the real love and loyalty between the stepbrothers. Lessing is less interested in hierarchy than he is in family relations and mixed characters.

Weisse turns to writing an anti-heroic drama in distinction from the more fashionable “bourgeois play,” and he elaborates more on the complexity of the characters involved, including Roxolana. She does not accept the traditional ruling on who should be the next heir.⁵⁶ Whether she wants power for her son or eventually only for herself, she has no right to impose it on Cihangir. However,

⁵⁵ See Haugwitz, *Obsiegende Tugend*, “Anmerkungen” [‘Notes’], 99, note to Act 3, line 1 where he lists the sources he consulted including Busbecq. On Haugwitz’s use of historical sources see Béhar, “*Prodromus Poeticus*,” 101*–3*.

⁵⁶ In Weisse’s version, Mustafa’s son Zopyr is the officially designated heir.

questioning the tradition may also speak in her favor. Unfortunately, by asking too much, she alienates Cihangir and fails to gain any control. Roxolana shows no scruples during the entire action of plotting the murder, and towards the end of the play, we see her rapidly sizing up the changed situation and betraying her co-conspirator Rüstam without a moment's hesitation. But all her scheming comes to naught. Roxolana is angry at her son Cihangir for mourning Mustafa's death instead of celebrating it as an event that cleared the way for him to succeed his father, the Sultan. She argues that it does not matter if he is not strong enough to rule, because she will still support him. He should thank her and reward her for bringing this opportunity about. His response is rather to commit suicide in front of her.

Roxolana was indeed presented in a largely negative light on German stage during the Baroque and Enlightenment periods, as these dramas have demonstrated. However, such representation allows us to gain insights into the power structures of the time. Even in the seventeenth-century drama, we find not only a Sultan who plots the death of his innocent son due to his foolish attention to Roxolana words, but also, as Haugwitz shows, a Sultan who recovers from his weakness and gains reason again. Thus corrected the negative image of the Turkish ruler, which dominated the works of the earlier (and to some extent also subsequent) authors. As the plays by Lessing and Weisse demonstrate in distinct ways, the bond between Mustafa and Cihangir transcends the striving for power and exemplifies brotherly love beyond the immediate circle. These stepbrothers of Islamic faith illustrate that love and loyalty are not only Christian but also universal human qualities. Literature fulfills its purpose when it challenges old stereotypes and makes us realize the human side of characters of all cultures.

The Baroque authors often wrote about the importance of discipline and considered the power of emotion and passion as something dangerous, while venturing nonetheless into the discovery of Eros. They often expressed a concern, if not an obsession, with issues of morality and ethics. Their dramas presented intense and sometimes reactionary attempts to confirm Christianity in the face of many new and fascinating influences from all over the world, including the Ottoman Empire. They often mobilized fear of moral decline in their audiences in plays that served religious purposes as well as confirming the superiority of their own Western cultural heritage. They condemned extreme sensation that they linked with violence, and they privileged measure, reason, and tradition. Although they tended to project their anxieties on those whom they considered the "other," they did not deny a sense of uncertainty and a lack of control facing not only humans but also spirits and otherworldly powers that may have their own right and may even be expressions of Divine power. They presented the world as a play of a higher order, writing dramas that illustrated human error and punishment, which should then motivate the audiences to return home with a strengthened resolve to embrace virtue and reason and to let go of their own unruly desires. Whereas German authors of the Baroque dealt often with extremes of rhetorical and artistic expression and went to the uttermost degree of extravagance in words

and actions in dealing with their own anxieties and worst fears, Enlightenment authors tried to achieve their goals via a different aesthetics, through a minimum of words and action onstage.⁵⁷ The Enlightenment was interested in achieving its goals through more subtle persuasion without the grandiose effort that had characterized the previous century. Lessing called such an approach the use of “pregnant images,” which were effective not by presenting exuberant scenes or telling people directly what they should do, but instead by letting them choose freely and responsibly on their own based on effective images and scenes. In order to mobilize the imagination of the audience, drama and prose in their own ways emphasized modes of visibility rather than verbal rhetoric. Lessing proposed, in his famous *Laokoon* essay, the idea that “the more we see the more we should be able to imagine” (“Je mehr wir sehen, desto mehr müssen wir uns dazu denken können”),⁵⁸ and in his plays he tried to achieve empathy (“Mitleid”) not only for the positive characters, but also for the negative ones. One Turkish character may be a villain, another may be a hero, but most likely they are, as Lessing seems to indicate, a mixture of positive and negative traits. Lessing’s work ends with a plea for tolerance and diversity, and he states in his final play, *Nathan the Wise*, that Moslems, Jews, and Christians are all interrelated. The writers discussed in this essay often project their own ideas and concerns on to the historical material they used, yet increasingly, as Ludwig Tieck demonstrated, they express a genuine interest in the Ottoman history.

Roxolana continues to fascinate the German imagination as a woman who represents passion and love and who—despite all her extraordinary and even ordinary vices—has an amazing ability to capture our attention through her outstanding use of language and effective rhetorical skills. The figure of Roxolana survives throughout the centuries in a series of complex cultural images, but even the most negative portrayals cannot deny her political skill and her astute use of language.⁵⁹ Whatever it was she was fighting for—her sons, a kingdom, or equal rights—she questioned the patriarchal tradition and cultural norms.

⁵⁷ See Beate Allert, “Lessing’s Poetics as an Approach to Aesthetics,” *Companion to G. E. Lessing*, eds Barbara Fischer and Thomas Fox (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 104–30.

⁵⁸ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 5/2 (*Werke 1766–1769*, ed. Wilfried Barner, 1990): 32.

⁵⁹ The fascination with Roxolana continued in twentieth-century German fiction and film. Johannes Tralow’s novel, *Roxelane: Roman einer Kaiserin* (Zürich: Scientia, 1944), still remains in print (12th ed., Husum: Verlag der Nation, 2004). Roxolana is also featured in a recent television series, where she is depicted, along with other famous historical “mistresses,” as an intelligent player in the masculine world of politics. See “Die Geliebte des Sultans,” Part 2 of *Mätressen: Die Geheime Macht der Frauen* (2005), dir. Jan Peter, perf. Cordelia Wege, Sólveig Arnardóttir, Suzan Anbeh, DVD (ASIN B000BSNO9K: Polyband and Toppic Video, 2006).

Chapter 5

How a Turkish Empress Became a Champion of Ukraine

Oleksander Halenko

Today it seems easy to accept the tremendous popularity of Roxolana in Ukraine, her native country, given that she was a real international celebrity from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Many European authors claimed Roxolana for their own nationalities, such as French, Italian, or Polish, in an attempt to flatter themselves and their targeted audiences.

The international fame of Roxolana certainly pleased the national pride of two prominent nineteenth-century scholars and the exponents of the Ukrainian revivalist movement, Volodymyr Antonovych (1834–1908) and Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895), when, in a comment to their 1874 publication of the Ukrainian epic folklore, they stressed that Roksolana was Ukrainian by descent, notwithstanding the claims of other nations.¹ The two scholars did not discover this fact by themselves, but rather learned it from the voluminous and very popular *History of the Ottoman Empire* by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856), the famous Austrian Orientalist and diplomat, who authoritatively closed the issue of Roxolana's origin by identifying her as “a Russian lady from Little Russia” (“eine Reussin von Kleinarussland”).²

However, the Ukrainian depiction of Roxolana differed from that in Western European. In the eyes of her Western contemporaries, as well as later novelists and playwrights, Roxolana remained a clever, although not infrequently cunning, European lady who outwitted the tyrannical Asians, rather than a heroic person of any sort, let alone a national heroine. Ukrainians, on the other hand, tend to see in Roxolana much more than a historical celebrity, or, in keeping with the gender perspective, a powerful woman of her time. For them, she is first and foremost a champion and protector of the Ukrainian people, an example of loyalty and self-sacrifice in the name of the nation and even the Orthodox creed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly emerged independent Ukrainian

¹ Vladimir Antonovich and Mikhail Dragomanov, *Istoričeskiia piesni malorusskago naroda s ob"asneniiami*, 2 vols (Kiev: M. P. Fritz, 1874), 1: 236–7.

² *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman, depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours*, trans. J. J. Hellert, 18 vols (Paris: Bellizard, Barthés, Dufour et Lowell 1835–1843), 5: 487; 6: 95–6, 99–100, 483.

state, in pursuit of ethnic consolidation of its multinational society, promoted such an image of Roxolana through the media, including cinema and education.³ Of course, this effort stimulated excessive fantasies of her role in Ukrainian history, while poor knowledge of Islamic culture and the Ottoman Empire on the part of the population often rendered such fantasies hilarious.

Although the motives for excessive glorification of Roxolana in contemporary Ukraine are clear and not altogether fascinating, the origins of this glorification merit attention. As soon as Roxolana was recognized as a Ukrainian, the origins of the current Ukrainian attitudes toward her began to reflect those of the social and cultural setting in which she was brought up and that most probably influenced her behavior and career. Until that point, this *milieu* (that is, Ukrainian society of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) remained mute and unaccounted for in its attempts to understand the enigmatic Roxolana. My essay will attempt to acknowledge the voice of that *milieu*, by focusing on three possible sources of information about it: the historical context of Ukraine's past; direct references to Roxolana in the sources written by her contemporaries; and finally, the Ukrainian epic (*duma*) "Marusia Bohuslavka" about a Ukrainian captive woman who helped her enslaved compatriots. It was in response to this particular *duma* that Antonovych and Drahomanov made the aforementioned claim that Roxolana was Ukrainian and suggested a parallel between her and the epic's protagonist. I will argue that neither of the first two sources could have inspired any positive attitude toward Roxolana in Ukrainians. As for the latter, I will try to demonstrate that Antonovych and Drahomanov, in their choice of a folkloric parallel for Roxolana, were inspired by romantic assumptions about the Ukrainian national spirit, which led them to a misinterpretation of this epic as a manifestation of that spirit and which ultimately resulted in their portraying Roxolana as Ukraine's champion. In fact, this epic was only one in a large series of Ukrainian epics and ballads that reflected the people's response to the challenges of "Turkish slavery" ("турецька неволя"), as they referred to a large-scale Ottoman slave hunt and trade conducted from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth century, thus offering rich information on the context of Roxolana's career in the Ottoman court.

Even at first glance, it seems impossible to reconcile the glorification of Roxolana with the Ukrainian perception of the Turks as one of the greatest and most feared enemies of all times. Since the conquest of the Genovese colonies in the Crimean peninsula and the submission of the Crimean Khanate in 1475, and in the course of the subsequent three centuries, the Ottoman Empire included in its possessions up to half of the present territory of Ukraine. In response to the demand of the Ottoman market for slaves, the Crimean Khanate turned the neighboring territories into a principal source of slaves, procuring thousands of them annually. The densely populated southern provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—Ukraine—became the closest and therefore most convenient

³ For instance, a TV serial about Roxolana was released in 1997, and a novel *Roksolana*, by Pavlo Zahrebelny, has been included into many high school curricula.

target for Crimean Tatar slave raids. These raids were sometimes staged as major military campaigns, undertaken on the orders of Ottoman sultans or initiated by the Crimean Khanate against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but small hunting bands, comprising fewer than a hundred raiders,⁴ periodically roamed the poorly defended Ukrainian lands. Although it is hard to accurately calculate the total loss of the Ukrainian population through the Crimean Tatar slave raids, it may be safely estimated as approaching millions.⁵ It is quite logical that the response of the local Ukrainian population to the challenge of the Crimean slave-hunting raids became the central theme of Ukrainian national history. The rise of the Cossacks in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the agricultural colonization of the Steppe from the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries, and the entrance into the suzerainty of Muscovy in 1654 and later—all these were and are now presented by the Ukrainian national historiography as Ukraine's reactions to the menace of slave raids by the Crimean Khanate. The centrality of slave narratives for Ukrainian national identity ensured Roxolana a prominent place in history and literature. Thus, in the eyes of many Ukrainians, although she was the wife of the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, hence a genuine Turkish empress, Roxolana paradoxically became protector of Ukrainian people from the Turks and their Tatar vassals.

It should be noted that some aspects in Roxolana's legacy, such as the construction of a mosque near the "Women's market" (*Avrat Pazar*) in Istanbul and her endowment, which stipulated special treatment of slaves in the hospital,

⁴ Ottoman tax regulation even freed slave hunting parties from taxation on imported slaves if they comprised fewer than one hundred participants. See *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, ed. Ahmet Akgündüz, vol. 2 (Istanbul: FEY Vakfı, 1990): 128–34.

⁵ Alan Fisher, referring to various data, has estimated the annual losses of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth through the eighteenth century and of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century at 20,000 people. See his "Muscovy and the Black Sea Slave Trade," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 6.4 (1972): 582, 593. Polish historian Bohdan Baranowski assumed that the annual losses of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth amounted to 20,000 captives as well, with the total figure for the years 1474–1694 reaching one million. See *Chłop polski w walce z Tatarami* (Warsawa [Warsaw]: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1952), 49. Halil Inalcık has calculated, on the basis of Ottoman fiscal documents, that the dues collected by the Ottoman customs in Kefe (Kaffa; Caffa), which was the main if not the only center for the Ottoman slave trade in the Black Sea, reached up to 17,500 slaves annually. This figure does not include slaves transported through other ports, such as Özü (now Ochakiv in Ukraine) and Ak-Kerman (presently Bilhorod-Dniprovisky in Ukraine). Nor does it take into consideration the number of slaves left behind by the raiders in the Crimea. Still, on the aggregate, this would make more than two million slaves for the period of 150 years alone. See Halil Inalcık, "The Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire," *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East-European Pattern*, ed. Abraham Ascher et al. (New York: Brookline College Press, 1979), 25–52. Later Inalcık suggested reducing this number down to 10,000, but offered no explanation for the change. See *Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, eds Halil Inalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 285.

may testify to her empathy for the slaves. But, firstly, the Ukrainian public was, and still is, largely ignorant of such details. Secondly, it would be a gross exaggeration to surmise that Roxolana played a great role in the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire, let alone to assert her involvement in the slave trade. Although she remained the second most powerful person of the great Empire and fully used its riches, part of which certainly came from the slave raids and slave trade, the Ottoman treasury collected thousands of golden pieces as custom dues from the import of slaves, and it is unthinkable that the Sultan's wife could have stopped this practice, even if she had wished to. In 1527, when Roxolana's influence on the Sultan was already well noticed by the foreign diplomatic residents in Constantinople, Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha told Hieronimus Laszki, Ambassador of Transylvania, that the customs in Kili and Kefe (Keffe; Caffa), two major slave markets on the Ottoman border,⁶ alone brought in 50,000 golden pieces annually, and that in the preceding two years their income had even grown by 30,000 golden pieces.⁷

Roxolana's actions in the harem, according to available information, do not point to her particular sympathy for compatriots. For example, the Venetian ambassador Bragadino reported an accident in the Sultan's palace that demonstrated her jealousy toward her compatriots, rather than her ethnic solidarity or compassion. When Süleyman and his mother were presented with two beautiful slave girls from Rus ("doe donzele di Rossia bellissime"), who were thus Roxolana's compatriots, she did everything in her power to make the Sultan marry them off to Ottoman provincial governors, and in this way, she effectively removed them from the imperial palace.⁸ Thus, even the little that is known about Roxolana as the Turkish sultana challenges the idea that she was in a position to render her Ukrainian compatriots protection from slave raids by her Turkish subjects and that she did so.

Now we need to establish whether Ukrainians knew anything about Roxolana before Volodymyr Antonovych and Mykhaylo Drahomanov recognized her as an important historical figure of Ukrainian origin. Why did Ukrainians seem to be

⁶ Kili was a major fortress, on the lower Danube, conquered by Ottomans in 1484; now a small town in Ukraine. Kefe was the capital of the Ottoman province in the northern Black Sea coast (1475–1771) and a center of the customs zone. See Halil Inalcık, "The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487–1490," *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea*, ed. V. Ostapchuk, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1996): 91–111; today it is the city of Feodosia in the Crimean peninsula, Ukraine.

⁷ See Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, 5: 105–8.

⁸ Cf.: "Al Sgr. fo donnà doe donzele di Rossia bellissime, una alla madre del esso Sgr. e la altra a lui, e zonte in Seraio, la seconda moier qual tiene al presente, haveva gravissimo dolor, e si buttò col viso in terra piangendosi, che la madre la qual havea donà la soa al Sgr. si accorse e la ritolse, e la mandò a uno Sangiaco per moier, e il Sgr. Convenne etiam lui mandar la sua a un altro Sangiaco, perche soa moier saria morta da dolor, sa queste donzelle o pur una di quelle fosse restà nel Seraio." Bragadino qtd. in Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, 5: 483.

so indifferent to the popularity of Roxolana in early modern Western Europe, and why did they not claim her earlier?

These questions can be partly explained by the fact that the Ukrainian polity hardly existed in Roxolana's lifetime. This polity began to take shape only in the mid-nineteenth century, with Antonovych and Drahomanov being prominent leaders of the nascent nationalist process. As a distinct ethnic territory, Ukraine emerged on the former territory of former Kyivan Rus, which after the Mongol conquest was absorbed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Its cultural and ethnic identity was secured by the Orthodox faith of the Rus population, whereas the ruling dynasties and the significant number of subjects in both parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth professed Catholicism. Although it first occurred in the Rus chronicles several decades prior to the Mongol invasion and was also used in Muscovy, the name "Ukraine" became the colloquial name for the Orthodox provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century. In official usage, these territories were referred to as "Rus'" or "Little Rus.'" Under the suzerainty of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the local Ukrainian elite entered the ranks of the ruling class and progressively adopted Polish culture and Catholic religion, whereas the lower classes remained predominantly Orthodox. Ukrainian Cossacks, initially a self-governed host of freebooters that emerged in the Steppe area, assumed the role of the Ukrainian elite, when they claimed the rights of the Polish gentry (*szlachta*) in the sixteenth century. In the second half of the seventeenth century, as a result of a major revolt against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Cossacks founded their own state, which eventually assumed the suzerainty of Muscovy, while its western half was retaken by the Polish Commonwealth. By 1795, the latter ceased to exist, as the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian rulers divided its territories. Then western Ukraine found itself in the hands of the Austrian Emperor. With its territory divided and the upper class filling the ranks of Russian, Austrian, and still dominant Polish gentry and nobility, Ukraine existed only as a geographic zone under the name of "Little Russia" (*Malorossia*).

While Roxolana was widely popular among the literate circles of Western Europe, in Ukraine she was mainly featured in oral tradition. Thus it is possible to detect at least indirect traces of this memory in Ukraine. The reading audience of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth undoubtedly knew the story of Roxolana from *The Turkish Letters* of Ogier de Busbecq, widely published in Western Europe.⁹ Samuel Twardowski, the secretary of the Polish Embassy to Sultan Mustafa in 1622, led by Prince Krzysztof Zbaraski, rather closely retold it in his poem (first published in 1633) about the embassy.¹⁰ He even mentioned her once by the name

⁹ See Galina Yermolenko's essay in Chapter 1.

¹⁰ Samuel Twardowski, *Przeważna legacja Krzysztofa Zbaraskiego od Zygmunta III do soltana Mustafy*, ed. Roman Krzywy (Warszawa [Warsaw]: Instytut badań literackich, 2000), 471.

of *Roksolana* (a Slavic spelling of the name *Roxolana* invented by Busbecq¹¹). In addition, Twardowski mentioned several details unknown to Busbecq, but evidently widely known in that land, namely, that Roxolana was a daughter of a humble Orthodox priest (*podhy pop*) from the Ukrainian town of Rohatyn and that Sultan Süleyman presented her before the Polish King as his (King's) sister.¹² As a Pole and a Catholic, Twardowski was outraged by this fact, and he openly expressed his contempt towards Roxolana. In his eyes, even the wife of a powerful Sultan was merely a "Russian" (*Ruska, Ruskoja*), that is, a member of the lower class, the inferior ethnos, and the inferior faith.

Another member of the ruling class of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, known under the penname "Michalonis Lituanus" ['Mikhail the Lithuanian'], showed more solidarity with Roxolana in his pamphlet, "On the Manners of Tatars, Lithuanians and Muscovites," presented to Polish King Sigismund II August in 1550. With obvious compassion, he described the misery of slavery, from which many of his compatriots suffered, and he mentioned that the favorite wife of the ruling Sultan was also stolen by the Tatars from "our" land ("rapta est ex prouincia nostra").¹³

In 1570, Ivan Novosiltsov, the Ambassador of Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) of Muscovy to Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574), was the first to allege that Roxolana had attempted to protect her former compatriots from Tatar slave raids: "And when Selim-sultan was born to Seleyman [Süleyman], then the czarina pleaded with Seleyman that he do not war with Lithuania, because the czarina, Selim's mother, was Lithuanian by birth [i.e., a Lithuanian subject], and Seleyman was friendly with Lithuania [i.e., Lithuanian Grand Duke] until his death and ordered to Selim-sultan not to go to war with the Lithuanian."¹⁴ The Muscovite ambassador did not mention the source of his information, but it is clear from his report that it was not obtained from his conversations with the Ottoman officials, which ambassadors were required to relate in much detail. Novosiltsov's statement was most probably based on a rumor that could have been picked up anywhere on his way between Moscow and Constantinople. It is thus possible to surmise that rumors about the so-called "special relations" between Polish-Lithuanian and Ottoman realms circulated widely in both countries.

¹¹ See my note in Appendix II of the present collection.

¹² Twardowski, *Przeważna legacyja Krzysztofa Zbaraskiego od Zygmunta III*, 222.

¹³ Michalon Lituanus, *De moribus tartarorum, litvanorum et moschorum* (Basileae [Basel]: C. Waldkirchius, 1615), 12.

¹⁴ "А коли деи у Селеймана родился Селим-салтан, и тогда деи царица просила у Селеймана, чтоб он с Литвою не воевался, потому что царица, Селимова мати, родом литовка, и Сулейман деи с Литовски был в дружбе же и по свой живот, и Селим деи салтану приказал и с Литовским воеватись не велел же." Ivan Novosil'tsov, "Stateinyi spisok I. P. Novosi'l'tsova," *Puteshestviia russkikh poslov XVI-XVII vv.: stateinye spiski*, ed. Dmitrii S. Likhachev (Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka, 1954), 87. Translation by O. Halenko.

And yet it is impossible to connect the origin of the Ukrainian myth of Roxolana with this evidence, because it became known to the public at large only in 1954 (the publication date of Novosiltsov's report), long after the publication of Ukrainian epic songs by Antonovych and Drahomanov. Moreover, Novosiltsov's report contradicts the evidence provided by other sources. In her two letters to Polish King Sigismund II (r. 1548–1573), Roxolana clearly stated that she supported the Sultan's intention to remain at peace with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: "Let Your Majesty know that should any your plea appear before His Imperial Majesty and be mentioned by him to me, I will take my personal interest in it and will say in response ten times more in a positive way and in favor of your Majesty, doing so by the order of my soul."¹⁵

One should not overemphasize the fact that Roxolana corresponded with a foreign monarch. It was part of the Ottoman diplomatic protocol, drawn on the Steppe political tradition, which allowed sovereigns' wives and daughters to partake in the exchange of letters and gifts with foreign rulers.¹⁶ Such an exchange took place only on the occasion of an embassy sent by the Sultan himself. Roxolana's daughter Mihrimah (1522–1578) also sent her letter to Sigismund II with the same embassy.¹⁷ One should also keep in mind a rather cynical observation made by Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha in 1527, when Roxolana already attained a leading position in the Sultan's entourage, that the Crimean Tatars carried out their slave raids in Ukraine disregarding the official state of peace between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish Crown.¹⁸ Neither the available data about the Tatar slave

¹⁵ "V.M. (qu') Elle sache donc que quelconque affaire qu'Elle aura auprès de S. M. l'Empereur et qu'il en fera mention, je m'intéresserai et parlerai dix fois de plus en bien et en faveur de V. M., m'engageant en cela à la reconnoissance de mon âme." Szymon Aszkenazy, "Listy Roksolany," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 10 (1896): 116; translation by O. Halenko. See the summary of this letter in *Katalog dokumentów tureckich: Dokumenty do dziejów polski i krajów osiennych w latach 1455–1672*, eds Zygmunt Abrahamowicz and Ananiasz Zajaczkowski (Warsaw [Warsaw]: PWN, 1959), doc. 99.

¹⁶ For specimens of diplomatic correspondence by wives and daughters of Crimean khans, see Aleksii Malinovskii, "Istoricheskoe i diplomaticheskoe sobranie del, proiskhodivshykh mezhdru rossiiskimi Velikimi Kniaziami i byvshymi v Kryme tsariami s 1462 po 1533 god," *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei*, 33 vols (Odessa, 1863), 5: 178–419; Josef Matuz, *Krimitatarische Urkunden im Reichsarchiv zu Kopenhagen: Mit historisch-diplomatischen und sprachlichen Untersuchungen* (Freiburg: K. Schwarz, 1976), 348, docs XXII–XXVII [the undated letters of the ladies of some Crimean Khans, including the Khan's mother (*anabiyim*), mother of a *qalgay* (*valide-i sultan*), and the "great lady" (*ulu biyim*)]. Joseph Hammer-Purgstall cited the letters exchanged between Roxolana and the first lady of the Persian Shah Tahmasp on occasion of the completion of the Süleymaniye mosque in 1556. See *Histoire de l'Empire ottomane*, 5: 95–7.

¹⁷ *Katalog dokumentów tureckich*, doc. 100, 104.

¹⁸ See n. 10 above.

raids¹⁹ nor the diplomatic activities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, directed at keeping peace on its southern borders,²⁰ point to any decline in slave raiding of Ukraine during Roxolana's lifetime.

Thus, the above-discussed evidence did not come directly from the Ukrainian *milieu*. Ukrainian people might have only kept memory of those Ukrainian women who attained success in captivity by marrying Ottoman nobles. It is impossible to know whether among such women was Anastasia Lisovska, a daughter of an Orthodox priest from the town of Rohatyn, whom one Polish noble identified as "Roxolana." This man was Wencesław Severyn Rzewuski (1785–1831), a Polish magnate, born in Lviv, then part of the Austrian Empire. He was one of the students of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall and co-sponsor of the first European Orientalist journal, *Fundgruben des Oriens/Mines d'Orient* (1809–1818), edited by Hammer-Purgstall.²¹ For both Hammer-Purgstall and Rzewuski, Roxolana was a compatriot, because the Austrian Empire annexed Western Ukraine during the Partitions of Poland in 1772 and 1795. Thus, these two men's claim that Roxolana was born in Rohatyn, then also in Austria's possession, was a clear demonstration of their national pride.

There is, however, indirect evidence that can be associated with the attitudes toward Roxolana on the part of ordinary Ukrainians. The source in question is the epic song about *Baida* (*Kniaz'*) ['Prince'] Dmytro Vyshnevetsky, a popular figure

¹⁹ Out of 14 massive raids carried out between 1474 and 1646 and recorded in Polish chronicles as netting more than 50,000 captives, three took place during Roxolana's tenure at the Ottoman court, namely in 1521, 1533, and 1555. The 1533 raid took place in the same year when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire concluded the first "eternal peace" (that is, a peace treaty that was to be valid until the death of either one of the two monarchs). Two bigger raids were recorded for the years 1571 and 1574, which fell during the reign of Selim II. See Iaroslav Dzyra, "Tataro-turets'ki napady na Ukraïnu XIII–XVI stolit' za khronikamy Bel's'kykh ta Strykovs'koho," *Ukraïns'kyi istoriko-heohrafichnyi zbirnyk*, vol. 1 (Kyiv, 1971): 83–102; and Iaroslav R. Dashkevych, "Iasyr z Ukraïny (XVI-persha polovyna XVII st.) iak istoriko-demohrafichna problema," *Ukraïns'kyi arkheohrafichnyi shchorichnyk*, vol. 2 (new series) (Kyiv, 1993): 40–47.

²⁰ During Roxolana's "reign," the Ottoman Empire concluded two truces (1525, 1528) and two "eternal peaces" (1533, 1555) with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The treaty of 1553 was the first to include a special clause, which stipulated the cessation of the Tatar raids in exchange for an annual tribute to the Crimean khan. See Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th cc.): An Annotated Edition of "Ahdnames" and Other Documents* (Leiden-Boston-Köln [Cologne]: E. J. Brill, 2000), 116–9. Earlier attempts, on the part of Polish ambassadors, to make the Crimean Khanate participant of the treaty were ignored by the Ottoman grand viziers. Cf. Süleyman's 1533 letter to King Zygmunt I, in *Katalog dokumentów tureckich*, doc. 31.

²¹ Following Hammer-Purgstall (*Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, 5:487), Antonovych and Drahomanov wrongly referred to Rzewuski by the initial "St.," which corresponded to "Stanisław." See *Istoričeskiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 237. Ahatanhel Krymsky, relying on this information, used another wrong initial "Stan.," also meaning "Stanisław." See Kryms'kyi, *Istoriia Turechchyny* (Kyiv-Lviv: Olir, 1996), 201, n. 2.

of the time and an adventurer remembered by Ukrainians as the founder of the first Cossack fortified refuge (*sich*).²² He was captured by the Ottomans and executed in Istanbul in 1564, during the reign of Sultan Süleyman. According to the story told in this epic song, hetman Vyshnevetsky, while being hooked by a rib, asked his page (*джурпа*; *dzhura*) to bring him his bow and arrows, and then he shot the Turkish czar, the czarina, and their daughter.

Baida made a shot from his bow—
And hit the czar between the ears,
And czarina—in the back of head,
And the czar's daughter—right in her poor little head.²³

Albeit fantastic on the whole and not accurate chronologically (Süleyman was a widower in 1564, at the time of *Baida*'s death)—which is not uncommon in folklore—this story captured, with remarkable precision, the real situation in the Ottoman dynasty during the life of Sultan Süleyman. Roxolana was the only wife of this sultan; therefore, she alone could have assumed the role of the empress (*tsarytsia*) in the eyes of Ukrainians of that time. Also princess Mihrimah, the only daughter of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and Roxolana, was a very influential member of the Ottoman dynasty²⁴ and a known figure in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, at least judging by her letters to Polish kings.²⁵ Therefore, it is most probable that Roxolana and Mihrimah were well known even among ordinary Ukrainians. The epic song about *Baida* Vyshnevetsky does not attest to any positive attitude toward Roxolana, thus reflecting an understandable resentment, on the part of their potential victims, to members of the Ottoman dynasty who were responsible for the horrors of slave raids. It can thus be argued that Roxolana's Ukrainian contemporaries held her as a Turkish empress (*tsarytsia*), and not as one of their own. Nothing in early modern folklore suggests that she was dear to her former compatriots.

Why then did Antonovych and Drahomanov see the features of Roxolana in Marusia Bohuslavka, the main character of the *duma* "Marusia Bohuslavka"?

In looking for an answer to this seemingly speculative question, it would be helpful first to consider alternative possibilities available to Antonovych and

²² Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, "Un condottiere lithuanien du XVI^e siècle, le prince Dimitrij Višneveckij et l'origine de la seč' zaporogue d'après les archives ottomans," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 10 (1969): 258–79.

²³ "Стрелив Байда із лука— / Попав царя помежи уха, / Царицю—в потилицю, / Цареву дочку— / в саму головочку." Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoricheskiia piesni malorussakago naroda*, 1: 147.

²⁴ For example, Mihrimah, who was married to Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, had two major charitable complexes built in her name in Istanbul. Finally she was buried alongside her father. See M. Çağatay Uluçay, *Padisahların kadınları ve kızları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), 38–9.

²⁵ See n. 17 above.

Drahomanov in Ukrainian folklore, which was the principal historical source for the romantic nineteenth-century historians. To be sure, the two scholars had a large pool of folklore characters to their choice. In the foreword to the aforementioned collection of Ukrainian folklore, they named as their sources more than a dozen of other publications, which appeared in both the Austrian Empire and the Russian Empire. Among those were the first anthology compiled by Mykola Tsertelev, as well as collections by Mykhailo Maksymovych, Platon Lukashevych, Waćław Zaleski, and Żegota Pauli.²⁶ These publications were inspired by the romantic belief that folklore was a manifestation of people's spirit.

"Marusia Bohuslavka" was in fact only one *duma* in a series of other *dumas* that were, in various ways, concerned with the challenges of the "Turkish slavery." There exist 19 such epics, which make up more than one-third of the known 52 pieces of this genre.²⁷ Seven of these epics tell stories of the Ukrainian Cossacks returning from their raids against Turks and/or dying in enemy land.²⁸ The remaining 12 epics show other Ukrainians in captivity.²⁹ Disproving the widespread nationalist assertions that the emergence of the Cossak movement was a response of the Ukrainian people to slave raids, these epics do not call for military containment of the raids. Rather, the poems set up models of behavior in captivity for Ukrainians, all of whom, disregarding their social positions, could not be safe from the Tatar threat. All the models and patterns of behavior, suggested in these *dumas*, are constructed on the basis of a quite accurate knowledge of Ottoman

²⁶ Nikolai Tsertelev, *Opyt sobraniia starinnykh malorossiiskikh pieseni* (Sanktpeterburg [St.-Petersburg]: K. Krai, 1819); Mikhail Maksimovich, *Malorossiiskie piesni* (Moskva [Moscow]: A. Semen, 1827), *Ukrainskii narodnyia piesni* (Moskva [Moscow]: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1834), and *Sbornik ukrainskikh piesen* (Kiev, 1849); Platon Lukashevich, *Malorossiiskie i chervonorusskii narodnyia dумы* (Sanktpeterburg [St.-Petersburg]: E. Prats, 1836); Waćław Zaleski, *Piesni polskie i ruskie ludu galicyjskiego* (Lwów [Lviv]: F. Piller, 1833); and Żegota Pauli, *Pieśni ludu ruskiego w Galicyi* (Lwów [Lviv]: Nakl. K. Jablonskiego, 1839–1840).

²⁷ All the calculations are based on the survey of Ukrainian *dumas* by Marko Plyset's'kyi, *Ukrains'ki narodni dумы: siuzhety i obrazy* (Kyiv: Kobza, 1994), 364.

²⁸ The titles of these *dumas* are as follows: "Плач зозулі" ['The Cuckoo's Cry'], "Федір Безродний" ['Fedir No-Kin'], "Втеча трьох братів з Азова" ['Escape of Three Brothers from Azov'], "Втеча з турецької неволі морем" ['Escape from Turkish Captivity by Sea'], "Буря на Чорному морі" ['Storm on the Black Sea'], "Олексій Попович" ['Oleksi, a Priest's son'], and "Матяш Старий" ['Old Matias'].

²⁹ The titles of these *dumas* are as follows: "Смерть Корецького" ['Death of Prince Koretsky'] (otherwise known as "Пісня про Байду" ['Song of Baida']), "Івась Коновченко" ['Ivas Kopovchenko'], "Невільники на каторзі" ['Slaves on a Galley'], "Плач невідьника про викуп" ['A Slave's Cry for a Ransom'], "Сокіл та соколя" ['An Old Hawk and a Young Hawk'], "Самійло Кішка" ['Samiilo Kishka'], "Іван Богуславець" ['Ivan Bohuslavets'], "Маруся Богуславка" ['Marusia Bohuslavka'], "Коваленко" ['Kovalenko'], "Дівка-бранка" ['A Captive Girl'], "Втеча матері з сином з турецької неволі" ['Escape of a Mother and Her Son from Turkish Captivity'], and "Сестра і брат" ['Sister and Brother'].

realities, including slavery.³⁰ They served as the basis for wide discussions on the challenges of slavery in a society exposed to slave hunts by the Crimean Tatars and other Ottomans. Folklore thus served as a sort of medium for the illiterate Ukrainian community of peasants and Cossacks, which helped to formulate and to accumulate collective experience vis-a-vis Ottoman slavery.

It is worth noting that *Turechchyna* [‘the Ottoman Empire’] was not depicted in Ukrainian folklore in a strictly negative sense, as a land of an alien religion or a source of suffering and death. Surprisingly, it was also presented as a land tempting Ukrainians with prospects of wealth and luxury:

You, the Turkish land, the Muslim faith,
You are replete with silver and gold,
And expensive drinks;
Only, a poor slave is deprived in this world.³¹

Such naïve but frank admittance of pleasures of life in Turkey can be taken as an implicit recognition of the prospects of assimilation for slaves. It points to the fact that the Ukrainian community recognized slavery not only as a challenge for an individual, but also a challenge for the entire community.

It is then logical to assume that the main idea of the 12 *dumas* was to encourage Ukrainians, who might fall into slavery, to do everything possible to return home. Conversion to Islam and adoption of the Ottoman way of life were reprobated not just as a mortal sin *per se*, but rather as a desertion of relatives and community, and a refusal to return home. Islam is cursed precisely for being the cause of separation between relatives:

You, cursed Muslim faith!
You bring separation to Christians in this world!
Not once have you separated a husband from his wife,
Or a brother from his sister,
Or a relative from his kin.³²

Converts to Islam were looked down upon with scorn for deserting their comrades and compatriots, rather than for professing a different religion. Yet, the poems

³⁰ Although recorded in the nineteenth century or later, most of the *dumas* about slavery seemed to avoid rough adjustments to the taste of the peasant audience; therefore, their narratives retained many details that changed their meanings in the course of time.

³¹ “Ти, земле Турецькая, віро бусурманська, / Ти єсть наповнена сребром, златом / І дорогими напитками; / Тільки ж бідному невольнику на світі невільно.” Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoricheskiiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 1: 94. Translation by O. Halenko.

³² “Проклята віро бусурманська! / Розлука ти на світі християнська! / Що ти не одного розлучила мужа з жоною, / Або брата з сестрою, / Альбо кровну родину з роудиною.” Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoricheskiiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 1: 91. Translation by O. Halenko.

emphasized the importance for Ukrainians to preserve their loyalty to the Orthodox faith and the family, and they praised cooperation among enslaved compatriots. Therefore, even an exemplary renegade, such as Liash Buturlak from the *duma* “Samiilo Kishka,” who gathered his share of unflattering epithets in the beginning of the narrative, is ultimately shown as a helper of Cossacks in their escape from Turkey across the Black Sea. In stressing the importance of preserving strong familial and communal ties in slavery, the *dumas* prescribed only two ways of regaining liberty: divine help, which came as a reward for one’s loyalty to family and brothers-in-arms, and mutual assistance.

The models of behavior in slavery were clearly gendered, according to the different life prospects for male and female slaves. In the observation of Panteleimon Kulish, a prominent nineteenth-century Ukrainian historian and writer, *dumas* were even termed differently as songs of women and songs of Cossacks.³³ All male captives, unless they were executed, were expected to return home. Armed violence (sometimes paired with deceit of the enemy) was seen as the only honorable way for men to escape from slavery. Hence all male characters of *dumas* were Cossacks, that is, professional warriors.

The recommendation for use of violence for men, however, essentially limited the social appeal of such a model. In some epics, the behavior of male characters resorting to violence in order to regain liberty seemed neither rational nor moral. For example, in the *duma* “Іван Богуславець” [“Ivan Bohuslavets”], the main character, a Cossack leader (*otaman*), succumbs to the marriage proposal on the part of a wealthy Turkish lady in exchange for liberating his brothers-in-arms, whom she has been keeping in prison. Once he achieved his goal, however, this Cossack kills his wife. It is obvious that in the eyes of the *duma*’s readers, even assistance to his compatriots was not a sufficient justification for such a treacherous act as marrying an enemy. In order to cover up for this disgrace, the *duma* advances an unfailing argument, accusing the Turkish lady of an attempt to forcefully convert her Cossack husband to Islam.

Such fictional efforts to find moral justification for violence prove that appeal to violence as a means for liberation from captivity could hardly have been broadly recognized by the Ukrainian community. It is quite understandable, if one takes into account that the vast majority of Ukrainian captives were peasants, who did not have military training, and that resorting to violence would ensure their death rather than liberation.

In contrast, Ukrainian female slaves were not expected to return home. Their mission was only to help male compatriots to flee back to Ukraine. Albeit hardly invigorating, this “female” model could count on a much wider, if not universal, appeal for the Ukrainian audience. This is because it exemplified the reality of a lifelong slavery, given the fact that women lost both the ability and the incentive to return home once they entered their owners’ households. Under such circumstances,

³³ Panteleimon Kulish, *Zapiski o iuzhnoi Rusi*, 2 vols (Sanktpeterburg [St.-Petersburg]: A. Iakobson, 1856–1857, Kyiv: Dnipro, 1994), 1: 215.

lifetime female slaves could do little for their Ukrainian community, except for helping compatriot slaves.

Of course, such a model of behavior in slavery was equivalent to a plea for self-sacrifice, which was difficult to make attractive. Even the most insistent calls for self-sacrifice for would-be lifelong slaves could hardly trigger a positive response, unless they were paired with a symmetrical reward. It was not so easy to find such a reward; therefore, four out of five female protagonists of Ukrainian *dumas* look neither inventive nor realistic. *Dumas* “Дівка-бранка” [‘A Captive Girl’] and “Втеча матері з сином з турецької неволі” [‘Escape of a Mother with her Son from Turkish Captivity’] tell stories of a miraculous delivery from slavery. In the *duma* “Коваленко” [‘Kovalenko’], a slave girl brings Cossacks the instruments hidden in a loaf of bread, which they use for a successful escape. The *duma* “Сестра і брат” [‘Sister and Brother’] is an elegy, in which a sister expresses a longing for her brother.

It was only the epic poem “Маруся Богуславка” [‘Marusia Bohuslavka’; ‘Marusia of Bohuslav’] that suggested a rather realistic balance between self-sacrifice and reward. The reward for helping compatriots was the absolution of several mortal sins, such as conversion to Islam, adultery, and gluttony. Such a model made this epic the most powerful and artistically refined answer to the challenges of Turkish slavery.

“Маруся Богуславка” tells the story of a female slave, Marusia, a daughter of an Orthodox priest, who became a concubine to a powerful Turk, but despite all the pleasures of her status, described by her as “Turkish luxury” (“розкіш турецька”) and “accursed relish” (“лакомство нещасне”), she sets free seven hundred Cossack slaves whom her Turkish master kept in the dungeon. The woman refuses to return to Ukraine together with the released Cossacks on the grounds that she had already converted to Islam and accepted, even if involuntarily, her comfortable lifestyle in Ottoman captivity:

As I have turned Turk, turned Muslim,
For Turkish luxury,
For accursed relish.³⁴

Yet Marusia Bohuslavka expresses her longing for her family, asking the Cossacks to relate the news about her to her parents, who live in her native town of Bohuslav³⁵ (whence her sobriquet “Bohuslavka”). Thus, this *duma* relates a realistic story of a person with conflicting loyalties.

The poem did not state what consequences Marusia’s actions might have entailed once her master discovered the treason, leaving the conflict between the divided loyalties of the slave woman without a rational explanation. On the one hand, this character demonstrates the continuing commitment to her compatriots

³⁴ “Бо я вже потурчилась, побусурменилась, / Для роскоши турецької, / Для лакомства нещасного.” See Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoričeskiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 1: 233. Translation by O. Halenko.

³⁵ Now a town situated 125 km south of Kyiv.

(hence to her motherland), her family, and even the Orthodox creed as she carries out her heroic deed on the holy day of Easter. On the other hand, she has definitely accepted her slave status. Marusia's heroic act in such controversial circumstances creates an impression of her selfless service to her motherland, which is appropriate for an epic story. But in compliance with the dominant positivist philosophy and nationalistic paradigm of the mid-nineteenth century, which mistook folklore for a mirror reflection of reality, two editors presented, rather banally, the epic story of Marusia Bohuslavka as a true lifestory (*sud'ba*) of a Ukrainian elite slave woman, not a mere chattel. From this point of view, Roxolana represented a full analogy to Marusia Bohuslavka. The editors validated their conclusion by quoting Mikhalon Lituanus, who also cited (although for a different reason) the wife of the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman, and the mother and the wife of the Crimean Khan Sahib Guiray (r. 1533–1551) as examples of slave women who were taken into households of important and wealthy Ottomans.³⁶ In this way, the real historical figures, such as Roxolana, were merged with the fictitious epic characters, such as Marusia Bohuslavka, into a category of “elite slave women,” as one would term them today. Thus individual features of a fictional character, recognized as typical, were extended to a real person, and so Marusia Bohuslavka became a prototype for the construction of the Roxolana image in contemporary Ukraine. The case of mutual help between slave compatriots, a slave woman and the Cossacks, articulated clearly in this epic poem made it particularly appealing to the awakening national consciousness of Ukrainians.

This epic was recorded by Kulish in 1853, and it was published three years later.³⁷ Twenty years had passed before Antonovych and Drahomanov, using the methodology of their time, decided to mix this epic with Hammer-Purgstall's statement about Roxolana as a daughter of the Orthodox priest from Rohatyn and about other Ukrainian members of the Ottoman dynasty. This connection proved to be irresistible to Ukrainian intellectuals and nationalists. Three years later Kulish, the first publisher of this epic, referred to the information reported by Hammer-Purgstall in his *History of the Reunification of Rus*.³⁸ After that point, two figures—

³⁶ “Красивая пленница, попадая к знатному человеку, могла занять высокое положение, какое занимает в думе ‘дівка-бранка, Маруся, попівна Богуславка,’ особенно если принимала ислам. Обращении татар и турок с красивыми пленницами и о судьбе некоторых русских пленниц, аналогической с судьбою Маруси Богуславки, Михалон Литвин, описав [...] обращение с обыкновенными пленницами, говорит так ...” [“A beautiful captive woman, having been purchased by a noble man, could take a very high position in Turkish society, as did “the captive girl, Marusia, the priest's daughter, Bohuslavka,” particularly if she converted to Islam. This is how Mikhalon Litvin writes [...] about the treatment of beautiful captive women by the Tatars and Turks and about their fates ...”] See Antonovich and Dragomanov, *Istoričeskiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 1: 236. Translation by G. Yermolenko.

³⁷ Kulish, *Zapiski o iuzhnoi Rusi*, 210–15.

³⁸ Panteleimon Kulish, *Istoriia vossoiedineniia Rusi*, 3 vols (Moskva [Moscow], 1877), 3: 347.

Marusia Bohuslavka and Roxolana—became inseparable. Even Ahatanhel Krymsky, in his *History of Turkey* (1924), routinely quoted this epic as evidence of an elite slave woman of Ukrainian origin and immediately afterward switched his narrative to Roxolana.³⁹ As a longtime and most authoritative Orientalist historian of Ukraine, Krymsky helped to strengthen the parallel between Roxolana and Marusia Bohuslavka, which eventually became accepted as a historical fact.

Thus, it may be concluded that the excessive veneration of Roxolana in Ukraine took its origins first in the national pride of two Austrian Orientalists who discovered that the famous Sultana was born on the territory that had just come into the possession of the Austrian emperors. Then two Ukrainian historians claimed her for the Ukrainian nation. Like the intellectuals of other nascent nations of the nineteenth century, they relied on folklore as authentic historical source. They assimilated the epic personage of Marusia Bohuslavka, who helped her slave compatriots, with Roxolana. It was an error, but it passed unnoticed in the time of national consolidation in Ukraine, and it was this mistake that set off the campaign of excessive veneration of Roxolana for her imagined patriotism.

The analysis of Ukrainian epics also reveals the fact that they reflected a wide discourse about the challenges of “Turkish slavery,” which developed in Ukrainian society contemporaneously with the epoch of slave raids. How exactly the Turkish slavery influenced Roxolana’s career at the imperial Ottoman court is a subject for another study.

³⁹ See Kryms'kyi, *Istoriia Turechchyny*, 198–213.

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Chapter 6

Roxolana's Memoirs as a Garden of Intertextual Delight

Maryna Romanets

Oscar Wilde's celebrated statement, "It is only the unimaginative who ever invents. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything,"¹ prefigures Roland Barthes's no less famous conceptualization of every text as a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."² Barthes defines any creative act as an absorption or transformation of earlier existing narratives and discourses into new configurations. Although attaching a text to various precursors is doubtless part of the postmodern tendency towards self-reflexivity and self-consciousness, intertextuality, as a strategy to negotiate a way through a "network of previous forms and representations,"³ plays a particularly significant role within contemporary Ukrainian literature. Along with its own extensively developed but to a considerable extent disjunctive and fragmented tradition, Ukrainian writing has inherited various forms of imperial cultural practices and discourses, simultaneously being subjected to multicultural influxes and products of both neocolonial expansion and globalization. The subversive postcolonial stance of postindependence Ukrainian literary practices reaches beyond the postmodern limits of deconstructing existing orthodoxies into the domain of social and political action to conceive, through textual politics, a political strategy of empowerment and enunciation. By questioning the homogeneity of grand narratives and thus resisting closure, the ongoing project of artistic and literary decolonization in Ukraine makes all kinds of histories open to revision, rewriting, and contestation. These competing discourses, none of which can claim any greater reliability than other contenders, are being continuously engaged in epistemic dialogues with a diverse array of intertexts that carry on a process of textual disruption, imitation, and modification.

Yuri Vynnychuk—"one of the groundbreakers of the erotic genre in contemporary Ukrainian literature" ("один із першопроходців еротичного

¹ Qtd. in David Cowart, *Literary Symbiosis: The Reconfigured Text in Twentieth-Century Writing* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 1.

² Roland Barthes, *Image—Music—Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 146.

³ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 194.

жанру в сучасній українській літературі”),⁴ who was termed, for his creative productivity, its “symbolic phallus” (“символічний фалос”) by Andrii Bodnar⁵—partakes in far-reaching intertextual games.⁶ He consistently displays creative and whimsical anarchy by juggling different conventions, genres, canons, and cultural codes, new and old alike. Having been turned into a space for playing out a dialogic relationship with a number of texts—literary, cinematic, and historical—his *Життя гаремноє* [*Life in the Harem*] (1996)⁷ demythologizes and demystifies one of the Ukrainian cultural icons of ideal womanhood through its hybridization with the conventional Orientalist fantasies of Western libertine pornography. Vynnychuk fabricates a pseudo-autobiographical manuscript of a historical figure, Roxolana (Nastia Lisovska), the most cherished concubine of Süleyman (Suleiman) the Magnificent, who legally married the Sultan and became the first really powerful woman in the Ottoman dynasty. In fact, it is the rise of the political power of Roxolana “that many historians (Westerners and Turks alike) pinpoint as the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire.”⁸

The spellbinding story of Roxolana, who was captured by the Ottoman vassals during their slave raid into Ukraine in 1520 and donated to the imperial harem by a nobleman (he had bought her at a slave market and was greatly impressed by her knowledge of Greek and Latin),⁹ has exerted its allure on Ukrainian writers, composers, and artists’ imagination. They have been busily creating, especially throughout the last century, their male cult of an eminent Hurrem Sultan.¹⁰ The

⁴ “Iurii Vynnychuk,” *Potiah* 76: *Tsentral'no-ievropeis'kyi literaturnyi chasopys* 1 (2002): 131. All translations from Ukrainian are mine.

⁵ Andrii Bodnar, “Zamist' peredmovy,” introduction to *Mal'va Landa*, by Iurii Vynnychuk (Lviv: Piramida, 2004), 5.

⁶ Vynnychuk was also the first editor of the erotic magazine *Гульвіса* [*Lovelace*] published in Lviv in the 1990s.

⁷ Iurii Vynnychuk, *Zhyttiie haremnoie* (Lviv: Piramida, 1996). Vynnychuk has also authored a labyrinthine *Mal'va Landa* (2004), saturated with grotesque eroticism, and *Vesniiani ihry v osinnikh sadakh* (2005), in which he claims to have turned all the women he loved into literature.

⁸ Filiz Turhan, *The Other Empire: British Romantic Writings about the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 51. A more recent publication by Galina Yermolenko counterbalances this negative attitude towards Roxolana by introducing an East European perspective featuring her as a national symbol. See her “Roxolana: ‘The Greatest Empresse of the East’,” *The Muslim World* 95.2 (2005): 231–48.

⁹ Serhiy Makhun, “Slavic Factor at the Court of Suleiman I,” *The Day* 15 Jan. 2002. 14 June 2008. <<http://www.day.kiev.ua/258338/>>.

¹⁰ Roxolana’s life has also inspired a number of Western narratives. Among earlier works, she was portrayed as one of the characters in Fulke Greville’s *Mustapha* (1603), William Davenant’s *Siege of Rhodes* (Part 2, 1659), and Roger Boyle’s *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668); and referred to by Francis Bacon in his “Of Empire” (*Essays*, 1597–1625). For more details, see Galina Yermolenko’s essay in Chapter 2 of the present collection.

escalation of the Roxolana myth, which turned into virtual “Roxolanomania,”¹¹ arrived at a new turn of the spiral with the 26-part TV serial monster.¹² Based, in the best case scenario, on five pages of 50-year-old factual material,¹³ this soap opera has summed up the efforts of literary Roxolaniads to produce a bizarre crossbreed of romantic sexualized patriotism and establish a conspicuous Roxolana stereotype.¹⁴

As Oksana Zabuzhko observes, none of these works focused on Nastia Lisovska's versatile and truly Renaissance personality as an outstanding diplomat, *intrigante*, benefactor, and reformist,¹⁵ who prefigured the powerful women of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁶ Leslie P. Peirce writes that the sixteenth century, termed an age of kings, was also an “age of queens—among them Anne Boleyn, Margaret of Navarre, Elizabeth I, Catherine de Médicis, and Mary Queen of Scots. The Ottomans too produced a ‘queen’ in Hurrem Sultan,” who rose to the position of great prestige and influence and whose unprecedented alliance with the Sultan was a “symptom of a more profound change within the dynasty” involving the issues of monarchy, family, and power.¹⁷ Instead, Ukrainian authors were hypnotized by Süleyman and Roxolana's love story and, thus, they

¹¹ Oleksander Halenko, “Vytivky ukrains'koho oriientalizmu,” *Krytyka* 4 (April 1999): 12.

¹² *Roksolana*, dir. Borys Nebiiieridze, perf. Ol'ha Sums'ka and Anatolii Khostikoiev, Ukrtelefil'm, 1997.

¹³ Halenko, “Vytivky ukrains'koho oriientalizmu,” 13.

¹⁴ For example, one of the businesses in Ukraine that deals with marriage, dating, and escort is called *Roxolana Marriage and Travel*. Its services are featured on different websites advertising “Beautiful Ladies from Sevastopol, Crimea,” evidently aimed at foreign consumers as the language of the sites is English: Foreign Women Megasite <<http://www.foreignwomenmegasite.com/links/link1.html>>; Mail Order Brides <<http://www.bridesbymail.com/mob/europe.html>>; Foreign Brides <<http://www.alldatinglinks.com/mailore.html>>; Date-World <<http://www.date-world.com/>> (all accessed 14 March 2007). What adds a sardonic twist to this enterprise is that during the Süleymanic period (1520–1566), which was the golden age of the Ottoman Empire embracing vast territory and diverse variety of peoples as the result of its successful military campaigns, Ukraine became a donor of concubines for Turkish harems. In addition, one of the largest slave markets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and on, which provided odalisques for harems in the Sublime Porte, was located in Caffa (Kaffa; Kefe; now Feodosia) in the Crimea. Of course, the idea of trafficking is probably not the one that the agency intended to highlight; Roxolana most likely figures here as an exemplum of a success story and illustration of the natural charms and attractions Ukraine can offer in terms of specific human resources.

¹⁵ Oksana Zabuzhko, *Khroniky vid Fortinbrasa: vybrana eseistyka 90-kh* (Kyiv: Fakt, 1999), 168.

¹⁶ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 90.

¹⁷ Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 58.

romantically fetishized Roxolana as an object of imperial desire as if forging their own responses to the sexual opportunities of empire. Such a symbolic role assigned to their female compatriot implicitly involves, among other things, the colonizer/colonized dichotomy. Zabuzhko argues that the fact that Roxolana's status as a love slave could generate a surge of patriotic feelings points towards Ukrainian males' acceptance of their own subservience in relationship to the Russian Empire,¹⁸ which had been consistently implementing a widely spread colonial homology between sexual and political dominance. Ukrainian male mythmakers, both past and present, seem to identify with Roxolana, thus apparently conceding to the conventional colonial strategy of effeminization—when colonizing men apply feminine qualities to colonized males in order to delegitimize, discredit, and disempower them. Because the cult of masculinity traditionally rationalized imperial rule by equating an aggressive, muscular, chivalric model of manliness with racial, national, cultural, and moral superiority, masculinity has become a “tropological site” on which, as Revathi Krishnaswamy writes elsewhere, “many uneven and contradictory axes of domination and subordination in colonial society are simultaneously constituted and contested.”¹⁹ It was not only the colonizers who propagated the notion of effeminess, resting the entire structure of colonial homosociality on the ideologeme of effeminacy, but also the Ukrainian elite that internalized such colonial representations, thereby providing a fertile ground for discursive practices that display power in gendered and sexualized terms.

All of the above factors, to some extent, into Vynnychuk's *Життя гаремное* [*Life in the Harem*]. Using Roxolana, who has been admitted to the Ukrainian national pantheon of heroes,²⁰ in the harem setting that she truly enjoys, Vynnychuk plays with the cult of Ukrainian cultural symbols. *Життя* [*Life*], which the author considers his “most brutal” book,²¹ provides yet another highly peculiar page of his “imaginary history” of Ukraine that seems to explore the possibilities and limits of meaning in the representation of the past. In one of his interviews, Vynnychuk recalls how he decided to turn this project into literary mystification. Prior to the publication of the novel in installments in the now defunct Lviv newspaper *Post-nocmyn* [*Post-progress*], an article about the discovery of Roxolana's diary

¹⁸ Zabuzhko, *Khroniky vid Fortinbrasa*, 168.

¹⁹ Revathi Krishnaswamy, *Effeminism: The Economy of Colonial Desire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 8.

²⁰ Roxolana's special status in the Ukrainian collective imaginary can be exemplified by an explanatory reference to Süleyman the Magnificent as primarily the “husband of our famous Roxolana” (“чоловік [...] нашої знаменитої Роксолани”) and then as “one of the most outstanding and wise Turkish sultans” (“од[ин] з найвидатніших та наймудріших турецьких султанів”), in Valerii Shevchuk's fundamental two-volume work on the Ukrainian Baroque, *Renesans. Rannie baroko*, vol. 1 of *Muza Roksolans'ka: Ukraïns'ka literatura XVI–XVII stolit'* (Kyiv: Lybid', 2004), 237–8.

²¹ Vadym Dyshkant, “‘Ukraïns'ki pys'mennyky ne zhyvut' z literatury’: Iurii Vynnychuk pro fantastyku, mistyfikatsii ta real'nist',” *Den'* 4 Nov. 2004. 14 June, 2008. <<http://www.day.kiev.ua/126816/>>.

appeared. It provoked an ensuing public scandal around the “immoral” subject matter of the recovered manuscript as *Soiuz Ukrainok* [‘The Ukrainian Women Union’] wrote an open letter to Vynnychuk, printed in the daily *Молодь України* [*Youth of Ukraine*], in which they demanded the immediate termination of the publication of the diary. The enraged patriots argued that the dissemination of the discovery is detrimental to Roxolana’s illustrious image, and they supported their adamant claim by numerous quotations stating that Roxolana’s sole mission in the harem was to enlighten the Sultan about Ukraine.²² Vynnychuk’s simulated diary has become a site where literature and ideology become inseparably intertwined, thus provoking a slanted approach to historical events infused by a misplaced “patriotism.” While perusing the discursive field within which the Roxolana myth continues to operate, Vynnychuk engages in a combative relationship with the canonical texts by changing them from something fixed to something modifiable and endlessly open.

Interestingly, this is not Vynnychuk’s first project aimed at disorienting publishers, readers, and, by extension, the system. He fabricated an epic, *Плач над градом Кия* [*Lament over the City of Kyi*] (1984), supposedly written by a fictitious Irish monk, Rianhabar, who allegedly survived the siege and pillage of Kyiv by Batu Khan’s Mongol-Tatar armies in 1240. Vynnychuk’s “translation” from Gaelic was published in a then reputable literary newspaper, *Літературна Україна* [*Literary Ukraine*], and in the no less highly regarded journal, *Жовтень* [*October*] (1984, no. 9),²³ and was referred to in scholarly publications and in *Українська літературна енциклопедія* [*The Ukrainian Literary Encyclopedia*].²⁴ His Macphersonian undertaking, being an exquisite aesthetic gesture of evasively political dissent, signified an intellectual revolt both against the suffocating atmosphere of Soviet cultural dogma and against Soviet historiography, which was preoccupied with purposeful and ideological “objectivity” and “scientificity.”

While writing his similarly subversive version of Roxolana’s life, Vynnychuk clearly articulates and develops those aspects of Roxolana’s career that evidently captivated his predecessors and contemporaries but that were carefully self-censored and suppressed. He complements and completes the silences of his precursor texts by amplifying their sexual overtones. By producing an erotic manual and thus transgressing a “sacred boundary” of quality literature and its moral stance, the author mounts an attack on repressive social codes and heavy-handed morality, albeit in the process betraying his particular brand of post-Soviet masculinity. In his attempt to provoke the reader to ponder how best to speak of lust and desire beyond cliché, he makes the idiom of “high” porn even higher because his language is opulently stylized through transpositions of an obsolete

²² Dyshkant, “‘Ukraïns'ki pys'mennyky ne zhyvut' z literatury’.”

²³ Dyshkant, “‘Ukraïns'ki pys'mennyky ne zhyvut' z literatury’.”

²⁴ R. I. Dotsenko, “Irlands'ka literatura,” *Ukraïns'ka literaturna entsyklopediia*, vol. 2, eds I. O. Dzeverin et al. (Kyiv: Ukraïns'ka radians'ka entsyklopediia im. M. P. Bazhana, 1990), 332.

Ukrainian lexis that simulates the authenticity of the sixteenth-century text in a very self-conscious manner. At the beginning of the memoir, Roxolana explains:

I have read writings about love transcribed from Greek women and also from Saracen women, but never have I heard about a Ruthenian female writing such things. That is why, with my memory sound and my reason integral, I want to do a favor for all those who find joy and delight in love, so that later on they refine love-making and not look at it askance (that is, regard it as licentiousness).²⁵

While featuring Roxolana as the first Ukrainian grand dame of sexual liberation, Vynnychuk, in passing, mimics numerous feminist projects of the discovery and reconstruction of women's literary tradition, further empowering his narrator through the discussion of taboo subjects. Simultaneously, his narrative runs counter to those produced since the beginning of the eighteenth century, when European travelers' tales about voyages to the Middle East became a popular genre and images of despotic sultans and desperate slave girls comprised a central part of an emerging liberal feminist discourse featuring the harem as an "inherently oppressive institution."²⁶ Furthermore, Roxolana's story becomes both an erotic confession of her personal experiences and a set of instructions in lovemaking for public use, utilizing the conventions of *Bahname*, the Turkish sixteenth-century erotic guide made popular in Europe in the nineteenth century alongside the Indian *Kama Sutra* and the Arabic *The Perfumed Garden*.

Having laid out the scene in the Imperial Harem of Süleyman the Magnificent, the writer does not attempt to present it as the locus of power in the Ottoman Empire, with an extremely organized system of administration and hierarchy. Instead, by positioning himself in relation to the imagined conceptual frameworks attributed to the "ideal harem of the generic stereotype,"²⁷ Vynnychuk turns it into a lascivious sexual playground in which subordination is broken, and concubines, bored to death, delight in lesbianism and indulge in erotic games with eunuchs. He enacts sexuality as a ritual with a highly elaborate code in the place that has become one of the biggest mystifications of Orientalism, which mirrored Western psychosexual needs and provided the space on which to project fantasies of illicit eroticism. In the imaginary of the dominant Orientalist discourse, the

²⁵ "Читала юж-єм писанія о коханню од грекинь списані, од сарацинок також, іно нігде не чула, жеби русинка тоє писала. Прето будучи в зуполной пам'яті і цілому розумі, сим хочу прислугу вчинити для всіх, которії в коханню знаходять радість і втіху, ажеби надалі то єще кунштовній справовали і не гляділи на тоє спросно (себто не вбачали розпусти)." Vynnychuk, *Zhytiie haremmoie*, 6.

²⁶ Joyce Zonana, "The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of *Jane Eyre*," *Signs* 18 (Spring 1993): 594.

²⁷ Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 183.

harem figures as a polygamous space animated by different forms of tyranny (from despot to women, from eunuchs to women, from mistress to slave, from favorite to rival); of excess (the multitude of women, the opulence of the interior, the passions of the despot); and of perversion (the barbarity of polygamy, the violence of castration, the sapphism of the women locked up without "real" men and the illicit affairs carried out behind the despot's back). All these things are found deplorable and enticing by turn.²⁸

The mesmerizing, over-amplified powers of the great seraglio entrenched in the European imagination arrested, as Rana Kabbani writes in her analyses of English translations from Oriental texts, the "perception of even the most gifted scholars" as its "shadow fell heavily on the landscape they traveled through, so that they hardly saw anything at all of the details before them."²⁹ In fact, however, as Peirce contends in an examination of major myths about the Ottoman Empire, sex was not the fundamental dynamic of the harem, which was ruled rather by family politics.³⁰ Peirce continues that, according to the "more astute and well informed of European observers[,] ... the imperial harem was more like a nunnery in its hierarchical organization and the enforced chastity of the great majority of its members."³¹

While playing with one of the most pervasive myths of the West, with the harem as its central symbol, Vynnychuk's fake memoir draws on the nineteenth-century pornographic convention in the manner of *The Lustful Turk* (1828) and other "obscene novels obtainable at the seedier bookstalls of Paris, with their moustache-twirling Sultans and cowering slave-girls."³² For example, in *The Seducing Cardinal's Amours* (1830) and *Scenes in the Seraglio* (between 1820 and 1830), the imaginary harem as the "garden of delight" is featured as a staple concept, and the confessional letter is used as a narrative strategy.³³ Likewise, Vynnychuk adopts this mode of representation that allows him to portray his character as both subject and object of erotic desire. In doing this, he imports the Western tradition, which Ukraine has "missed," together with sexual revolution and other matters related to the body.

In constructing his genealogies of Ukrainian female sexuality and enacting it on the traditionally masculine arena of Orientalized sexual fantasy, the writer employs, in addition to the use of generic Orientalist tropes, yet another discursive strategy that alludes to numerous captivity narratives that, from the late medieval period through the eighteenth century, provided increasingly detailed accounts of

²⁸ Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism*, 182–3.

²⁹ Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myth of Orient: Devise and Rule* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 66.

³⁰ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 3.

³¹ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 6.

³² Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 442.

³³ Lisa Z. Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 42.

Europeans held captive in the Middle East, America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.³⁴ In a warped way, because it revolves entirely around bodies, Vynnychuk's text seems to follow almost unfailingly main characteristics of the genre outlined by Joe Snader: premium on empirical inclusiveness, on a broad range of experience, and on all the captive "witnessed or heard reported from other captives."³⁵ The first chapter of the novel relates Roxolana's arrival at Constantinople, vested with exotic mystery; her first impressions of the sumptuously decorated interior of the imperial palace; a spectacular appearance of the chief eunuch in luxuriant apparel; her subjection to a thorough physical examination, including a painful virginity test at the hands of the eunuch; her bathing in an enormous pool, an indispensable element of an Oriental ritual, and literal cleansing, assisted by female slaves in transparent *turquerie* attires; a supper of exotic fruit, untouched because of her exhaustion; and her blissful dive into sleep.

The next chapter gives a no less meticulous and naturalistic description of the internal cleansing of Roxolana's body, hair removal from her legs and pubic area with a savage-looking curved knife, massaging her from head to toe with aphrodisiac aromatic oils, and bleaching her teeth with a bizarre substance. All this is crowned by a makeup session—plucking and tinting of eyebrows, applying of lipstick and blush—that highlights her gorgeousness and is instrumental in conjuring her erotic persona and in bringing out this strange and alluring other from her former self. In these textual segments before the appearance of Süleyman, the author alternates the description of unfamiliar, wondrous curiosities with the narration of Roxolana's personal abject experiences as she is disgraced and debased by being turned into a passive object, assertively and violently acted upon by the harem "beauticians." Shame and humiliation are powerful, negative emotions that partially structure Roxolana's account here. Vynnychuk seems to capture the mindset conceptualized by some feminist writers as abjection, which "marks out a landscape of feelings by and about women that places them before, below, and beyond culture—almost outside what can be represented within it."³⁶ Roxolana here is propelled into the world of the abject, which, according to Julia Kristeva, disrupts identity, disturbs order, and destabilizes systems. Abjection is caused by "[w]hat does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."³⁷ Existing at the margins of the self, neither subject nor object, the abject consists of those elements, particularly of the body, that contravene and threaten the sense of propriety and are deemed impure for public display and discussion. Having been placed at the threshold of the imaginary boundary into the realm of the author's pornographic fantasy, Roxolana's narrative both obliterates

³⁴ Joe Snader, *Caught Between Worlds: British Captivity Narratives in Fact and Fiction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 16.

³⁵ Snader, *Caught Between Worlds*, 16.

³⁶ David Glover and Cora Kaplan, *Genders* (London: Routledge, 2000), 7–8.

³⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

the confining codes of femininity that form part of the patriarchal ideology and turns her into the locus for the projection and living out of male sexual anxieties.

Perfumed, bejeweled, dressed in Eastern garments charged with enchantment, sweetness, and seduction, and trembling with the anticipation of the unknown pleasures, Roxolana is ready for her first encounter with the Sultan. Vynnychuk avidly takes up the figures of Orientalist female musicians to provide the backdrop for the amorous scene that evokes a sense of cultivated beauty and pampered isolation. He makes Roxolana gasp at Süleyman's arrival. The latter, in his turn, is smitten by her stunning appearance, surpassing all his expectations. By playing out this reciprocal infatuation at first glance, Vynnychuk follows Ukrainian and Polish sources, which "extoll Roxolana's beauty that conquered the powerful Sultan," as opposed to Venetian reports, which "maintain that she was not particularly beautiful but rather small, elegant, and modest."³⁸ The ensuing dialogue between the two soon-to-be lovers is rather minimalist; however, by attempting to keep the authentic ring to the memoir, the author explains that Süleyman addresses Roxolana in Slovenian, which she has no difficulty in understanding, and furthers the verisimilitude of the Sultan's use of one of the Slavic languages stating that his mother is Bosnian,³⁹ although she was the daughter of the "Khan of Crimean Tatars."⁴⁰ However, faithfulness to historical detail is not at the centre of Vynnychuk's attention.

The following several pages depict Roxolana's sexual arousal, as Süleyman kisses, fingers, and penetrates her. An inexperienced virgin, she readily succumbs to the Sultan's caresses. Vynnychuk's representational strategies of lovemaking seem to be borrowed from pornographic movies. The presence of the musicians implicitly enhances the mood and provides the embedded rhythms that complement the movements of bodies, and Roxolana's involuntary moans of delight add an extra level of sensory perception to the pleasures depicted. Her "confessional frenzy," to use Linda Williams's expression,⁴¹ embodies the will to knowledge and power and places the female body under scrutiny for its innermost secrets. By turning Roxolana into a sexual spectacle, Vynnychuk reveals how deeply he believes in the concept of male mastery. Roxolana's narrative focuses on Süleyman's compulsive rounds of her erogenous zones, his concentration on her breasts, his attention to her clitoris with lingual stimulation, and his letting of himself into her vagina. His virtuoso sexual performance, accompanied by an unidentifiable fire rushing through her limbs that makes her tremble, perfectly complies with the conventions

³⁸ Yermolenko, "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Empresse of the East'," 234.

³⁹ Vynnychuk, *Zhytjie haremmoie*, 23.

⁴⁰ Anthony Bridge, *Suleiman the Magnificent: Scourge of Heaven* (New York: Franklin F. Watts, 1983), 110.

⁴¹ Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 122.

of the genre,⁴² and Roxolana's inviolably ecstatic and orgasmic response to the Sultan's passionate acts emphasizes the author's deliberate employment of pornographic regimes of representation. She also discovers the peculiarities of male anatomy, and here, in accordance with pornographic scenarios of erectility and verticality, it is the Sultan's penis that both scares and magnetically attracts her, that is instrumental in escalating Roxolana's uncontrollable sexual desire to the point of fainting as he takes her to the edge of ecstasy and back again. The accumulation of all these sexual numbers that should culminate in a "money shot," which, according to Berkerley Kaite, is the "site/sight of male orgasm signaling not only narrative closure but the mirror reflection of phallic secular logic"⁴³ and is necessary to ensure the chapter's resolution, is deliberately delayed, thus violating the convention because Süleyman is urgently called upon to attend to matters of state—the revolt of the emir of Akhisar.

The subsequent chapter resembles a vignette from popular Oriental genre scenes and conjures up an erotic ideal in seven voluptuous odalisques from Macedonia, Bosnia, and Serbia, dutifully lounged on pillows, who invite Roxolana to a party. It is noteworthy that in his particular codification of gender, Vynnychuk segregates white women (Slavic factor being an additional axis of separation) from racial others. In so doing, he implicitly combines Western assumptions that the "darker races" were always "desirous of white people"⁴⁴ with racial concepts that privilege the fair-skinned body in Orientalist representations of bath and harem scenes,⁴⁵ and with the racism inherited from Soviet society in which it was deeply rooted and that cultivated the fear of racial and cultural pollution. He also changes narrative strategies by shifting focalization and introducing the inlaid stories of other inhabitants of the harem to provide variegated routes for the excursions into the Ottoman "sexscapes." The story of the Serbian concubine incorporates yet another thematic feature of the captivity genre based on gender and sexual politics that highlights the chastity of a female captive who defends her honor from the amorous advances of a lusty Oriental villain-ruler.⁴⁶ In addition, the story is concurrently related to stock melodramas, which invariably involved aspects of female honor or fall from grace in Orientalism.⁴⁷ In the concubine's account, the conventions linking sex, violence, and control are stripped bare. The Serbian woman is mercilessly whipped for disobeying the Sultan's orders and subsequently raped. However, Vynnychuk, in constructing Süleyman's insatiable sexuality and brutality, conflates rape and seduction, and by the end of the coitus, the odalisque

⁴² For the would-be pornographer's guide compiled by Stephen Ziplow, see Williams, *Hard Core*, 126–7.

⁴³ Berkerley Kaite, *Pornography and Difference* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 6.

⁴⁴ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 134.

⁴⁵ John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 46.

⁴⁶ Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 129.

⁴⁷ MacKenzie, *Orientalism*, 63.

turns into a willing receptacle of the Sultan's desire and is obsessively longing for future encounters. Because Süleyman seems to lose interest in conventional sex and stops coming to visit the Serbian concubine, she seeks advice from a Greek concubine. Having been instructed, in a double inlaid story, about anal and oral sex, the Serbian manages to regain Süleyman's attention by putting the acquired knowledge into practice and is represented as experiencing unsurpassable sensations. In this, the text utilizes centuries-long stereotypes of Oriental libidinal excess and inclination to all sorts of perversions and deviant sexual behaviors "firmly wedged in the dominant Western imaginary."⁴⁸ The party is concluded by the bacchanalia, with eunuchs obediently attending to and enacting odalisques' sexual whims.

Unlike the indulging concubines, Roxolana is repulsed both by smooth faces and bodies of effeminate de-virilized men and by her fellows' actions regarding them as decadent and degrading. She has difficulty in identifying with diverse erotic subject positions and desiring diverse objects. In her movement from heterosexual scenes to mixed encounters, Roxolana finds lesbian delights unacceptable and perceives same-sex lovemaking as forced, being a result of neglected female sexual needs. Vynnychuk's strategy of appropriation and erotic re-inscription of pleasure, which explores the possibility of divergent erotic exchanges in the harem setting, thus draws on heterosexual and homophobic articulation of lesbian identities and inevitably reinforces outdated stereotypes of lesbianism as linked to deviance. Similar treatment of homoerotic desire as debasing and offensive is illustrated by the *vâlide sultan*, Süleyman's reigning mother, who becomes the avatar of compulsory heterosexuality by terming the Turkish rulers' love for boys an "ancient Greek disease" ("давня грецька хвороба")⁴⁹ and emphasizing that her son is the first Sultan who is not interested in boys, even though, as Dror Ze'evi observes, in the Ottoman world, "homoerotic or pederastic passion did not bear the stigma of abnormal behavior that it came to bear in modern Western cultures."⁵⁰

Roxolana is primarily tutored in how to make the power of sex instrumental in the upward, hierarchical mobility in the segregated female space of the harem. The *vâlide sultan*, who used to make a careful selection of those who would be offered to the sovereign as possible consorts,⁵¹ instructs the novice, whom she has supposedly singled out and designated to the role of Süleyman's future confidante and advisor, in the art of mastery, submission, and manipulation. Although, according to certain historians, Hafsa Sultan was one of the very few people who might have dissuaded her son from an unprecedented marriage with Roxolana,⁵²

⁴⁸ Joseph A. Boone, "Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism," *PMLA* 110. 1 (1995): 91.

⁴⁹ Vynnychuk, *Zhyttie haremnoe*, 79.

⁵⁰ Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 2.

⁵¹ Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New York: Praeger, 1973), 86.

⁵² Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 62.

Vynnychuk's *vâlîde sultan* positions herself as Roxolana's ally and, moreover, plans the transference of her own power to the young concubine. Her directives inspire Roxolana's seductive enterprise and, upon the Sultan's arrival, Roxolana demonstrates an enviable sexual resourcefulness and frantic erotic energy. The representation of her ever-growing sexual enjoyment is structured through parodic displays of sexual excess, and the scene, which elicits the feeling of almost visceral involvement with sweat-moistened flesh and groping hands, culminates with mutual fisting and spectacular orgasm. By positioning Roxolana as a subject of erotic desire, Vynnychuk's work may represent a confrontation with the oscillating poles of gendered identities and the role of power within them. Her initiation into sexual enjoyment is Roxolana's rite of passage into the corridors of power.

Vynnychuk also imparts Roxolana's memoirs with a "literary" element when he brings his protagonist to the altar of love, with the statues of a garlanded penis and bejeweled vagina, and a long roll of Morocco containing poetic names for sexual organs. Roxolana once again impresses Süleyman with her vivid imagination by promptly inventing an extraordinary number of names. Their visit to the altar concludes in reading erotic poetry, sexual characterizations of women belonging to different cultures, and one Bedouin's scatological observations for comic relief.

Roxolana's imaginary history ends with the chapter aptly titled "How I Became Haseki Hurrem (The Queen of the Harem)" at the point when she eliminates her major competition, a Circassian woman—the mother of Mustafa (Mustapha) the firstborn. Here Vynnychuk closely follows the 1553 report by the Venetian ambassador Bernardo Navagero, which reveals Roxolana's "ability to manipulate the protocol of the harem to her advantage" and explains how she won the Sultan's affection.⁵³ According to the ambassador, Roxolana was attacked by the jealous Circassian who scratched her face, ruined her closing, and insulted her. A few days after the accident, Süleyman summoned Roxolana, but she refused to appear before him, saying that she could not come

into the presence of the sultan because, being sold meat and with her face so spoiled and some of her hair pulled out, she recognized that she would offend the majesty of such a sultan by coming before him. These words were related to the sultan and induced in him an even greater desire to have her come to him, and he commanded again that she come. He wanted to understand why she would not come and why she had sent him such a message. The woman related to him what had happened with Mustafa's mother, accompanying her words with tears and showing the sultan her face, which still bore the scratches, and how her hair had been pulled out. The angry sultan sent for the Circassian and asked her if what the other woman had said was true. She responded that it was, and that she had done less to her than she deserved. She believed that all the women should yield to her and recognize her as mistress since she had been in the service of his majesty first. These words inflamed the sultan even more, for the reason that he no longer wanted her, and all his love was given to this other ...⁵⁴

⁵³ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 59.

⁵⁴ Qtd. in Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 60.

Vynnychuk recounts the episode in a more emphatic manner, though, through a remarkable stylization of the conversation within this triangle of appropriative rivalry, after which the Circassian, the rival subject, is exiled from the imperial palace, and Roxolana steadily rises to the position of unparalleled power to become one of the mythic, mysterious figures of the Orient.

In addition to the Western Orientalist intertextual dimension in Vynnychuk's literary counterfeit, a Ukrainian one also exists. This one is linked to Ahatanhel Krymsky, an eminent Ukrainian Orientalist, belletrist, linguist, expert in over thirty languages, student of literature, folklorist, and translator, whose extensive scholarly output on the Orient contains two histories of Turkey—one published in 1910 (vol. 2)—1916 (vol. 1) in Moscow; the other, in 1924 in Kyiv. Krymsky's studies of the Ottoman Empire under Süleyman's reign embrace a Slavic and particularly Ukrainian element that addresses, among other issues, the role of Roxolana in Turkish history. In her investigation of the scholar's work in the framework of nationalism, sexuality and Orientalism, Solomia Pavlychko states that Krymsky's attitude is ambivalent, or rather antipathetic, towards this historical figure, who combines a powerful mind and charisma with ruthlessness towards her political adversaries. Krymsky's unprejudiced representation of his famous countrywoman runs counter to the already established reverential portrayals of Roxolana by his Ukrainian contemporaries.⁵⁵ Moreover, his histories of the East, characterized by an interdisciplinary approach and vast range of topics, also include an inquiry into erotic and pornographic Oriental literary traditions as well as into sexual practices and customs. According to Pavlychko, Krymsky's "*History of Turkey* abounds with references to sexual mores of sultans' courts, janissaries, and so on. Krymsky became interested in Eastern sexuality long before it became a separate subject of research in Western scholarship."⁵⁶ It is notable that his choice of focusing on issues associated with sexuality—in the best case perceived as marginal, in the worst case labeled "bourgeois" and "obscene"—is quite unconventional, even unthinkable, in light of the class-oriented bastardized Marxist methodology as the only analytical tool admissible in the Soviet Union. Most likely, his interest in eroticism has come into play as a factor in speculations regarding his possible authorship of the 1912 anonymous confessional narrative of a Kyivan sex addict,⁵⁷ that typified a veritable explosion of exploratory writing about sex in all its exotic manifestations throughout Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁵⁵ Solomiia Pavlychko, *Natsionalizm, seksual'nist', oriientalizm: skladnyi svit Ahatanhela Kryms'koho* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 2000), 178.

⁵⁶ "“Історія Туреччини” переповнена згадками про сексуальні звичаї султанських дворів, яничарів тощо. Кримський зацікавився східною сексуальністю задовго до того, як вона стала окремою темою досліджень у західній науці.” Pavlychko, *Natsionalizm, seksual'nist', oriientalizm*, 180.

⁵⁷ Ivan Luchuk, “Sumburni prypushchennia (pisliaslovo redaktora),” afterword to *Spovid' kyianyna erotomana*, trans. Anatol' Perepadia (Lviv: Kal'variia, 2004), 140–1.

Written originally in French by an anonymous Ukrainian author and published in Ukrainian translation by the prestigious press Kalvaria as *Сповідь киянина еротомана* [*The Confession of a Kyivan Erotomaniac*] (2004), the work is surrounded by an aura of literary mystification not uncommon for erotic literature. Its title and confessional style evoke the spirit of Henry Spencer Ashbee, the unflagging compiler of *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1877), the leading authority on pornography in Victorian Britain, and the alleged author of *My Secret Life (The Sex Diary of a Victorian Gentleman)* (1871) that has long provoked fierce literary debate.⁵⁸ *Сповідь* [*The Confession*] was sent, as a letter, to Havelock Ellis, the pioneer of sexology who challenged Victorian aversion to public discussions of sexuality; it appeared in 1926 in *Mercure de France* and was recommended as an “erotic masterpiece” to Vladimir Nabokov by a then exceptionally influential Edmund Wilson, thus becoming yet another proto-text for the psychologically volatile world of the obsessive attraction to a nymphet figure in *Lolita* (1955).⁵⁹

By weaving an intricate canvas out of numerous literary and historical texts and traditions, Vynnychuk seems also to pick up unconsciously the line of literary erotomaniac mystifications in the mode of *Сповідь* [*The Confession*]. To appreciate his radical intertextuality, with its circularity of reference, one should be familiar with its descriptive systems, themes, social mythologies, and histories, and with other texts. However, the reader who does not have this background and whose horizon of expectations is clear will still enjoy the universally recognizable codes, stylistic charm, irony, and eccentric nuances in Vynnychuk’s dynamic prose. Vynnychuk’s playful parody and pastiche, in which he joins, to use Oleksander Halenko’s phrase, a “male harem” (“чоловіч[ий] гарем”)⁶⁰ of Roxolana’s admirers, is a deviant postcolonial endeavor wherein everything is inverted with postmodern zest and gusto. As Linda Hutcheon writes elsewhere, postmodern parody is a “value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history (and through irony, the politics) of representation.”⁶¹

A limited number of publications related to pornography in postcolonial critical discourse tends to fix the roles along a habitual axis of colonial power asymmetry: the pornographer-colonizer exercises the power of his gaze over the abusively structured object of erotic desire—the colonized, the “native,” the feminine, and the emasculated—as if each time reasserting the sexual economy underpinning the colonial encounter and colonial rule.⁶² Vynnychuk’s text suggests a more complex dialectics operating along the postcolonial continuum and allows for an approach

⁵⁸ Ian Gibson, *The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2001).

⁵⁹ Kazbiek Biektursunov, “‘Blachevnyi’ kinets’,” introduction to *Spovid' kiyanyyna erotomana*, 4–5.

⁶⁰ Halenko, “Vytivky ukrains'koho orientalizmu,” 11.

⁶¹ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), 94.

⁶² See, for example, Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Darby Lewes, *Nudes from Nowhere: Utopian Sexual Landscapes* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

that places postcolonial pornography outside of the deadlock of the colonizer-colonized binarism by revealing a new consciousness about unavoidable power in sex and of not viewing this power as fixed. By untying a number of fixities, the writer disrupts the inherited totalitarian tradition that neutralized and codified the body in the iconographic terms of a de-sexed socialist realism. While reading, misreading, reassembling, and misinterpreting the system of hereditary and learned texts, rules, and figures in the corpus, Vynnychuk self-consciously lets the machinery show, thus demonstrating the fictitious and constructivist nature of any discourse, including the fanatically professed “objectivity” of socialist realism, and opening up the closed symbolic horizon to the play and energy of heterogeneity.

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Chapter 7

Roxolana in Turkish Literature: Re-Writing the Ever Elusive Woman of Power and Desire

Özlem Öğüt Yazıcıoğlu

The Harem and the life in the Harem, which you claimed can never be accessed by people outside, are recounted to their minutest details in historical novels [...] Writers employ the same strategies you used when you were trying to persuade Kanuni¹ to have Şehzade² Mustafa killed, and they succeed [...] Many people know you from such novels rather than history books.³

Considering that Hürrem Sultan (Roxolana)⁴ was wife to the most “magnificent” emperor of the Ottoman Empire, *Kanuni* Sultan Süleyman (Suleiman the *Lawgiver*), and is known to have had much more influence and power in the palace than any other woman in the history of the Ottoman Empire, the number of literary works written in Turkey, which focus on her life, is rather limited. The main reason is probably the secrecy of the harem, a place that no man, other than the eunuchs and of course the Sultan himself, was allowed to enter. Likewise, the women in the harem were not allowed to leave its quarters, except for some concubines who

¹ *Kanuni* [‘Lawgiver’] is the epithet generally used for Sultan Süleyman (Suleiman).

² *Şehzade* [‘prince’] is the title given to sultans’ sons who were candidates to succeed to the throne in the future.

³ “Kimsenin ayrıntılarını anlatamayacağını söylediğiniz Harem ve Harem Hayatı, tarihi romanlarda en ince noktalarına kadar okura sunuluyor [...] Sizin Kanuni’yi Şehzade Mustafa’yı öldürtmeye ikna etmek için kullandığınız yöntemi, yazarlar okuyucularını ikna etmek için kullanıyorlar, başarılı da oluyorlar [...] Sizi de tarih kitaplarından değil, daha çok böyle romanlardan tanıyorlar.” Adnan Nur Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi* [*Interview with Hürrem Sultan*] (İstanbul: Sistem Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2004), 148–9. All translations of the literary texts discussed in this essay are mine, unless stated otherwise.

⁴ Roxolana (“Roksolan”) was named “Hürrem” after she was brought to the imperial palace in Istanbul. She obtained the title “Hürrem Sultan” when she became the sultan’s *haseki* (his favorite concubine who bore him a son). In contemporary Turkey she is known as “Hürrem Sultan.” Among the literary works that are discussed in this chapter, only Baykal’s *Interview* refers to her as “Hürrem.” In others, she is referred to as “Hurrem.” In this chapter the name “Hurrem” will be used except in references to Hürrem in Baykal’s *Interview*.

were close to the powerful women of the harem, such as *valide sultan* (the mother of the Sultan), the Sultan's *hasekis*, or other members of his family, and were married off to eligible men of status or of a promising career outside the palace. Therefore, even references in history books to the lives of women in the harem are often based on word of mouth and are more or less subjective. Literary works revolving around women in the harem largely draw on historical sources but include elements that are either produced or colored by their author's imagination.

This essay studies the prominent works of Turkish literature in which Hürrem plays a central role: two history novels, *Hurrem Sultan* (1960), by Feridun Fazıl Tülbentçi, and *Hurrem Sultan* (1937), by M. Turhan Tan,⁵ focus on the period of Ottoman history from Hürrem's arrival at Sultan's palace (the *Topkapı* Palace) in Istanbul to her death and the death of her son Bayezid, respectively. Three history plays from *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi* [*Suleiman the Lawgiver Tetralogy*] by Orhan Asena—*İlk Yıllar* [*The First Years*], *Hurrem Sultan*, and *Ya Devlet Başa Ya Kuzgun Leşe* [*Either Power or Death*]⁶—written in the 1950s represent significant chapters from Süleyman's reign, from Hürrem's arrival at the imperial palace through her death and the continuing rivalry for succession to the throne between her sons Selim and Bayezid. In Adnan Nur Baykal's *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi* [*Interview with Hurrem Sultan*] (2004), Hürrem assumes a voice of her own and relates how the conditions in Süleyman's palace and her desires that were fostered by those conditions led her to manipulate others in an attempt to reach her goals. Özen Yula's play *Gayri Resmi Hürrem* [*Unofficial Hürrem*] (2005), with its embedded plays and performances, represents Hürrem as every woman in the past, in her contemporary present, and in the future of the Ottoman harem, and highlights her ability to perform and transform herself, which undoubtedly contributed much to her successes in the history of the Ottoman Empire.⁷

Approaching the genres of the historical novel and the history play from a critical and parodying stance, Baykal's and Yula's works, written almost half a century later than the works by Tülbentçi, Tan, and Asena, interrogate the intricate relationship between fact and fiction, narrative and history. Although Asena's, Tan's, and Tülbentçi's works revolve around *Kanuni*'s military campaigns and power games in the imperial palace, the details in the three writers' accounts of Hürrem's life display variations. The three authors complemented and embellished their narratives of history, especially the mysterious aspects of Hürrem's life, with their imagination, often in line with the patriotic or romantic undercurrents of their works.

⁵ See Feridun Fazıl Tülbentçi, *Hurrem Sultan* (İstanbul: İnkılap ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1978); M. Turhan Tan, *Hurrem Sultan* (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık ve Reklamcılık Ltd. Şti., 2001).

⁶ Orhan Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, MİNPA Matbaacılık Tic. Ltd. Şti., 1998).

⁷ Özen Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hürrem; Toplu Oyunları 3* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık Ticaret ve Sanayi A.Ş., 2005).

Baykal's and Yula's works point to the processes of such fictionalization of history or historical figures in order to underline the multifacetedness of truth. Furthermore, these two contemporary works display Hurrem as constantly acting—in a way fictionalizing or re-writing herself—so as to simultaneously conform to and defy the system (the imperial harem) in which she was forced to live. Her “performances” of complicity mark her resistance to the system. This is very much in line with Judith Butler's conception of “performativity” as the “stylized repetition” of bodily or psychic acts/aspects of identity, produced in the foreclosure of normative social/historical power yet providing subversive possibilities of agency and resistance.⁸ Interestingly, when read in this light, the earlier works by Tülbentçi, Tan, and Asena also exhibit such “performativity” by repeating the style and content of historical narratives, yet pointing to the social and literary constructedness of their characters, which, in a way, empowers those characters, as they can remain elusive.

In Act I, scene i of Yula's play *Unofficial Hurrem*, the character Hurrem says, “I've never told anyone about my past. This is the source of my power. When they don't know about it, they construct a past of their own imagination [...] They didn't know and the less they knew the more they told my story, and as they told it they created another Hurrem.”⁹ ... Indeed, the earlier works depict the first encounter between Hurrem and Süleyman rather differently, thus creating varying images of Hurrem. Tülbentçi's novel opens with *Kanuni* Sultan Süleyman entering the palace with his mother Hafsa Sultan (*valide sultan*), who welcomes him back from an expedition. He is alarmed and angered by the screams coming from the harem, which implies a lack of discipline and respect, but he calms down when he sees the “wild and restless beauty” of the 17-year-old “Roksolan” (“Roxolana,” thereafter named “Hurrem”), who is terrorizing the concubines, odalisques, and eunuchs alike in her attempts to escape from the palace. Hafsa Sultan is surprised by her son's interest in the girl, because, in her opinion, she is not even beautiful compared to other gorgeous women in the harem, let alone her improper, rebellious behavior. In Tan's novel, however, it is Hafsa Sultan who is impressed by Hurrem's beauty and offers her to the Sultan in the presence of his *haseki* Mahidevran (Gülbahar),¹⁰ a scene that introduces the reader to the power games among the women in the harem. In Asena's play *The First Years*, it is again the *valide sultan* who wants to educate and present Hurrem to Süleyman, also

⁸ See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990, 30–34) and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993, 121–4). See also Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1981).

⁹ “Geçmişimi kimseye anlatmadım. Gücümün kaynağı da bu zaten. Bilmedikleri zaman kendilerince bir geçmiş kurarlar [...] Bilmediler, bilmedikçe anlattılar, anlattıkça bambaşka bir Hurrem yarattılar.” Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 13.

¹⁰ Süleyman's first *haseki* is called “Gülbahar” in Tülbentçi's, Asena's, and Yula's works, whereas in Tan's and Baykal's works her name is “Mahidevran.”

with the purpose of taming Gülbahar's pride. But Hurrem, in a passionate and revolutionary mood, unexpectedly throws herself at the Sultan's feet and manages to capture his attention. Her behavior both hurts *valide sultan's* pride and defies a norm of the harem where *valide sultan* has the authority to choose, educate, and present concubines to her son.

All three of the earlier works grant central importance to three major victories Hurrem wins during *Kanuni's* reign: her victory against Gülbahar, the Sultan's former *haseki*, the mother of his son Mustafa, in their competition for Süleyman's love; her victory against İbrahim Paşa (Ibrahim Pasha), Süleyman's Grand Vizier, in their mutual scheming and struggle for prominence in the palace, which results in Süleyman's death order for İbrahim; and her elimination of *şehzade* Mustafa from the competition for the throne through her long-term efforts and schemes to persuade Süleyman that Mustafa is preparing to usurp the throne, wherefore the Sultan has him killed. Tan's *Hurrem Sultan* and Asena's *Tetralogy* also focus on Hurrem's part in the ensuing power struggle between her sons Selim and Bayezid, which, however, takes a different course than the one intended and plotted by Hurrem and Rüstem Paşa,¹¹ who are outsmarted by *Lala* Mustafa Paşa.¹² Hurrem herself does not live to see the outcome of Selim and Bayezid's competition, which eventually leads to Bayezid's death.

All of the early works portray Hurrem as a rather unruly, ambitious, and calculating woman who determinedly pursues her self-centered goals and accomplishes her short- and long-term plans by carefully choosing her spies and catering to their self-interests to gain power over them. In other words, they represent Hurrem as the main perpetrator of several dramatic and violent episodes in the history of the Ottoman Empire, with the implication that the consequences of her actions and conspiracies, particularly the death of *şehzade* Mustafa, who had distinguished himself among his brothers as the best candidate for the throne, may have contributed to the weakening and the ultimate decline of the Ottoman Empire. This idea finds dramatic expression in Orhan Asena's play *Hurrem Sultan*, in Süleyman's dialogue with Cihangir Sultan, Hurrem and Süleyman's youngest and most beloved son, a handicapped yet wise, sensitive, and insightful young man.

¹¹ Rüstem Paşa, one of Hurrem's closest allies, is husband to Mihrimah Sultan, her daughter, and is promoted to the position of grand vizier. He is held responsible for *şehzade* Mustafa's death and temporarily loses his position as a result of the protests by the soldiers and the public. See *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi* [The Encyclopedia of the Ottomans: Their Lives and Works, ed. Ekrem Çakiroğlu] (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık A.Ş., 1999), 2: 470–72.

¹² *Lala* is a title given to the viziers who were responsible for the professional development of *şehzades*. Rüstem Paşa appoints *Lala* Mustafa Paşa, Bayezid's beloved vizier (*lala*), to serve Selim in the hope that *lala* will spy for Bayezid, whom Hürrem and Rüstem support in the two brothers' struggle for the throne. However, the plan backfires due to a former grudge *Lala* Mustafa Paşa holds against Rüstem. *Lala* quickly gains insight into Rüstem's plans and dedicates his efforts to Selim, which results in Bayezid's death. Selim succeeds to the throne after Süleyman's death. See *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, 2: 312–3.

At the time when Süleyman starts suspecting Mustafa of treason and considering his execution, which causes him great pain at the same time, Cihangir also suffers from painful daydreams that portend calamities for the Ottoman Empire. He feels that a big catastrophe is being prepared by some whom he cannot clearly identify in his mind. His prophetic statement, in Act II, scene vi, that black clouds gather above the Ottoman skies¹³ sounds like a warning and implies that Mustafa's death will have tragic consequences for the Ottoman Empire. In Act V, scenes v and vi of the same play, Bayezid expresses his pain at his half-brother Mustafa's death, whose professional abilities and exceptional personality cannot be surpassed by anybody else in the Empire, and he openly blames his mother and Rüstem for preparing this end. Addressing Hürrem and her faithful ally, he says, just like Cihangir before, "Do you see the darkness falling Mother? And the terrible men guarding it? This shouldn't have been the fate of the Ottoman Empire."¹⁴

In Asena's play, as well as Tan's and Tülbentçi's novels, Cihangir dies of sorrow soon after Mustafa's death. Tan's novel ends with a fantastic scene following the murder of Bayezid and his four sons upon Süleyman's order. It describes Hürrem's daydreams, mixed with her nightmares and her madness, which ultimately lead to her death before she witnesses the outcome of her sons' struggle for succession to power. Tan describes how Hürrem foresees the course of events in her dreams. In those dreams she undergoes insufferable pain, fever, and convulsions, which in a way serves as retribution for her evil deeds. Tan supports this idea with a direct reference to the description of Hürrem's death in Hammer's *History*, in which Hammer claims that Hürrem deserves to be condemned by history due to her extensive abuse of power.¹⁵ In Tan's novel Hürrem is recurrently referred to as a "femme-fatale" ("fettan kadın") or even a "sorceress" ("büyücü") who put a spell on Sultan Süleyman. Tan also alludes to a number of well-known early modern Ottoman historians, such as Peçevî, Celâlzade, and Solakzade, who unanimously held Hürrem responsible for the death of Mustafa, whom they all described as innocent, with the exception of the sixteenth-century historian Nişancı who described Mustafa as guilty but could not provide convincing evidence.¹⁶

The problem of recording or representing truth or history constitutes a central aspect of Özen Yula's *Unofficial Hürrem*, which underscores the subjectivity of representation that undergoes constant de-/re-construction. In his Preface and Introduction to his *Interview*, Baykal describes how he himself became "deconstructed" while trying to construct his work. He confesses that he thought his primary task before writing a book on Hürrem Sultan was to peruse all possible sources (history books, historical novels, travelogues, embassy reports, etc.) that

¹³ Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 151.

¹⁴ "Bak valide, şu inen akşamı görüyor musun? Şu karanlığı? Karanlığı bekleyen şu korkunç adamları? Âl-i-Osman'ın kaderi böyle olmamalıydı." Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 188.

¹⁵ Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 574.

¹⁶ Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 509.

recorded details about her life and then form a coherent life story with a full characterization of Hürrem Sultan, from his own standpoint, which he thought would develop after such an extensive and in-depth reading. However, he realized that far from attaining a personal perspective on Hürrem Sultan, he became fragmented in his assessment of her. Since his divided halves could not agree on a consistent representation of Hürrem Sultan, he decided to write this text in the form of an interview in which the half of him that blamed Hürrem Sultan would, like a prosecutor or a journalist, pressure her with questions and comments justifying the accusations and judgments of the historians, whereas his other half, which understands and sympathizes with her, would let her speak for herself and defend herself against such allegations by rationalizing her actions. Contrary to the general pattern of interviews, it is Hürrem, not the interviewer, who poses the first question which now points to Hürrem's ambivalent, dialogical self: "Have you ever negotiated with yourself?" ("Kendinizle hiç hesaplaştınız mı?")¹⁷

Interestingly enough, the ambivalent or multifaceted quality of identity, truth, and representation that marks Baykal and Yula's contemporary texts, is subtly present in the earlier works by Tülbentçi, Tan, and Asena, whether the authors were conscious of it or not. When read against Baykal's and Yula's works, the earlier texts deconstruct themselves by appearing judgmental on the surface and suppressing an underlying ambiguity, which nevertheless reveals itself behind the seemingly flat statements and characterizations. In other words, Baykal and Yula's works stimulate the reader to detect in the earlier texts aspects that undermine monolithic readings of Hürrem's character and even betray an authorial consciousness in the process of "negotiating with himself," much like Baykal and his interviewee Hürrem. For example, towards the end of Tan's novel, where Hürrem's delirium and nightmares about the future of her sons are described, the author's passing reference to the doctors' being used to treating mad or hysterical women in the harem implies Tan's awareness that the restricted lives of the harem women, who were physically and mentally confined within its narrow boundaries, often cost them their health. Thus, Tan's novel which contains many pejorative references to Hürrem, but demonstrates sensitivity towards issues concerning the women in the harem, emerges as the product of a divided self. It is important to note here that the subject of madness is central to Özen Yula's *Unofficial Hürrem*, in which it is associated with the loss of memories of the past and past identities, pointing to the repressed selfhood of the harem women.

Tan's sympathetic attitude towards the sufferings of the women in the harem, often caused by ongoing power struggles and thwarted expectations, becomes evident already at the outset of his novel, in the scene where Hafsa Sultan and Mahidevran are talking about the new Russian concubine Roksolan. *Valide* complains that the Sultan is not interested in seeing Roksolan although she is very beautiful. Mahidevran is upset and interrupts *valide* by saying, "This is the first time I hear the ugly are called beautiful. What is beautiful in her? Her eyes are

¹⁷ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 15.

mat, her face is mournful. Moreover, her nose is crooked. If you call her beautiful, what are *we*¹⁸ supposed to be called?”¹⁹ Süleyman who overhears their dialogue walks towards his jealous *haseki* and says, “The value of a diamond is assessed by a jeweler, the value of gold by the gold expert, and it’s my mother’s eyes that can best judge beauty. They are never wrong.”²⁰ Both the Sultan and his mother want to punish Mahidevran for her arrogance. Hafsa Sultan “takes advantage of this opportunity to act as a merciless mother-in-law” (“bir kaynana insafsızlığıyla bu fırsattan istifade etti”) and asks Mahidevran personally to go and call Roksolan in.²¹ Tan describes Mahidevran’s feelings as follows: “It was a big blow [...] but what could she do? Although she was mother to a *şehzades*, she was still a concubine in the harem where only the Sultan and then his mother had the right to speak.”²² Mahidevran is inconsolable but when she thinks of Mustafa, who will take over the throne when his father dies, she realizes that the future will bring her status and power as the new *valide sultan* and that she is supposed to “wait for that happy time with patience and calm” (“o mesut günü sabırla, tahammülle, tevekkülle bekleyip şimdi ses çıkarmamak gerekti”).²³ Hürrem, likewise, displays patience and modesty. She often uses the statement, “I am just a concubine” (“Ben bir halayığım”), when the Sultan asks her opinion on private or political issues, although she carefully calculates the emotional effect of her simultaneously submissive and complaining tone on the Sultan. In fact, it is the same statement that gradually ingrains in Süleyman’s mind the idea of taking Hürrem as his wedded wife, which he does, thereby defying another long-standing Ottoman custom. Tan’s novel thus subtly interrogates whether Hürrem or any other woman in the harem is to blame for trying hard to rise to the top in a system that fuels such desires—a rather difficult and painful process. For Hürrem it was a life-and-death issue, as she underscores in the *Interview*.

When asked about the lives of women in the harem, in Baykal’s *Interview*, Hürrem describes them as follows: concubines were expected to bear sons to the Empire; in other words, it was forgotten that they were women or rather human beings.²⁴ If a concubine managed to become one of the Sultan’s favorites and to give birth to a son, she would secure herself a status as a *haseki*. If her son

¹⁸ My emphasis.

¹⁹ “Çirkinlere güzel denildiğini de yeni işitiyorum. Neresi güzel o Moskof tutsağının? Gözü paslı, yüzü yaşlı. Üstelik burnu da eğri! ... O güzel sayılırsanız size, bize ne demeli bilmem?” Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 10.

²⁰ “‘Elması’ dedi ‘kuyumcu, altın sarrafı anlar. Validemin gözü de güzelliğin mihenk taşıdır. Ne şaşar, ne aldanır.’” Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 10.

²¹ Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 10.

²² “Darbe ağırdı [...] ama ne yapabildi?.. Kendisi, birkaç şehzade doğurmuş olmasına rağmen nihayet bir halayıktı. Burada, bu saraydaysa söz söyleme hakkı ancak padişahın ve sonra anasınınındı.” Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 10.

²³ Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 11.

²⁴ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 39.

succeeded to the throne, she would rise to the most prestigious position of *valide sultan* who possessed the greatest power in the harem, sometimes even over the Sultan. However, should her son be eliminated from the struggle for the throne, she would be sent to the Old Palace “to disappear among the shadows of history” (“tarihin gölgeleri arasında yitip gitmek”).²⁵ Hürrem stresses that she never submitted to fate, nor left the control to others, because her slightest mistake could erase her whole life.²⁶ She adds, “[I]f I had submitted myself to the existing system I would have perished. You would not even feel the need to have an interview with me.”²⁷ She claims that her greatest fear is to be forgotten, which is the same as not having lived at all.²⁸

Her desire for life constitutes the driving force behind her resistance to the power structure that dominates her, and it displays significant parallelism with Deleuze’s argument, in his *Foucault*, that “the most intense point of lives, the one where their energy is concentrated, is precisely where they clash with power, struggle with it, endeavor to utilize its forces or to escape its traps,” that “the diffuse centers of power do not exist without points of resistance that are in some way primary,” and that “power does not take life as its objective without revealing or giving rise to a life that resists power.”²⁹ Indeed, Hürrem’s desire for power, which can hardly be dissociated from her desire for life, constitutes her rebellion against the existing order that threatens to crush her unless she utilizes its tools more rationally and skillfully than others. That is why she improves her knowledge of history, literature, and politics of the Ottoman Empire and gains full insight into the affairs of the state, including those of the harem. Hürrem derives her power to resist the established system and her rivals, who are also trained in that system, from her complicity with the system itself, as her attitude and statements in the *Interview* clearly indicate. Hürrem remarks that the kind of information she provides about the harem is just enough to understand her position as well as the position of all other women in the harem, stressing that so much is known by almost everyone anyway. When asked about the details, however, she refuses to betray the secrets hidden in the recesses of the harem and purposely withholds information: “I imprisoned things I have seen and heard in my mind, heart and soul. The curtain of secrecy that surrounds the harem is so thick that information inside cannot leak out [...] Secrecy was a very important part of

²⁵ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 39.

²⁶ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 15.

²⁷ “[K]endimi mevcut sistemin eline bırakmış olsaydım kaybolur giderdim. Benimle böyle bir söyleşi yapmaya ihtiyaç bile duymazdınız.” Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 16.

²⁸ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 51.

²⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 94.

our training.”³⁰ Hürrem’s refusal to provide detailed information about the harem—which of course empowers her vis-à-vis her writer(s)—along with her emphasis on secrecy, implies not only the gaps in the knowledge of the historians and the writers of history novels or plays, but also highlights secrecy and conspiracy as integral aspects of life in the harem.

The intricate web of intelligence among competing power centers and their conspiracies in the palace constitute an important leitmotif in Tülbentçi’s, Tan’s, and Asena’s works. Thus, Hürrem emerges in these works not (only) as a victimizer but also as a forced participant, a captive, if not a victim, in a society whose norms and hierarchies have long been established and fixed. In the *Interview*, Hürrem repeats several times that she was brought to the harem by force and not of her freewill, but she quickly learned to make the best of the limited opportunities allowed by the system to attain for herself and her children the highest possible status, the positions of *valide sultan* and the Sultan respectively, both of which are implied, when not directly stated, in the earlier works, too.

Hürrem’s strategies to gain and maintain power were common within the system, as indicated by recurrent references in Tülbentçi’s, Tan’s, and Asena’s works to the violent acts of the acclaimed Ottoman sultans before Süleyman, such as Mehmet II’s murder of his brother and *Yavuz* Sultan Selim’s [‘Sultan Selim the *Stern*’] usurpation of power from his father, all of which undermine the authors’ apparently judgmental attitude towards Hürrem. Moreover, allusions in all three works to Süleyman’s paradoxical feelings of love and doubt towards his sons—even on the day of their birth—whom he cannot help but regard as potential usurpers, reduces the force of the idea that Hürrem is the sole perpetrator of the scheme against *Şehzade* Mustafa. In fact, if she had not conspired against Mustafa, someone else may or would have done so. As underscored in all three works, İbrahim Paşa was ambitious enough to overshadow and usurp the Sultan’s power through his military achievements and political negotiations, as well as through gaining popularity among people and soldiers. In this respect, it can be argued that by outsmarting and eliminating İbrahim Paşa, Hürrem did service to the Sultan and the Empire.

In the *Interview*, Hürrem points out how her careful observation of İbrahim Paşa’s rhetorical skills in manipulating the Sultan enabled her to adopt and successfully employ the same skills against İbrahim himself,³¹ which is clearly illustrated in all of the earlier works and which subtly raises the question whether she could be blamed for using the very codes of the system to her advantage.

Tülbentçi’s *Hürrem Sultan* describes the amazingly wide and intricate web of Hürrem’s agents and their activities directed at slandering and defeating İbrahim

³⁰ “Görüp işittiklerimi beynime, kalbime, ruhuma hapsettim. Haremin çevresindeki gizlilik perdesi o kadar sıkıdır ki, bilgilerin dışarı sızması çok zordur [...] Zira ketumiyet, ağzı sıkılık aldığımız eğitimin önemli bir parçasıydı.” Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 37.

³¹ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 68.

Paşa. Gülbahar, İbrahim Paşa, and Hatice Sultan—the Sultan’s sister, who marries İbrahim Paşa—also form their own network of spies to overpower Hürrem. The novel abounds in scenes that describe feasts and celebrations (involving food, wine, and gorgeous virgins) that İbrahim organizes to divert the Sultan from both the affairs of the state and Hürrem. In the vain hope of climbing the ladder all the way to the top, İbrahim first plots the removal of Pîri Mehmet Paşa³² from his position of Grand Vizier and then his murder. He then accuses İskender Çelebi³³ of the failure of the Persian campaign and slanders him for corrupting his post of a treasurer, which results in İskender Çelebi’s execution. Ironically, all these intrigues were planned by Hürrem in advance, as she anticipated İbrahim’s motives and manipulated the course of his actions in a way that ultimately would lead to İbrahim’s demise rather than rise. First, she uses Rüstem to persuade İbrahim to eliminate Pîri Paşa and İskender Çelebi, both of whom have been of great service to the Empire. Then, Hürrem and Rüstem gradually convince Süleyman of the injustice done by İbrahim to both statesmen. They also make explicit and implicit remarks about İbrahim’s excessive pride and his plans for treason, whereupon Süleyman starts observing his Grand Vizier’s actions closely, either personally or through his agents, mainly Rüstem. Finally, the Sultan decides to kill İbrahim.

The networks of intelligence and power games extend from top to bottom of the harem hierarchy, as manifested in Tülbentçi’s novel. Nazniyaz, Hürrem’s odalisque, flatters Hürrem, thinking her own prestige in the harem will rise too, if Hürrem becomes a *haseki*. She tells Hürrem that it is upon the Sultan’s request that she is treated with such kindness and respect. As Hürrem dreams about becoming the Sultan’s woman, the concubines and odalisques at her service pamper her pride and perpetuate her desires by telling her about the many favors bestowed on *hasekis*. As Hürrem gains experience in the harem’s intrigues, she uses the women as spies. Hürrem’s networks of intelligence and conspiracy emerge as an indispensable element of her struggle for existence in a system that may easily send her into oblivion. At the beginning of Asena’s *The First Years*, Hafsa Sultan herself refers to the necessity of networking as part of one’s allegiance to the

³² Pîri Mehmet Paşa was the successful and reliable Grand Vizier of *Yavuz* Sultan Selim (Süleyman’s father), who kept his post after Selim’s death, but he was approaching old age in the early years of Süleyman’s reign. In Tülbentçi’s novel, İbrahim keeps reminding Süleyman that Pîri is too old to achieve success for the Empire, in the hope to replace Pîri, but Pîri is slandered by Ahmet Paşa, a vizier, who also hopes to succeed Pîri. However, Süleyman appoints İbrahim as Grand Vizier. Still, Süleyman greatly respects Pîri Paşa and often takes his opinion on state affairs. The disturbed İbrahim designs a plot that leads to Pîri Paşa’s murder by his own son. See *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, 2: 164–5.

³³ Çelebi is a title added to a name to indicate gentility. İskender Çelebi is the Sultan’s most trusted chief accountant whom he sends onto the Persian campaign led by İbrahim Paşa, asking the latter to consult with İskender on critical decisions. See *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, 1: 660.

system, as she explains her motives for trying to find and train concubines who can divert the Sultan's attention from *haseki* Gülbahar.³⁴

Valide sultan Hafsa refers to fear and worry as an essential part of life in the harem. Her words reflect Hürrem's in the *Interview*, where she emphasizes the need to be alert at all times in the face of a latent rival or conspiracy; therefore, she regards her life as one moving on the threshold of being and non-being. The fact that Hafsa Sultan was able to rise to the status of *valide sultan* implies that she may have led a similar life to Hürrem's and followed similar methods to consolidate her power. In this sense, *valide sultan*'s words, while betraying an anxiety to reassert her superiority over Gülbahar, are also suggestive of an attempt on her part to help Gülbahar in this tough game, by curbing her pride and fostering her desires for the future. What she does not realize, however, is that Hürrem will not disappear with a clap of hands. On the contrary, she will challenge the power of both *valide sultan* and the *haseki*.

After Hürrem catches Süleyman's attention, in Tülbentçi's novel, *valide sultan* starts to educate her about the customs, rules, and manners in the harem. She conveys to Hürrem that the primary responsibility for Hürrem's education lies with her, and it is she who will decide when Hürrem can be presented to the Sultan. She also points out that the harem girls do not like it if one of them distinguishes herself in some way, especially if she is favored by the Sultan and his family. She says that they grow jealous and spread unimaginable rumors.³⁵ She advises Hürrem never to pay attention to them, nor to get mad or lose self-control.³⁶ *Valide sultan*'s attitude throws light on the questions that have puzzled people for centuries: How could Hürrem rise from a slave to a *haseki*, then a sultan's wife, and finally *valide sultan*, eliminating other strong rivals, such as İbrahim, who was not only the Grand Vizier, but also the Sultan's most cherished companion; Gülbahar, who was Süleyman's *haseki* for almost a decade; and Mustafa, Süleyman's son by Gülbahar and the legitimate heir to the throne? How could she maintain her power for over three decades? What was it that distinguished her from or rendered her superior over other *hasekis* and *valide sultans*, who came before her, and that inspired the ones after her?³⁷ First of all, Hürrem strictly followed Hafsa Sultan's advice to always maintain self-control, and never allowed her emotions get in the way of her careful reasoning. In the *Interview* she points out that she always carefully reasoned with herself about the situations she found herself in, calculating her behavior and reactions in a way that would bring the results she wanted. "If I had not constantly negotiated with myself I would not be myself; in fact, I would not

³⁴ Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 13.

³⁵ Tülbentçi, *Hürrem Sultan*, 13.

³⁶ Tülbentçi, *Hürrem Sultan*, 13.

³⁷ The number of influential women in the Ottoman history increases after Hürrem Sultan; among them were Handan Sultan, Safiye Sultan, and Kösem Sultan, whose lives were studied in Ahmet Refik Altınay's *Kadınlar Saltanatı [The Reign of Women]* (Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000).

be” (“Kendimle sürekli hesaplaşmasaydım ben olamazdım, hatta olmazdım”),³⁸ she says. Secondly, she carefully observed and pondered people’s actions and reactions in accordance with their personal, professional, and social statuses and motives, and she calculated the possible effects of her own actions on them, thereby reducing the risk of failure. Thirdly, she never acted impatiently, waiting for the right time to put her plans into action. When she set herself a goal, she first weighed the probabilities of success and failure. If the time and conditions were not ripe, she waited until a better opportunity arose, when the probability of success would weigh heavier.³⁹ Her life was calculated as a chess game, which appears to be a significant metaphor in Asena’s play *The First Years*. The chess game between Hurrem and her odalisque, Daye Hatun, in Act I, scene i, foreshadows the series of victories she will win throughout the *Tetralogy* plays. Hurrem perfects her skills, as delineated above, and defeats her rivals at their own game.

Foremost among Hurrem’s strengths distinguishing her from other harem women and from her rivals are her acceptance of change and ambiguity, her insight into the minds and psyches of her favorites and her rivals, and her refusal mentally to remain within the boundaries assigned to women in the harem. Unlike Hafsa Sultan, who is only content with her power within the framework of the harem, Hurrem extends her power to the political domain of the Empire, which finds expression in one of Tülbentçi’s subtitles for the fifth part of his novel: “Hurrem puts her henna dyed fingers into the affairs of the state” (“Hurrem Kınalı Parmaklarını Devlet İşlerine Sokuyor”).⁴⁰

As for Hurrem’s ability to change along with changing circumstances and to keep self-discipline in the face of challenging situations, her comments in the *Interview* mark the difference between her and her rivals in this respect. She states that unlike Mahidevran and İbrahim, she never got carried away with pride or joy over her successes so as to take present happiness for granted and erroneously believe in its permanence, forgetting that everything was subject to change. She did not lavishly waste her strength and she knew where to use her strength and where her weakness,⁴¹ which becomes manifest in her account of her reaction to Sultan Süleyman and *valide sultan*, who asked her opinion about two concubines who were presented to the Sultan. She kept calm despite her burning jealousy and immediately thought of a way to prevent the Sultan from developing an interest in those girls, without giving the Sultan the impression that she was attempting to impose an opinion on him, which he might interpret as disrespect for his authority. So, although her eyes and facial expression purposely betrayed her jealousy, disappointment and pain, she humbly said, “What can I say?” (“Ne diyebilirim ki?”). This way she indicated that she acknowledged the rules of the palace as well as the Sultan’s needs and superiority even if it caused her great pain to have to share

³⁸ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 15. Italics are mine.

³⁹ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 17.

⁴⁰ Tülbentçi, *Hurrem Sultan*, 168.

⁴¹ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 57.

his interest and affection. Realizing that the Sultan was pleased by her jealousy, which she supposedly was trying to hide, she considered the battle as half-won and took another step that she saw fit at that moment. She pretended to faint, whereupon the Sultan sent those two concubines away never to see them again.⁴² This is one of the many instances in which Hürrem's "performance" demonstrates the body as the embodiment of possibilities conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention and as a means of resistance.⁴³

The marked difference between Hürrem and Mahidevran, who had to face a similar challenge but could not handle it well earlier, as well as Hürrem's ability simultaneously to accept and defy authority, become even more pronounced when Mahidevran physically assaults Hürrem, which results in the former's banishment from the Sultan's sight forever. This incident constitutes one of the most dramatic scenes in all of the earlier works, as well as in the *Interview*, all of which describe it as Hürrem's definitive victory over Mahidevran. When Mahidevran asks Hürrem to her room, sensing that Süleyman's interest in her young rival was not just a temporary affair, Hürrem takes utmost care to behave properly and to exhibit due respect to the *haseki*. In the *Interview*, Hürrem relates that day as follows:

However, my eyes were free! I looked contemptuously at the woman across from me who wanted to display her dominating power. The subtly sarcastic expression of my lips, which did not openly invite reproach but could not be ignored either, contrasted with my behavior that was in full conformity with the rules. It was my facial expression which implied to her that I had snatched from her the man she loved and she was defeated. The laws of the harem contained a gap concerning the expression of the eyes and the face. They must have thought that when the body was tamed so well the rest would automatically be restrained, too [...] It had not occurred to anybody else to make use of this only remaining freedom.⁴⁴

She goes on to say that when Mahidevran attacked her in anger and started beating her, she did not attempt to defend herself nor raised a hand against her but kept that facial expression all along.⁴⁵ She remarks, "If Mahidevran had attacked me at the time when the Sultan had just started to show an interest in me I may have been erased from the scene forever. However, she was late; she had missed the

⁴² Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 58–9.

⁴³ See Butler, *Gender Trouble* 134–49, and *Bodies That Matter*, 224–7.

⁴⁴ "Lakin gözlerim özgürdü! Gücünü ezici kılmaya çalışan karşımdaki kadına küçümsemeyle bakıyordum. Dudaklarıma yerleşen, kınamaya yer vermeyecek kadar belirsiz ama bilmezden gelinemeyecek kadar da belirgin alaycı ifade, kurallara uygun tavrımla bir çelişki oluşturuyordu. Sevdiği erkeği elinden aldığımı, yenildiğini yüz ifademle anlatıyordum. Haremin yasalarında gözlerin yüze yayılan ifadesi konusunda bir boşluk vardı. Bedenin bunca ehlileştirilmesi geri kalanı da zaptı rapta alır diye düşünülmüş olmalı [...] Kimse, elde kalan bu yegane özgürlüğü kullanmayı akıl etmemişti." Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 27.

⁴⁵ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 28.

time when she was supposed to interfere.”⁴⁶ Hürrem attributes Mahidevran’s bad timing to her acceptance of the harem system, according to which the concubines were supposed to deny their selfhood by not objecting to sharing the Sultan. As Mahidevran had accepted the system, she had not interfered in Süleyman’s relationship with Hürrem, but when she started to feel neglected, she made a move to prevent it and thereby rebelled against the system. Her move was too emotional and too belated by that time.⁴⁷ Hürrem points out that she was informed about everything in time and rewarded those who brought her news in advance whereas Mahidevran was so sure of herself that she did not feel the need for such an information network.⁴⁸

Hürrem summarizes the secret of her achievements as follows: her refusal to internalize the dominant system despite her apparent conformity to it, her carefully chosen spies on whom she bestowed favors in return for their service, and her utmost attention to the timing of taking a step towards her goals. Hürrem’s statements in the *Interview* also indicate that her victories were attributed at least partly to her rivals’ lack of insight into the Sultan’s psyche, as well as to their reliance on their past and present accomplishments and status, instead of their readiness to prepare for the changes the future might bring, and their surrender to their emotions and loss of self-control, instead of rational calculation of all possible consequences of their words and actions. The failure of Hürrem’s rivals to read the psyche of others is again subtly illustrated in the early works. These works repeatedly emphasize Sultan Süleyman’s attachment to and exceptional treatment of İbrahim Paşa in a way unprecedented in the history of the Ottoman Empire, until Hürrem and her allies start to sow the seeds of doubt in Süleyman’s mind. Thus, all three works compel the reader to trace in Hürrem’s moves a full insight into the nature of this relationship, which enables her to break it up. In fact, the Sultan’s relationship with İbrahim must be scrutinized along with the question what it was that attracted *Kanuni* to Hürrem the moment he lay eyes on her, although none of the works discussed in this study describe her as a particularly beautiful woman. What made the Sultan love Hürrem for almost 35 years, despite the fact that the harem was full of beautiful and talented girls eager to please him?

The triangle of desire that links Hürrem, *Kanuni*, and İbrahim emerges as an important leitmotif in Tan’s novel, which often refers to Hürrem as the owner of *Kanuni*’s heart and to İbrahim as the servant of his pleasure.⁴⁹ Moreover, the novel highlights a “triangle of emotion,” whose angles are occupied by the Sultan’s love

⁴⁶ “Eğer Mahidevran Hatun bana, Hünkarımın dikkatini çekmeye başladığım ilk günlerde hücum etseydi, silinip gidebilirdim. Gecikmiş ve müdahale etmesi gereken zamanı kaçırmıştı.” Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 30.

⁴⁷ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 30.

⁴⁸ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 30.

⁴⁹ Tan, *Hürrem Sultan*, 158, 159, 192.

Hurrem, his pleasure İbrahim, and his duty, the Empire.⁵⁰ In the final scene of Asena's *First Years*, when Hurrem has almost managed to convince Süleyman of İbrahim's dishonesty, the Sultan becomes almost suicidal, because he finds himself in a position where he has to make a choice between Hurrem and İbrahim, one of whom must be lying.⁵¹

As Tülbentçi's, Tan's, and Asena's works emphasize, there are two characters the Sultan blindly relies on and spoils with all kinds of privileges and concessions, sometimes even to the point of disrespecting the customs of the palace: Hurrem and İbrahim. In Tülbentçi's novel, for example, he invites İbrahim to his room to spend the night, listen to the music İbrahim plays and sings, and converse with him.⁵² Likewise, even before Hurrem becomes a *haseki*, the Sultan has a separate room with a view arranged for her in the harem, so that he can personally go and visit her, which reverses the pattern of sultans inviting concubines to their own quarters. Süleyman's behavior makes Hafsa Sultan uneasy since it also implies disrespect for her own superior standing in the harem. Once upon a time, she herself was not only more beautiful than Hurrem but also more noble. Still, *Yavuz* Sultan Selim, Süleyman's father, had not bestowed the same kind of honor on her.⁵³ Of course, the magnitude of Süleyman's passion which defies all traditions becomes most evident when he gives in to Hurrem's wish to become his wedded wife.

Kanuni's attachment to both Hurrem and İbrahim can be explained through René Girard's statement that "When the 'nature' of the object inspiring the passion is not sufficient to account for the desire, one must turn to the impassioned subject. Either his 'psychology' is examined or his 'liberty' is invoked."⁵⁴ Indeed, *Kanuni's* desire for both Hurrem and İbrahim grant him some freedom from his duty as sultan of the Ottoman Empire to live up to the legacy of his father *Yavuz* Sultan Selim, an ideal he must strive for yet wants to rebel against at the same time. In that respect, his psychology resembles that of Hurrem, who also desires to defy the system to whose standards she must conform meticulously. The Sultan also emerges as an ambivalent character; on the one hand, he seeks to emulate his father *Yavuz* Sultan Selim, and on the other, he tries to prove himself differently from him. In a way, he suffers from an "anxiety of influence" and wants to find his own identity as an intellectual and merciful emperor rather than a fierce one, such as Selim, whom everyone presents as a role model to him. In Act I, scene ii of Asena's *The First Years*, Süleyman says that his father was like a storm that blew over three continents and turned them upside down, but a voice inside him

⁵⁰ Tan, *Hurrem Sultan*, 251.

⁵¹ Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 108.

⁵² Tan, *Hurrem Sultan*, 191.

⁵³ Tülbentçi, *Hurrem Sultan*, 17–8.

⁵⁴ See René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 2.

tells Süleyman that he should be that great beautiful light after the storm.⁵⁵ In scene iii, he complains to Gülbahar that his unusually informal friendship with İbrahim whom he made “a brother” to himself is disapproved. Referring to his father’s rules and victories that left a strong mark on the Empire, he admits that he sometimes doubts whether he can really fill his father’s place, noting, however, that times are changing and he must rather promote peace and the study of man.⁵⁶ In scene v, however, he admits to İbrahim that Selim himself was aware that the world was changing and his conquests in the East were a step towards expanding the Empire to the West, and that his own aim should be to emulate his father’s success by conquering western lands where he could establish peace forever.⁵⁷ His growing paranoia about his sons and about İbrahim constituting a potential threat to his rule can also be traced back to his father, because Selim had killed his brothers and usurped his father’s throne. Eventually Süleyman ends up killing not only İbrahim but also two of his own sons, Mustafa and Bayezid, as well as Bayezid’s sons, which finds most dramatic expression in Asena’s *Either Power or Death*. The ideal emperor must not tolerate any threat to his power even if it comes from his kin. This is the model *Kanuni* was raised with, and he follows this model. Hürrem has full insight into *Kanuni*’s psyche because her own life is marked by the necessity to always keep alert against possible threats to her power. Thus, she consciously caters to the Sultan’s ambivalent desires. In Baykal’s *Interview*, Hürrem says that it was not just her modesty but also her restless and rebellious soul, her self-confidence, and her free spirit that attracted the Sultan, who was mostly surrounded by submissive and flattering people. Unlike the “women of duty” trained in the harem, she approached him as a man, a lover, and a human being, rather than an emperor. Süleyman liked her wild and unruly self, which was clothed in modesty.⁵⁸ She stresses that her difference never went so far as to hurt the Sultan’s pride, and she never crossed the borderline of respect and humility towards him.⁵⁹ That is why she was superior to İbrahim who crossed that borderline.

She also adopted the principle of change in appealing to the Sultan’s sense of beauty. She says that true beauty is elusive and does not let itself be understood and enjoyed easily; otherwise, it is destined to be overlooked or forgotten quickly: “Only the woman who looks different in each light and environment is beautiful” (“Ancak her ışıktaki, her ortamda farklı görünebilen bir kadın güzeldir”).⁶⁰ She combined her posture, clothes, hairdo, make-up, the speed of her talk, even her mood in infinite ways, depending also on the mood of the Sultan: “I would exhibit hundreds of steps between sorrow and joy” (“Hüzünle neşe arasındaki yüzlerde

⁵⁵ Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 14.

⁵⁶ Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 19–20.

⁵⁷ Asena, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Dörtlemesi*, 27.

⁵⁸ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 20–21.

⁵⁹ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 75.

⁶⁰ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 33.

basamağı ayrı ayrı sergilerdim”).⁶¹ Moreover, she did not count on the success of the day and renewed herself every day so that each time was like the first time for Süleyman.⁶²

The constant erasure and re-inscription of identity marks Özen Yula’s *Unofficial Hurrem*, which focuses on the attempts of the 54-year-old “mad” Hurrem Sultan to remember and return to her past life back in her hometown where she left her freedom.⁶³ She complains, “This palace makes one forget herself” (“Bu saray, insana, kendini unutturur”).⁶⁴ Two of the main motifs of the play are rebellion and escape, and madness is associated with both. At the beginning of the play she escapes into her room, which paradoxically stands for both her freedom and her enclosure in the palace, and locks the door behind her, refusing admittance to the doctors, contrary to the Sultan’s order. The entire play takes place in this room where Hurrem and a concubine (“Concubine”) named “Hurrem,” who sneaked into the room through a secret passage and who represents Hurrem Sultan’s youth, enact episodes from her life in the palace. Almost the entire play consists of the two Hurrems acting the roles of different personas, who played a part in Hurrem’s life, by projecting their puppet figures on a “dream screen,” thus creating a shadow theater. The structure of the play embedded with multiple performances represents Hurrem who constantly had to transform herself to win her power games. However, she underlines that a passion for power, which equals a passion for life, pervades the whole established system:

History labels women as “passionate.” However, history itself rests upon passion, so why should women be blamed? [...] One should destroy in order not to perish. For instance, when love is concerned ... If love will destroy you, you must destroy your heart. That’s the only way to avoid danger. You must solve the problem once and for all.⁶⁵

Hurrem’s words seem to refer to her secret lover in the play, a fictive lover, a character in the puppet show that is imagined and directed by Hurrem and that constitutes a significant part of the play *Unofficial Hurrem*. Her secret lover is an artist named Mihal, who was commissioned to paint her room with pictures from her past. Mihal appears in the play only in the form of a puppet with whom Hurrem conducts a rather impassioned dialogue. Although Mihal had taken an oath not to speak about the room after his work was finished, he was murdered

⁶¹ Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 35.

⁶² Baykal, *Hürrem Sultan ile Söyleşi*, 35.

⁶³ Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 43.

⁶⁴ Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 13.

⁶⁵ “Tarih, kadınları ‘ihtiraslı’ yaftasıyla geçiriyor kaydına. Halbuki tarihin kendisi ihtiras üzerine kurulmuşsa, kadınların bunda ne suçu var? [...] Yok olmamak için yok etmeli. Mesela bir aşk ... Şayet bir aşk seni yok edecekse, sen gönülünü yok etmelisin. Ancak böyle kurtulursun bütün tehlikelerden. Kökünden halletmelisin meseleyi.” Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 17.



Fig. 9

Performance of Özen Yula's play, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem* [*Unofficial Hurrem*], by Istanbul City Municipality Theater, Jan. 2005. Dir. Ayşenil Şamlıoğlu. Perf. Rozet Hubeş and Şebnem Köstem. Photo by Ahmet Yirmibeş. By permission of Istanbul City Municipality Theater.



Fig. 10 Performance of Özen Yula's play, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem* [*Unofficial Hurrem*], by Istanbul City Municipality Theater, Jan. 2005. Dir. Ayşenil Şamlıoğlu. Perf. Rozet Hubeş and Şebnem Köstem. Photo by Ahmet Yirmibeş. By permission of Istanbul City Municipality Theater.



Fig. 11 Performance of Özen Yula's play, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem* [*Unofficial Hurrem*], by Istanbul City Municipality Theater, Jan. 2005. Dir. Ayşenil Şamlıoğlu. Perf. Rozet Hubeş and Şebnem Köstem. Photo by Ahmet Yirmibeş. By permission of Istanbul City Municipality Theater.



Fig. 12 Performance of Özen Yula's play, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem* [*Unofficial Hurrem*], by Istanbul City Municipality Theater, Jan. 2005. Dir. Ayşenil Şamlıoğlu. Perf. Rozet Hubeş and Şebnem Köstem. Photo by Ahmet Yirmibeş. By permission of Istanbul City Municipality Theater.

upon completion of his work, which was decided by Hurrem and *Kanuni* together, because nobody was supposed to hear anything about the secrets of the room. The words spoken by Mihal's puppet in the voice of the younger Hurrem expose both women's feelings about their lives in the harem: "Death is the place where you live Hurrem" ("Ölüm, içinde yaşadığın diyardır Hurrem").⁶⁶ On the other hand, the passage quoted above also throws light on Hurrem's relationship with *Kanuni*, which required her to suppress her emotions. She did not delude herself with the idea that she could possess *Kanuni* because she had full insight into his divided soul. She admits that she had to share the Sultan's attention and affection with other women who also meant a lot to him: his mother Hafsa Sultan, his sister Hatice Sultan, and her daughter Mihrimah Sultan, but above all she had to share him with the Ottoman Empire. She asks Concubine: "Have you ever gone to bed with vast lands, wars during which many lives were lost, long, tiresome sieges, treaties, poverty, and wealth? Have you ever made love to a huge history while trying to construct history, especially while another fire was burning in your heart?"⁶⁷ Later in the play, she tells Concubine, "The hallways of the palace teach you a lot Hurrem, even to produce more selves from within yourself and to make people believe in the reality of those."⁶⁸ Indeed, Hurrem's life is composed as a series of perfectly crafted plays of her authorship, in which she emerges as both real and fictive, a conformist and a rebel, a puppet and a puppeteer at the same time. Her identity reflects Karen Christian's claim that identity is "an ongoing narrative that can never be outside representation."⁶⁹ Christian mainly draws on Stuart Hall's reference to identity as "something that happens over time, that is never absolutely stable, that is subject to the play of history and the play of difference."⁷⁰

Before Hurrem escapes from the palace, she tells Concubine a story, the story of several generations of two concubines—one concubine being the Sultan's favorite—who talk about the past and the future by acting roles, telling stories and playing games, giving free reign to their imagination, and even inventing fictive lovers.⁷¹ Although the two Hurrems are sorry for all those women in the story who "tried to find happiness by leading a borrowed life" ("Hep ödünç bir hayatı yaşayarak mutluluğu bulmaya çalışmış"), they both agree that at least they left

⁶⁶ Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 19.

⁶⁷ "Kocaman bir ülkeyle, binlerce can alan savaşlarla, uzun, yorucu seferlerle, antlaşmalarla, yoksullukla, zenginlikle yatağa girdin mi sen hiç? Bir tarihi kurmaya çalışırken, koca bir tarihle seviştin mi? Hele bir de, gönlün başka bir ateşe ... " Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 17.

⁶⁸ "Sarayın koridorları çok şey öğretir insana Hurrem. Kendi içinden, kendinden başka insanlar çıkarmasını da, bu başka insanlara diğer insanları inandırmayı da ... " Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 40.

⁶⁹ Karen Christian, *Show and Tell: Identity as Performance in U.S. Latina/o Fiction* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 9.

⁷⁰ Christian, *Show and Tell*, 9.

⁷¹ Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 55–6.

a mark in the world at a certain period of time, which provided material for a story.⁷² The last scene of the play starts with applause, and it turns out that the previous scenes presenting the dialogues of the two Hurrems and their role-acting were themselves parts of a play organized by Handan Sultan⁷³ and enacted by two concubines. Handan Sultan says that she saw her own story in Hurrem's, although she realizes the concubines mixed reality with fiction in the stories they enacted. She adds that embellishing reality with fiction has always been customary, thereby also referring to lies and conspiracies in the palace.⁷⁴ Handan also insists that this rebellious play be kept secret from Safiye Sultan⁷⁵ and Sultan Mehmet III,⁷⁶ which implies that she, like Hurrem, both conforms to and rebels against the system. It must be noted here that the concubine who acted the role of the young Hurrem in the embedded play is the future Kösem Sultan,⁷⁷ another important woman, after Hurrem Sultan and Safiye Sultan, in the history of the Ottoman Empire. In the closing lines of Yula's play, Kösem says, "One must determinedly pursue one's goal in order to reach it. The throne is as alluring as it is dangerous ... There will be a Kösem Sultan, too. Take note of that."⁷⁸ Kösem's words and her future life, as it is recorded in history textbooks and history novels, reflect Handan Sultan's statement in the play: "Stories don't bring death [...] On the contrary, they chase away death. They prolong life. Everyone writes her story, plays it and leaves."⁷⁹ By successfully writing and enacting her own story/history, Hurrem inspired women such as Kösem Sultan who sought to emulate her in their own writing/acting and thereby immortalized both her and themselves.

Hurrem Sultan left her imprint in history by constantly erasing and rewriting herself, thus escaping from "closure" while living within the closure of the harem.

⁷² Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 56–7.

⁷³ Handan Sultan was a *haseki* to Sultan Mehmet III (1595–1603), the son of Murat III (1574–1595), who was Hürrem and Süleyman's grandson; she was *valide sultan* during the reign of Sultan Ahmet I (1603–1617). See Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 198–243.

⁷⁴ Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 62.

⁷⁵ Safiye Sultan was the *haseki* of Sultan Murat III (1574–1595) and mother of Sultan Mehmet III (1595–1603), during whose reign she was *valide sultan*. See Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 194–243.

⁷⁶ During Mehmet III's reign, Safiye Sultan was *valide*, and Handan Sultan was *haseki*." See nn. 72 and 74 above.

⁷⁷ Kösem Sultan was the *haseki* of Sultan Ahmet I (1603–1617), Handan Sultan's son, and a *valide sultan* during the reigns of Murat IV (1623–1640) and Ibrahim I (1640–1648). See Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 213–65.

⁷⁸ "İstemesini bilmelisin ki olsun. Tehlikeli olduğu kadar güzel de o that ... Bir de Kösem Sultan olacak Nargül abla. Bunu yaz bir yere ... Yaz bunu!" Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 65.

⁷⁹ "Hikayeler ölüm getirmez [...] Aksine ölümü defeder, ömrü uzatır. Her insan kendi hikayesini kurar bu dünyada, oynar ve gider." Yula, *Gayri Resmi Hurrem*, 61–2.

Her desire for power and her resistance to power made her the ever elusive woman who will never be captured in writing but always live in writing. The two contemporary texts studied in this essay, Özen Yula's *Unofficial Hurrem* and Adnan Nur Baykal's *The Interview with Hürrem Sultan*, focus on the complexity and ambivalence of Hurrem's identity, thereby contesting the apparently judgmental attitude of historians as well as writers of history novels or plays. With special focus on Hurrem's "performative" acts, Baykal's and Yula's works display the ways in which Hurrem resisted the power structure that constrained her, by enacting the very roles it assigned to her. At the same time, they encourage the readers to revisit earlier works on Hurrem, such as Feridun Fazıl Tülbentçi's and M. Turhan Tan's history novels, and Orhan Asena's history plays in his *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Tetralogy*. Hurrem's portrayal in these works as an overly ambitious, egotistical, and manipulative woman—never satisfied with anything less than the best for her interests and conspiring against her rivals and the innocent alike—converges with another Hurrem emerging from between the lines to tell us that she was yet another woman in the harem whose actions involved nothing outside the scope of reason, considering the established order of the palace, and whose power transcended all individuals. This dual Hurrem manages to become an individual by rebelling with submission, by loving with reason, and by reasserting her life with constant transformation.

PART 2

Translations

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Chapter 8

Gonzalo de Illescas, *The Second Part of the Pontifical and Catholic History* (1606)¹

Foreword and translation from Spanish by Ana Pinto

The *Historia pontifical y catholica* is a lengthy work, by a Spanish cleric Gonzalo de Illescas (1521–1574/1575),² which attempts to document all historical events connected with the popes and Spanish kings. Much to its author's credit, as Winston A. Reynolds points out,³ Illescas's work is one of the first histories of the popes to have been written in a language other than Latin, and certainly the first such work in Spanish. The chronicle has two parts. Part I, which consists of five books, covers a long stretch of time, from Saint Peter up to Benedict XI (d. 1304)—194 popes in all. Each of the five books ends in a chapter dedicated to the kings of Spain. This first part of the work was first published in 1565, in Dueñas—a small town near Palencia—to which Illescas was attached by birth and work.

Part II has only one book, the sixth one, covering 31 popes—from Clement V up to Pius V (d. 1572). It was first published in Salamanca in 1573. This second part⁴ is of great interest because the writer was contemporary with the historical events from Paul III's up to Pius V's time, which implies that he was a witness to many of them, as he testifies throughout this sixth book, even though his point of view might be at times somewhat marred.

Judging from the many early editions of Illescas's work,⁵ we can infer that it was widely read, a fact that can also be proved by the early expansion of its

¹ Translated from Gonzalo de Illescas, *Segunda parte de la Historia pontifical y catholica* (Barcelona: J. Cendrat, 1606), 261v–3v.

² Not to be mistaken—as the authoritative Espasa encyclopedia does—with a Hieronymite friar bearing the same name, but living a century earlier, whose impressive portrait by Zurbarán still hangs in the original place for which it was painted, the vestry in the Guadalupe Monastery. See *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana*, 70 vols (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1925; 1981), 28: 1037.

³ Winston A. Reynolds, "Gonzalo de Illescas and the Cortes-Luther Confrontation," *Hispania* 45.3 (1962): 402.

⁴ Obviously, all the information about Roxelana is contained in the sixth book, Part II of Illescas's *Historia*.

⁵ See Ludwig Pfandl, "Gonzalo de Illescas und die älteste spanische Papstgeschichte," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens*, eds Heinrich Finke, Konrad

contents; four other parts were very soon added by others. The author of Parts III and IV was Luis de Bavia, Part V was written by Brother Marcos de Guadalajara, and Juan Baños de Velasco added Part VI. However, in spite of its popularity, the book did not escape the strict and ubiquitous eye of the Inquisition, for it was put on various *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* [*Indexes of Forbidden Books*] for the years of 1569, 1583, 1590, 1612, 1632, and 1667.⁶

Despite the widespread diffusion of Illescas's work, and the brazen plundering of the work by later chroniclers,⁷ no one cared to write a profile of its author. It was not until 1931 that the German Hispanist Ludwig Pfandl, extracting information scattered throughout Illescas's work, sketched a reliable biographical notice of Gonzalo de Illescas. Others have followed and improved Pfandl's path, although further research should be encouraged in order to know the blurred aspects of Illescas's still intriguing life.

**“OF ISMAIL THE SOPHY, KING OF PERSIA;
AND OF SULEYMAN’S WAR AGAINST TAHMASP,
ISMAIL’S SON, IN 1535”⁸**

I think that the curious reader would like to know what happened to our friend Ismail the Sophy,⁹ King of Persia, and his descendants, whom we have not mentioned for a while. I will briefly state the following facts in order to complete the historical account. After Ismail the Sophy's wars and conflicts—which have already been told—against the Ottoman Sultans, Selim and Suleyman, Ismail the Sophy lived peacefully in his kingdom for some years until he died of sickness in 1525. He was outlived by four legitimate sons. The eldest one, who was called Tahmasp, inherited the Persian kingdom and the Sophy name, a title that has been used by these kings for some years until God may order otherwise. The second son, whose name was Bahram, was given the government of Media, Hiberia, and Albania. Alqas, who was the third son, was appointed governor of Babylon, Assyria, and

Beyerle, and Georg Schreiber (Münster in Westfalen: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1931), 26; Quintín Aldea, Tomás Marín, and José Vives, *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España*, 4 vols (Madrid: Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1972–1987), 2: 1190–91; and Enrique Gacto, “Censura política e Inquisición: la *Historia Pontifical* de Gonzalo de Illescas” in *Revista de la Inquisición* 2 (1992): 23–4.

⁶ See Gacto, “Censura política e Inquisición,” 25–6.

⁷ See Mariano Roldán-Pérez, “Gonzalo de Illescas y la *Historia Pontifical*,” *Estudios literario dedicados al profesor Mariano Baquero-Goyanes* (Murcia: Universidad, 1974), 593, 614–24; and Emilio García-Lozano, “Gonzalo de Illescas: historiador y cronista de Indias,” *Actas del 11 Congreso de historia de Palencia*, 7 vols (Palencia: Diputación de Palencia, 1990), 4: 466.

⁸ For the bibliographic information on the source of the original passage, see footnote 1 in this chapter.

⁹ An archaic title or designation of the supreme ruler of Persia, the Shah.

Mesopotamia. The fourth son called Sam Mirza was given the Parthians' kingdom. These four brothers were on very good terms with one another, but at the same time they were great enemies of the Ottomans, as their father had been before, and consequently they were good friends with the Christian princes and kings.

Tahmasp spent the first nine or ten years of his reign in securing his land and having continual skirmishes with the Hyrcanians and Kirghizians, who were neighboring peoples. The reason why he fought these tribesmen was a religious one and had to do with the way they understood their faith, as here we deal with the Lutherans. As we have already said, the Sophy's people were called Kizilbash while the other Turkmen were called Kazaks because of the difference in their hats or turbans, and also because they did not understand the Koran in the same way. Tahmasp would very much like to make war against Suleyman, and many of his vassals—generally called AGRAMIOS¹⁰—advised him to do so, but he never had enough forces to leave his frontiers, except for a few unimportant raids with the Persians and the Kurds when they crossed the Euphrates and caused trouble along Suleyman's borders.

These offenses and others (especially the question of different religious opinions) had provoked in Suleyman a desire to start a campaign against the Sophy in order to get rid of that annoying neighbor. But strangely he was hindered from accomplishing this enterprise by his own mother, on the one side, and, on the other, by his new wife Roxelana, whom he had recently married and by whom he had already had children. He was so captivated by Roxelana's beauty, and—according to what people said—by her spells and enchantments, that he was reluctant to leave Constantinople and go far away from her. For this reason and others, such as the natural hatred the two aforementioned women felt against the Christians, Suleyman was persuaded that he was to make war against Hungary or any other Christian king and not against people of his own faith, as he was reminded how disastrous the wars against Persia had been for him and his predecessors in the past. He was also reminded of what had happened to the unfortunate Bayazid I, who was so wretchedly treated by the great Tamerlane. Only Ibrahim Pasha thought otherwise; his was different from the two ladies' opinion. He had many reasons to think that making war against the Christians was not opportune, since they counted on a very lucky Emperor and three countries, such as the Spaniards, Italians, and Germans (among others), who were very valiant and dexterous with weapons. He also said that the Kizilbash should not be detested less (for even though the Kizilbash were Turks, they were so stubborn in their religious errors) than the Christians who had a different faith. All these reasons given by the Pasha were evident and looked real and conclusive. But what actually made Ibrahim persuade Suleyman to make war against Persia was that he had Jesus Christ in his heart and, curiously enough, he loved our religion as any Christian from a Christian country, and he tried to prevent any type of danger that could

¹⁰ That name has been left as it appears in the Spanish original, given the difficulty of finding a correspondent word in English.

harm Christendom. He did it so willingly that both Suleyman's mother and his wife called Ibrahim a feigned Turk and disguised Christian. But since he was the great favorite of Suleyman and had managed to win the Sultan's will—because Suleyman thought that his Pasha, who was a very wise man, would never deceive him—in the end, Suleyman decided to abandon the idea of war against Hungary and made an aggressive campaign in Asia against Tahmasp the Sophy, King of Persia, despite his own mother and his wife's contrary opinion. Without any delay he had everything prepared for war and at once he saw himself marching off with 300,000 men. [...]

[Narration of the successive battles and Suleyman's defeat follows. The first serious setback for Suleyman took place in Sultania as he was waiting for Tahmasp to begin the battle, and because of severe weather conditions (cold and snow), "many" Turks died. But Suleyman's real defeat happened near Bethlis, at the foot of Mount Taurus [sic] when Tahmasp's captain caught Suleyman's men by surprise at night and "countless" Turks were killed, while 800 Janissaries and some distinguished men were made prisoners. This defeat took place on the 10th of October, a date to be celebrated from then on, as it meant the Sophy's triumph over Suleyman.]

This enormous disaster was so painful for Suleyman that he immediately retreated from the war and returned to Constantinople with great fury and resentment in his heart against his great friend Vizier Ibrahim for having advised him to carry on that war. And it is believed that if Ibrahim (who had left before) had been present when Ulama arrived at the base camp with the news of the defeat, the Sultan would not have waited to punish him and would have just done what he would do later.

Before reaching Constantinople, Suleyman came across Barbarossa and the Jew Sinan who told him about the loss of Tunis, which upset him greatly. But he did not show any symptoms of weakness; rather, he kindly consoled them and gave them hope that the disaster which had befallen them would be retaliated by greater ones he had in mind to inflict upon the Christians.

Meanwhile, feeling elated and not caring about what was going to happen to him later, Ibrahim had ordered a magnificent reception for Suleyman's arrival in Constantinople. But this was not enough to appease the Sultan, for Ibrahim's new services and old ones were of no use to root out from Suleyman's heart the sense of indignation he felt because of what happened at war. Every day his indignation grew even further with what his mother and his wife would tell him, since they both were firmly resolved to precipitate poor Ibrahim's downfall. The fact of being the Sultan's great favorite was bad for him because this status usually engenders envy, and Roxelana wished his death because in everything Ibrahim favored Mustafa, Suleyman's eldest son, over Bayazid, Roxelana's son. She did everything in her power to have Bayazid designated as his father's successor, but Ibrahim always advised Suleyman not to pervert the natural order of things. The combination of all these causes contributed to Ibrahim's downfall. But none was more harmful for him than the suspicion that he was a secret Christian, and that

he favored Christians in everything. Consequently, Suleyman began to feel such intense loathing for his former favorite that he decided to put him to death. In order to carry it out, but hiding his true purpose from Ibrahim, Suleyman called for him with the excuse that he had to inform him of some business. He stayed alone with Ibrahim in his chamber and from that day to this Ibrahim has not appeared either alive or dead. It was believed that on this occasion he was lavishly bestowed by the Sultan and was told to go to sleep; and when he was sleeping, Suleyman beheaded him with his own hands. He chose to kill him in that way, because a long time before that day when Ibrahim had told the Sultan not to be given so many favors, as they could be the cause of his downfall, Suleyman had solemnly promised not to kill him as long as his life lasted. And given that a sleeping person is neither alive nor dead, he thought that he would not break his promise. Ibrahim's assets were seized with such rigor that, despite his wealth, his poor wife was hardly given her small dowry with which she could maintain her small children.

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Chapter 9

Lope de Vega, *The Holy League* (1603)¹

Foreword and translation from Spanish by Ana Pinto

The Holy League is one of the dramas written in the Spanish Golden Century by a prolific Spanish playwright Lope de Vega (1562–1635). The action of the play recreates both the splendor of the Ottoman Empire and its defeat. The play opens with various scenes laid in the Sultan's palace in Constantinople and closes with the battle of Lepanto, where an alliance of Christian forces—the Holy League—puts a stop to the Ottoman naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

The Holy League was written between 1598 and 1603² and is based on historical facts contemporaneous with the writer's lifetime. The battle of Lepanto was fought in 1571, which means that Lope de Vega was nine years old at that time. On the whole, both the action of the play and the main characters match historical events and figures. However there exist several inaccuracies concerning specific historical facts, which need some comment.

Rosa, *Rosa Solimana*, or *Solimana* are the three names given in the play to Sultan Selim's first and favorite concubine, and it is well known that this was the name of Suleyman I's famous first wife. Historically, *Rossa*, *Rosa Solimana*, or *Roxelana*, as she was also known in the Western world, was Selim II's mother and not his wife. She did not outlive Suleyman (1494–1566), for she died several years before him. Lope de Vega, very possibly, committed this anachronism on purpose in order to justify the inclusion of the famous Venetian painter Titian as a character in the play. On historical grounds, it seems certain that Titian made a portrait of *Solimana*,³ and that the painting, which was very likely brought to Spain, was well known in this country during the seventeenth century.⁴ Her portrait

¹ Translated from Lope de Vega, *Obras Completas, Comedias*, ed. Manuel Arroyo Stephens, 15 vols (Madrid: Turner, 1994), 10: 565–75.

² These two dates are tentatively given by S. Griswold Morley and C. Bruerton in *Cronología de las comedias de Lope de Vega* (Madrid: Gredos, 1968). My translation is based on one of the earliest editions of the play, which was published by Viuda de Alonso Martín in Madrid in 1621.

³ There is no historical evidence, though, that for this task Titian journeyed to Constantinople, as it is openly said in the play.

⁴ Pedro Beroqui, *Tiziano en el museo del Prado* (Madrid: Talleres tipográficos de Cándido Bermejo, 1946), 144.

is now lost, although a copy exists in the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida.⁵

Any literary work, even though it could be based on historical facts, is to be expected to have many more ingredients other than just historical accuracy, and in the composition of *The Holy League*, it is three paintings by Titian that seem to have also influenced the Spanish playwright.⁶ Besides Titian's portrait of Rosa Solimana for the character of Rosa in the play, two other Titian's paintings—*Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto* and *Allegory of Religion*—seem to have been the inspiration for the depiction of the battle of Lepanto in the third act of the play.

There exists a great deal of literature on the influence of painting on Lope de Vega's work.⁷ And from these studies we know that the Spanish dramatist was well versed in the theory and history of art, and consequently he must have greatly admired Titian, for in Spain the Venetian painter was considered to be the greatest portraitist of the epoch, as Frederick De Armas points out.⁸ If this was so, it is not surprising to see that historical accuracy should have been sacrificed in order to focus on the extraordinary beauty of the Sultan's most beloved wife. Audiences and readers of the play would very easily perceive the Sultana's beauty if told that she had deserved to be painted by the great Titian. The Venetian painter had also captured on canvas another royal beauty closer to the Spanish public, the Empress Isabel of Portugal, Charles V's wife.

Speaking of Titian's painting of Rosa Solimana brings to light another trait of the play that seems to be rather puzzling: the oblivion of Suleyman the Magnificent. His name does not appear anywhere in the play; even when the shadow of Selim's father comes in the middle of the night, Selim calls him by another name: "*Selim*, it's your son, it's Selim who calls you. / Father, Why are you leaving?" ("*Selin*, tu hijo soy, Selín te nombra. / Padre, ¿por qué te vas de esa manera?") (Act I; my emphasis).

Historically, Selim I was Selim II's grandfather. Why then, did Lope de Vega skip over Suleyman?⁹ No definitive answer can be given to this question, but it

⁵ Wilhelm E. Suida, *A Catalogue of Paintings in the John & Mabel Ringling Museum of Art* (Sarasota: John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art, 1949), 168; Frederick A. De Armas, "Lope de Vega and Titian," *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978): 349.

⁶ De Armas "Lope de Vega and Titian," 345–9.

⁷ Just a few examples will suffice: see Arturo Marasso, "Lope y la pintura," *Boletín de la academia argentina de letras* 4 (1936): 428; Miguel Herrero-García, "Ticiano y Lope," *Revista de estudios hispánicos* 2 (1935): 629–30, and also his "Un dictamen parcial de Velázquez y una escena de Lope," *Revista española del arte* 13 (1936): 66–8; Robert J. Clements, *Picta Poesis* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1960); and Américo Castro and Hugo Rennert, *Vida de Lope de Vega* (Salamanca: Anaya, 1968).

⁸ De Armas "Lope de Vega and Titian," 344.

⁹ It must be said, however, that the name "Soliman" appears twice in the play, but it does not refer to the historical figure of Suleyman the Magnificent. The first time the name is used by Mustapha when addressing the Venetian Senate. These are his words: "Senate, may I have your attention please!: / Selim, *Soliman* Sultan/ from the great Ottoman house,

seems that the absence of Suleyman's character in the play was intentional. A possible explanation could be that the very mention of Suleyman's name could bring to Spanish audiences recent memories of the Ottoman glory, which would tarnish the Spanish glory of the historical moment the play wanted to praise.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

SELIM, Grand Turk
 SELIM'S SERVANTS
 ROSA SOLIMANA
 CAPTIVE MUSICIANS
 MUSTAPHA, *pasha*
 PIYALE, *pasha*
 ULUC ALI, King of Algiers
 THREE CAPTIVES
 A MERCHANT
 CONSTANCE, *captive*
 MARCELO, *child*
 TITIAN, *painter*
 VENETIAN SENATORS
 FATIMA, Turkish woman
 MAMI
 ALI, *Turk*
 ANDREA DORIA¹⁰

ACT I

(A great company of Turks. Selim appears behind them, leaving his bath, and being offered some clothes on a tray. He begins to get dressed.)

Lord of the greatest part of the world / [...] wishes you health, friendship and peace” (“Estad, Senado, atento: / Selin, Sultán *Solimán* / de la gran casa otomana, / señor de lo más del mundo / [...] a vos salud, amistad y paz”) (Act I; my emphasis). The meaning of the name in this context seems to clearly be “great,” “Ottoman,” or even “Muslim.” At the end of the play, the name appears a second time and is included in the lyrics of a song sung by two rogues: “Death to the nasty Soliman! / Long live Philip and Don Juan! [...] (“Muera el perro Solimán! / Vivan Felipe y don Juan!”) (Act III). Given the nature of the two characters singing that song and the context, the word “Soliman” seems to stand for either “Muslim” or “sultan.”

¹⁰ The character of Andrea Doria in the play is not based on the famous Genoese admiral Andrea Doria, the one who entered the service of Emperor Charles V, after serving the French King Francis I. It stands for Giovanni Andrea Doria (1539–1606), also an Italian admiral from Genoa, and a great-nephew of the former, who fought at Lepanto.

SELIM: The water was really good.

Give Fatiman¹¹ two hundred coins.

SERVANT: Great gift!

ANOTHER SERVANT: Though they are dumb,
their sound gives away that they are of gold.

SELIM: A wonderful mixture of perfumes!

There is no better comfort,
nor more beneficial effects
than these fragrances,
for the person who is in love.

SERVANT: If baths did not soften
man's flesh, you would be very right.

SELIM: What nonsense!

Is my flesh with my sweaty face
expected to be eaten?

SERVANT: No, but it is advisable for a good king
to be strong and healthy;
this is why kings used
to practice hunting not only for pleasure.
It helps eradicate idleness,
it is similar to warfare, and
it strengthens man's body
for sea and land fights.

SELIM: Tell me, fool, were not
the Romans, among all past
and present nations,
a warlike people?

SERVANT: Yes, Sir, they were.

SELIM: Well then, they had baths,
and they made use of them so frequently
that thousands of bath-houses were built.

SERVANT: But those who were fighting
did not make use of them,
it was only those who were living peacefully.

SELIM: Get off, you impertinent!

(Enter Rosa Solimana.)

ROSA: Who are you cross with?

SELIM: If I ever lost in Orient
what has been conquered
more by my good luck than by my people,

¹¹ "Fatiman" is the name of a male servant; not to be confused with "Fatima."

and saw this beautiful face,
I would forget and be enthralled;
For seeing you is seeing paradise,
but you would stop being so
if you ever felt any grief.
My power is not infinite,
and I am not called Great Lord
because I can control a vast territory,
from the German frozen lands
to the scorched Egypt;
neither am I, because Anatolia,
Armenia and Syria,
Mount Taurus and the Hyrcanian Sea,
and the lands from Arabia to Hungary
are under my rule;
neither am I, because I crossed the Tigris,
saw Mesopotamia and covered
the Tanais with blood,
destroyed the great Rhodes,
and laid siege to Malta;
neither am I, because my power
has reached the cold Danube,
and the Indian Bengala;
neither am I, because Sijeto equals
the misfortune of Chios;
neither am I, because you know
how many people adore my person,
which is over the moon, and implore
my favor as if it were Allah's;
neither am I, because several provinces,
though of a different faith,
give me silk, birds, and horses;
neither am I, because I have so many vassals
who pay me tributes and taxes;
neither am I, because of so many pearls,
silver and gold, and luxurious palaces
full of riches;
I am called Great Lord only because I am
the master of this beauty that I adore.

ROSA: And what would happen, Selim,
if I had, as the Christians say,
a seraph's beauty
endowed with many more sublime qualities
than the number of leaves in this garden?

If among all the gifts given
 to a mortal creature by the celestial hand
 I had wisdom,
 and if you were a man of humble origins,
 poor and without renown,
 and if another man, like you are now,
 wanted to make me the universal mistress
 of his kingdoms,
 I would surrender myself to this body
 which is what my soul adores.
 What about your bath?

SELIM: Such a presence you have that,
 even though I could not feel you
 with my senses,
 I could feel you with my soul.
 An *alfaqui*,¹² who is my friend, says
 that Allah is everywhere,
 and I do not contradict him,
 since you are my Allah
 and everywhere you are with me.
 Please take a seat, as flowers and springs
 in this garden invite you
 with their scents and streams;
 and make these lips ask for
 impossible things.
 For power, not that of Christians
 who are vile and dejected,
 but Ottoman Turkish power
 can find phoenixes in nests
 and stars in hands.
 Ask for the sun before it sets,
 and I will take it and place it at your feet
 with the Spaniard's pride
 and the Albanian's fury.
 Be aware that there is only one thing
 that will be impossible for me to grant you:
 Giving you my whole soul so that you can see it.

ROSA: Look! I will easily be satisfied:
 Have someone come and sing.

SELIM: So be it.
 Majesty also shines in these small things.
 Call someone to come and sing.

¹² An *alfaqui* is synonymous with "Mufti." It means a "Muslim priest."

SERVANT: Here you are!

The three Spanish captives

SELIM: Sing something.

SERVANT: What will their song really say?

ROSA: Though their music is strange,
it is pleasing to me.

CAPTIVE MUSICIANS (*singing*):

In Selim's arms

Rosa Solimana appears.

She is the flower of Anatolia
and the beauty of Asia.

The more Selim conquers
with the help of his janissary power,
the more she conquers with her eyes,
for they kill what they look at.

*Happiness to the soul who is paid homage
by the person to whom the world pays tributes!*

To Rosa, the fair Italy owes

its present peace,

because, in order to enjoy her beauty,

Selim refuses to take up arms.

Also Spain feels grateful to her influence.

Mars has his sword hanging in Venus' temple.

*Happiness to the soul who is paid homage
by the person to whom the world pays tributes!*

SELIM: Spain, you have an advantage
in *savoir faire*!

ROSA: It seems that listening to them
makes you feel elated.

SELIM: In the name of Allah! I rather enjoy
this singing than the sound of flutes.

ROSA: Will they dance Spanish dances too?

SELIM: Hey! Dance!

What would you like them to dance?

ROSA: The tournament.

SELIM: I would very much like to see this dance.

ROSA: Dance only that dance!

(*Dancing takes place, and enter Mustapha.*)

MUSTAPHA: How do you dare to forbid me
to enter where the Great Lord is?

SERVANT: There is not a place reserved for you.

SELIM: Hey! What is this noise?

SERVANT: Mustapha would like to speak to you.

MUSTAPHA: O, valiant descendant,
of the great Ottoman house,
which has been so fortunate for centuries
in the control of Asia!
How is it possible that you consent,
being the best of your house,
to have your soul enslaved
by the dominion of the flesh?
The lazy when clothed in silk and rich drapery
do not get renown.
Renown is acquired by taking up arms.
Would your ancestors not have left you
less than Armenia and Arabia,
if they had been lazy and prone
to always enjoying themselves in rich beds?
Do not lose what they won
with palm and laurel,
because the value of things
consists in keeping them.
Rosa is certainly handsome,
but fame is much more beautiful;
and virtue alone exceeds
everything created.
Perfumes are not so dear to
a good captain and king,
as the smell of the black smoke
from the burning of gunpowder. [...]

[Mustapha's long speech follows. He reminds Selim of the great exploits of the kings of Spain (Charles V and his son Philip II, contemporaries of his) achieved by taking up arms. Selim interrupts him by saying:]

SELIM: Mustapha, stop!
Stop, Mustapha!
Are you mad?

MUSTAPHA: Sir ...

SELIM: Go away and leave me alone!

MUSTAPHA: I'll leave, but one day
you will know ...

SELIM: Leave immediately! (*Exit Mustapha.*)

O! My Solimana!

How terrible it is that these people
do not let me rest for one day only!
They act so, because they get richer with war,
where they become robbers of Italy's gold.

They long to see my banners
 plowing through the land
 and sailing the sea.
 Do not allow anyone to enter here!
 And you are allowed to resume your singing.

(*Enter Piyale pasha.*)

PIYALE: Sir, allow me to enter
 so that I can talk to you.
 SELIM: What do you want, Piyale?
 PIYALE: You are extremely idle,
 Great Lord of the greatest part
 of the world, for you almost own
 from the Nile to the Indian Ganges,
 and, considering who you are, I don't know
 how your sanjakbeys¹³ and pashas
 can dare to talk to you.
 It is true that Mars is usually portrayed
 weaponless in Venus' arms,
 and these portraits are done in this way,
 not because he is always unarmed
 for he would stop being Mars,
 but to show how passion is appeased,
 which is a very important thing for captains.
 In Solimana's arms, Sir,
 you are lying carelessly,
 and your laziness lets
 Christians rest.
 Now France has peace
 and great prosperity.
 The King of Poland sleeps
 fearless of your cannon-shots.
 Maximilian, who is pleased because
 he knows your present exercises,
 takes off his steel gauntlets
 and puts on leather gloves.
 In Hungary, Sigismund
 lives in delightful peace.
 Portugal unmolested
 trades from India all kind of things.

¹³ The governors of *sanjaks*. In the former Turkish Empire, a *sanjak* was one of the administrative districts or provinces.

- Palatine Polish build libraries.
Castile sleeps. And Oran steals
men from your lands.
Please sir, look at your ancestors'
extraordinary achievements!
- SELIM: How very impertinent of you
to talk like that!
Piyale, leave the garden at once!
If you do not leave, I will order
my Janissaries to cut your throat.
- PIYALE: But sir ...
- SELIM: I am telling you to go away.
- PIYALE: Consider ...
- SELIM: Ooph dog! leave at once!
Or else I will have your
fierce tongue nailed to those doors.
What do you think of it?
- ROSA: Do not get angry, for my life's sake!
- SELIM: You have added moderation to my anger.
- ROSA: I feel very grateful
for helping you temper your anger.
But they [these men] have spoken to you with great zeal.
- SELIM: Do you know how much I love you?
- ROSA: I would like your love tempered,
so that you can first attend
the things of your realm.
- SELIM: Then, I want you to see how much I love you
by humbly prostrating at your feet
all that I am.

(Kneel Selim.)

- ROSA: Oh, my Lord!
- SELIM: I am fine in this position.
- SERVANT: (This either witchcraft or madness must be.)
- ROSA: Sir, how can you kneel here?
- SELIM: Yes, Rosa, and even that is not enough.
- ROSA: Oh my dearest! Kneeling down
is not a proper thing for you to do;
even though love is mad,
the love you feel for me
must not drive you mad.
- SELIM: It is my pleasure to do so.
- ROSA: So be it,
but the world is upside down.

SELIM: If I had two thousand worlds
I would put them beneath your feet.
And if I could turn all this sand under your feet into pearls,
I would do so,
because your feet do not deserve less.

ROSA: Please stand up, for my life's sake!

SELIM: It's that life that gives me mine.

(Enter Uluc Ali, King of Algiers.)

ULUC ALI: Please let me in.

SELIM: In the name of Allah! The King of Algiers!

ULUC ALI: Can't I see you only for one day?

SELIM: Speak out promptly, Uluc Ali!

ULUC ALI: Great Lord,
whose great courage is capable
of controlling the world.
It is not fair so unwillingly to listen
to the person who is speaking to you
and loves you so dearly.
Just now Piyale and the great Mustapha
have left this place,
and they complained about Solimana
who keeps you occupied
morning, evening, and night.
You signed a treaty of peace with Venice
last year, because you wanted to live a life
that your dignity despises;
and, to tell you the truth,
that peace was cowardly and foolish.
By this treaty, relying on your power
and with their hands unoccupied,
the Venetians know that they can plunder
other places.
Pius V, their Pope,
incites them, and I fear
that he is hiding some mischief,
for the time is ripe for it.
Captives say, my lord,
that since that fisherman,
Christ's church has never had
such a renowned and formidable minister.
When he is in conclave
with his cardinals,
he only speaks of his affront, your deeds

and your majesty.
He makes kings worry
about your Alcoran and your faith,
because he has in mind
to conquer Jerusalem,
his prophet's tomb.
You do not know what Pius V is like;
all that I have said is nothing
compared to what he is.
All fifth-ranked people, my lord,
if it pleases you to consider them,
have divine courage:
Fifth was King don Fernando
and Charles the Emperor.
What would happen if Rome
knew that a woman controls
and tames the Great Lord,
causing dishonor to his sword
and a great insult to Mahomet?
Lo, Sir!

SELIM: Vile dog!

In the name of the person you have mentioned
I hope he sheds your dirty blood!
What do you all want? Let me alone, shadows!
Since I do not know how to call you.
Is there in the world
anything more tyrannical and insulting?
I'll kill you!

ULUC ALI: Great Lord!

SELIM: Run away, you dog!

ULUC ALI: That'll be better.

(Exit Uluc Ali.)

ROSA: Oh, my darling!

SELIM: Rosa, please leave me alone!

In the name of Mahomet! if anyone else
talks about you again
he'll see what I can do!

ROSA: You are extremely angry.

SELIM: See what will happen if Uluc Ali
comes again and talks to me!

ROSA: Lo! Do not be cruel,
as all was due to their loyalty.

SELIM: Can't these dogs see
 that you are like the Alcoran
 which is beyond all dispute?
 Long live my darling!
 And if, as I fear, anyone
 insists on speaking about you,
 I'll promise, and swear it to Allah,
 that I'll have his hair and beard shaved,
 and he'll be condemned to the galleys!
 Let us go in! It is about time to rest.

ROSA: Your having felt annoyed
 really worries me.

SELIM: Looking at you, madam,
 cannot make me annoyed.
 You have the power to spare their life;
 for, your power over me
 is mightier than mine.
 Let them come and see me,
 and I'll grant them favors. [...]

[A new scene follows, and various Christian captives appear; among them, there is a mother, called Constance, and her small son, who wait to be redeemed by a Trinitarian friar. The latter and also a merchant are present on the stage. After this scene, another one opens and Selim appears on the stage.]

(Exeunt the captives. Enter a shadow followed by a troop and Selim with his sword drawn. Exit the shadow through the other door.)

SELIM: Stop! Wait!
 Shadow! why are you getting away?
 And if you are a soul,
 Wait! Wait for a moment!
 Selim, it is your son, it is Selim who calls you.
 Father, why are you leaving?
 It seems that I am taken aback by what I see;
 everything horrifies me,
 everything disturbs me;
 I shrink back in fear.
 Did I not deserve to touch you?
 O! frozen shadow!
 My courage failed! This is true!
 You went out cast by the winds
 And now I feel ghastlier and stiffer than you.
 If you were created by my fears

and if I saw you in my sleep,
 how could you speak to me?
 how could you shout and make me hear
 your swift feet?
 Am I Selim? Yes, I am.
 Can I feel? Yes, I can.
 Has it begun to shine? Yes, day is breaking.
 Where am I? I am in my chamber.
 Solimana, what has happened?
 Maybe that vision presaged my death,
 which for a king is horrendous news.
 What did my father tell me?
 Be it what it may, I will face danger.
 Come on, soldiers! Get out my banners!
 Down idleness! The Christian is to tremble,
 and so are Charles the Fifth's son
 and the Fifth Pius,
 and so too the Hungarian and the Venetian,
 for, today the world will see
 my mighty power.
 Today the world will know
 that I am both a Scythian and an Ottoman.
 Today I want to have Peter's [i.e., the Pope's] ship
 sunk by my galleys.
 Come on, soldiers! Get out my banners!

(Enter Rosa Solimana.)

ROSA: As fast as I could get dressed
 and leave your bed,
 I have come, for I heard you
 speaking aloud.
 SELIM: Hurry up! Call my pashas!
 ROSA: I am afraid you are sleeping;
 no one has come in here.
 SELIM: Rosa, the time when I was mad and blind
 is now gone by;
 even though my passion is not dead
 it has now cooled down.
 The man who came here
 was my father, that venerable old man.
 ROSA: Pull yourself together!
 You have imagined there was another person
 when you saw yourself reflected in that mirror.

SELIM: That is enough;

Do not talk about what that might be.

ROSA: I know what it was.

SELIM: And, what is it?

ROSA: You certainly have grown tired of me,
and, as daylight was taking long to come out,
you invented this story.

Cold shadows mean
that your soul is cold.

When you men have in bed
what you do not desire
and do detest,

you imagine, like sick people,
that you see deaths and shadows.

If you do not feel like
lying with me,
do not deceive yourself,
since you have three hundred women
at your disposal.

But, why do you call me instead?
Having me drives you madly in love,
it takes the shine off your reputation,
but I know that a man loses his wits
enjoying what he detests.

Yesterday you were Great Lord
for deserving my favors
rather than for ruling the whole Asia.
How is it, Selim, that your deep love
has turned to such scorn?

Yesterday, kneeling down you placed
the world at my feet and you were willing
to give me a thousand others.

And today, with such deep hatred
you cast me out of your side.

What can this mean?

Yesterday I could see
my feet treading on a king as loot;
yesterday I was treading on pearls
and today I am shedding them
and you do not try to dry them up.

SELIM: Please, do not cry, Rosa, do not cry!

I do not want your sweet cheeks
to get burnt by your tears.
But it is not advisable

to spend one's whole life in love.
 Go into the chamber, then
 You will know what the matter is.

ROSA: I am willing to obey.

SELIM: And I still think that the world is too little
 for you to be offered
 and be placed at your feet.

ROSA: When will you see me again?

SELIM: Later.

ROSA: Are you telling me the truth?

SELIM: Come on! Won't you leave?

ROSA: Sir ...

SELIM: Come on, then!

ROSA: How could I have been brought
 to this miserable condition?

SELIM: In the name of Allah!

I feel that a greater fire is burning me!

(Exit Rosa. Enter Piyale, Uluc Ali, and Mustapha.)

[In this scene, Selim meets his two pashas and the King of Algiers to tell them how his last night's vision has changed his mind and life. He tells them about his plans and entrusts one of the pashas (Mustapha) with a mission: to go to Venice and ask the Venetians to give him back Cyprus, otherwise war would be declared.]

[The following four scenes are about the Christian captives' leaving. Some are going to Spain, while the mother (Constance) and her small son are going to Cyprus on board of Mustapha's brig on his way to Venice.]

[The next scene takes place at the Senate in Venice; the senators are assembled to welcome the famous painter Titian back from Constantinople where he had been sent to paint the portrait of Rosa Solimana.]

(Enter four Venetian senators and Titian, the painter.)

FIRST SENATOR: You are very welcome back to your country,
 you, famous painter, great and illustrious Titian,
 glory of the past and present century.

TITIAN: My very honorable Venetian Senate,
 following your advice I went to Constantinople,
 since Selim asked you to send me
 in order to paint Rosa Solimana,
 which is against the rules of his despicable sect;
 I painted her, served him and, well paid,
 have come back to my country and brought you this letter.

SECOND SENATOR: I have heard that Selim spends his time
in idleness.

TITIAN: You can easily disarm your galleys;
for, buried in idleness, love, and sleep,
he spends his time, like Nero or Commodus.

THIRD SENATOR: I am going to read the letter.

FIRST SENATOR: We are all ears.

THIRD SENATOR: "Selim, Sultan by the grace of God, Emperor of
Constantinople, etc., last year, I swore peace with you, noble Senate and
the Venetian Republic, and now I swear again to make that peace
inviolable until my successors' time. I have been very well served by
Titian, your famous painter; and I beg you to grant him a noble title,
for his art deserves it, and his moral integrity compels me to ask you
this. May God preserve you."

FIRST SENATOR: What Selim asks is fair;
so, from now on a title will be granted to you, Titian.

TITIAN: I kiss your feet, my invincible lords.

FIRST SENATOR: Have you by any chance brought a copy
of Rosa Solimana's portrait with you?

TITIAN: I have brought this one
which I offer to your assembly.

(Titian shows them the portrait.)

THIRD SENATOR: What a beautiful lady!

SECOND SENATOR: Since she is a woman who keeps Selim calm,
she deserves a place among the most famous women.
God be with you, Titian, for the Senate
needs to speak about an important issue.

TITIAN: May the high heavens preserve you!

SECOND SENATOR: Sirs, would you please take a seat.

(Exit Titian and sit the senators.)

ACT II

[The first scene of Act II opens with Mustapha, on his way back to Constantinople, trying to seduce the Christian captive woman (Constance), who is still with him and has not been left in Cyprus on his way to Venice. A new scene follows that takes place in Constantinople; the dramatis personae are Selim and Fatima.]

(Enter Selim and Fatima.)

SELIM: As true as the moon is in the sky,
you will be foolish and

fall from that sky
if you go on feeling jealous.
I admit that Rosa
is the most beloved one,
and her first place
will not be occupied by anyone.
Let Rosa be there,
for she is entitled to be the first;
but my heart is big enough,
so that there can be a place for you.
If in my baths, as you know,
there is room for three hundred women,
How is it that you want to be so important
and not to share it with another?
Value your second place,
as if given by Allah,
and do not oppress the heart
of a man of the world.

FATIMA: Selim, just as a realm cannot be well ruled
even for one day by two kings,
likewise, love that is a king, too,
does not like company.
Your bath-house has enough room
for a thousand women,
but you will not be able to have
two women in your heart,
which is plainer than the palm,
for if they feel jealous,
they will quarrel and, if they quarrel
they will cause your soul great distress.
If because of a woman,
a hundred provinces are inflamed,
What will two angry women not do to one soul?

SELIM: I understand, Fatima,
what you mean,
but to a sound mind
what does it matter if they [the women] are foolish?

FATIMA: And will a very good instrument
sound fully accorded
if it has not very good strings?
Do you not see that dissonance will follow?

SELIM: No, because an expert hand
makes up for any deficiency.
Do a thousand seeds not live peacefully

in a pomegranate?
Why do you not like
that a soul could hold two tastes?

FATIMA: But when pressed,
the seeds try to open the pomegranate;
and there being many of them,
they long to come out of their enclosure.

SELIM: Fatima, there is always
an exception to everything;
my heart is capable of that,
see if you want to adapt to it.

FATIMA: Please tell me that you like me
to satisfy desire,
and I will do it, but do not say
that you love two women.

(Enter Rosa.)

ROSA: You are so busy
that you can hardly be seen.

SELIM: My dear Rosa!
I have to pay attention to state matters.
These days I have made new arrangements
of my ships, and galleys
for the protection of our coasts
with a Turkish infantry.
I have appointed new captains,
I have provided munitions,
and employed soldiers
from diverse nations.
Ship-building has left
that small mountain over there bare.

ROSA: And has Fatima been the purveyor
of those things you have done?

SELIM: She is a friend and advisor.

ROSA: Is she an advisor and friend?
If you consider her as a friend
I can understand that you might feel obliged to her,
but, if it is true that you consider her as an advisor,
you will carry out an ineffectual war
guided by a woman's advice.

FATIMA: Now, Selim, you will see
if your heart can hold both.

ROSA: All your activities, Selim,
take place here;

I have never seen you use other weapons,
or other brave squadrons.
Fragrances, music, play,
delicacies, and wonderful baths
are your wars and your damage,
and, then, Fatima.

FATIMA: Sir, widen your heart
if we are both to be held.

SELIM: How fearless you have grown!

ROSA: I do not know how Allah blesses me
with so much patience to endure you.

SELIM: Do not take so many liberties.
It is enough! Leave it alone!

FATIMA: I am glad that this anger
begins to annoy you.
In good faith, you were going
to put two adders into your heart!

ROSA: You will soon see my folly
if you do not leave, Fatima.

SELIM: Oh! It is clear that arrogance and beauty
often go hand in hand!

(Enter Ali.)

ALI: I would like to speak to you, Sir,

SELIM: Speak out, then!

ALI: Mustapha has already come.

SELIM: Do you know by chance, Ali,
if Venice accepts to hand over Cyprus to me?

ALI: What a captain you sent
to fulfill such mission
and bring you the news you expected!

SELIM: Tell me, then. Is Mustapha not as brave
when he gets started, as the dead Barbarossa,
who was the terror of people?

ALI: All this is flattery of braggarts;
but take Barbarossa's awe-inspiring
face out of his tomb,
and you will see that even dead
he is more successful than the living Mustapha.
I will not say anymore, for the person
who has brought shame on all of us
is about to come here.

SELIM: Tell me, what has he done?

ALI: He addressed the Republic so cowardly
that he left the Senate
feeling miserable and ashamed.

SELIM: Venice, even if my ambassador had been a child,
could you possibly have spoken evil?

ALI: And Venice
has already protected its coast with galleys.
In the name of Mahomet! If you send me there
I will cast fire into its ships and it will burn!

ROSA: I am afraid this is jealousy.

ALI: Yes, but of my great deeds,
which make me the fear of the world.

SELIM: Tell me, Ali ...

[Selim continues questioning Ali in order to find out what has happened between him and Mustapha. Finally he discovers that Ali feels a grudge against Mustapha for a matter of love: Constance, the beautiful Christian captive, has been coveted by both. While discrediting Mustapha, Ali tries to get appointed as commander-in-chief for the campaign against Venice. Later, Mustapha joins the scene, and both Ali and Mustapha argue. While listening to their personal complaints about each other, Selim appoints Ali as General of the Army, but he finally gets cross with both and says:]

SELIM: In the name of Allah! Ali,
I will have you both impaled!

ROSA: You have much disfavored Mustapha,
who is such a gifted and renowned man,
and has rendered such good service to you.

SELIM: What else can be done?

FATIMA: I will tell you what, Sir,
You can favor them both,
since both are brave men.

SELIM: This is the peace I want to make:
I decide to appoint Mustapha too
as the general of this war;
You, Ali, are to command the sea,
and Mustapha, the land.

ROSA: You have decided extremely well.

FATIMA: You must be given the prize for your courage.

SELIM: Rosa, you two, do the same:
Share me between you both,
one is to have my body,
and the other one, my soul.

[This scene ends and is followed by other scenes in which some Christian people talk about the formation of a Christian alliance against the Ottomans. The remainder of Act II deals with the Turkish campaign against Cyprus, carried out by both Ali and Mustapha, who succeed in capturing the island.]

ACT III

[The first scene opens with two Spanish soldiers talking about the Venetian defeat at Cyprus and the preparations for creating a Christian alliance against the Sultan. The alliance, called the "Holy League," is concluded between the Pope (Pius V), Philip II, and the Venetians. The principal leaders of the alliance will be King Philip's brother, Juan of Austria, and the Genoese Admiral Andrea Doria. Meanwhile, in Constantinople the following scene takes place.]

(Enter Selim with Rosa and Fatima.)

SELIM: Why do you think it is strange
that I should care about Mars?

ROSA: You have been so dedicated to Cupid
that I do not know when
you have made use of his weapons.

SELIM: My dearest Solimana,
I have been practicing in order to be prepared
to face the day when a misfortune
might befall;
and since Fortune is a wheel,
nobody should trust his present position.
Ali, Uluc Ali,
and Mustapha are very happy
with their important victories;
And, for my sake, they do not fear
the sea, nor the force of winds.
It seems that they are almost
getting to Italy and landing there.
But I am afraid that they can be confronted
with this army of the League
that is being prepared.

FATIMA: Do not worry about that Christian League.
If our men are
three dexterous and brave captains,
they will achieve victory over the League.

SELIM: I greatly fear that young don Juan.

FATIMA: Even though there were two thousand don Juans,
Ali will win over the Pope,

So will Uluc Ali over King Philip
And so, too, will Mustapha over the Venetians.

SELIM: Will Allah help me or the Pope?

ROSA: If this decision depended on my will,
yours would be the victory.

SELIM: And that very same day, Rosa,
I would give you the same glory.

ROSA: Selim, you must trust Allah.

(Enter Mami, a Turk.)

[Mami, an envoy from the Ottoman fleet, has been sent to ask Selim's advice about the opportunity to go into battle against the Holy League in the gulf of Lepanto, where it has retreated. Mami speaks in Rosa and Fatima's presence and, after giving some news to Selim, he says:]

MAMI: He [i.e., Ali] wants completely to destroy
Christendom,
but he does not want to go into battle
without knowing what you wish.

SELIM: I want to ask your advice.

MAMI: (Upon my soul, what kind of advice!
What a senate of elderly people!
To two women he entrusts
his reputation! It seems clear
that he sees it from afar!)

FATIMA: For such bellicose people,
placed on the moon,
rich, honorable and glorious,
who have gained the victory
over the adverse fortune,
What endeavor will be impossible to accomplish?

ROSA: Fatima is right,
and it is not to be feared
that they might be defeated,
for they have been trained to win.

MAMI: Oh, what a strange decree!

SELIM: Mami!

MAMI: My Lord!

SELIM: Let it be so.
Once there, they should attack.

MAMI: Yes, Sir.

SELIM: People say that this don Juan
is strong and discreet.

MAMI: Ali had one of the thousand portraits of him
drawn in Italy.

SELIM: And is he strong, Mami?

MAMI: His appearance does not do justice to his soul.

SELIM: But it does in many people.

MAMI: He is handsome and noble,
and fair as a German;
I swear that he is a man.
And being a man and don Juan
makes him to be loved rather than feared.
He is a man so dear to men, children, and women
that no one has ever existed like him.

SELIM: What do you intend? Make me feel jealous?

MAMI: No, I don't. I have said what I feel.

SELIM: Wait, and I'll write to the generals.

(Exit Selim.)

ROSA: Tell me,
Can all that be seen in don Juan?

MAMI: I saw all that in his portrait
And all that has made him famous.

ROSA: When coming back, will you not
bring a portrait of don Juan?

MAMI: Certainly not! But if you tip me ...

ROSA: I will not be ungrateful to you.

MAMI: Why do you want to have it?

ROSA: Just to have a look at him.

FATIMA: How very extravagant your wishes are!

ROSA: Fatima, I get annoyed
when people praise things without seeing them.

FATIMA: Where do you intend to place it?

ROSA: In the apple of my eye.

(Exeunt Mami, Rosa, and Fatima.)

[This scene ends, and so does Rosa Solimana's presence in the play. The last part of Act III deals with the Turkish defeat and the victory of the Holy League over the Ottomans.]

Chapter 10

Prospero della Rovere Bonarelli, *Soliman* (1620)¹

Foreword by Galina Yermolenko
Translation from Italian by Virginia Picchietti

Prospero Bonarelli's tragedy *Il Solimano*, dedicated to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II, was performed in Florence in 1619 and published in 1620. The reprinted editions of 1632 and 1649, as well as the French edition of 1637–1638, bespeak its great popularity with the public.² The 1620 edition was embellished with six etchings by Jacques Callot, representing the frontispiece and a scene from each of the five acts.³

Bonarelli achieved considerable historical accuracy of Turkish life by drawing details of costumes and manners from Francesco Sansovino's Turkish chronicle *Dell' historia universale dell' origine et imperio de Turchi* (Venice, 1561).⁴ Yet the world of *Il Solimano* is universal due to its neoclassical genre. The neoclassical emphasis on verisimilitude led to the abandonment of long philosophical soliloquies and choruses of the Senecan drama, and, instead, the introduction of numerous confidants into the play.

Roxolana appears here just as "Regina" ['Queen'], and Soliman as King of Thrace, although the action still takes place in Aleppo, Turkey. Acmat, Rusten, and Osman are Turkish stock characters that had appeared in earlier tragedies of the Soliman-Mustapha cycle: Rusten is usually Soliman's "evil" adviser and son-in-law, who conspires with the Queen; Osman is Rusten's relative and henchman; and Acmat is Soliman's "good" adviser, who often speaks against Roxolana (the Queen

¹ Translated from Prospero della Rovere Bonarelli, *Il Solimano; tragedia* (Firenze [Florence]: P. Ceconcelli, 1620). For the play's plot summary, prepared by Virginia Picchietti, see Appendix I. See also Galina Yermolenko's discussion of the play in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

² *Jacques Callot 1592–1635*; [cat. of exhibition] at the Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, 5 March through 11 April 1970 (Providence: Brown University, Department of Art; Rhode Island School of Design, Museum of Art, 1970), no. 19.

³ Callot's impressive title page featuring the young Soliman standing between massed standards against the backdrop of a battle can be seen in Figure 4 in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

⁴ See *Jacques Callot 1592–1635*, no. 19; and Joseph S. Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from Its Beginning to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols (New York: B. Blom, 1932, 1964), 1: 208.

in the play) and in favor of Mustapha ("Mustafa" in the play). Other characters, such as Adrasto, Aluante, Aidina, or Alicola, as well as various messengers, have more European (Italian) names and seem to be Bonarelli's inventions who perform the functions of confidant(e)s and counselors on which the action in neoclassical dramas heavily depended.

Bonarelli also introduced several innovations into the known Roxolana-Mustapha plot, such as the substitution of royal offspring (which was a common theme in the Italian tragic theater of the *seicento*)⁵ and a romantic love between Mustafa and Despina, daughter of a Persian King. Much of the intrigue is thus based on Soliman's fear of his son's potential betrayal in favor of his archenemy, the Persian Shah.

Translated below are the last two scenes of Act IV, which show the Queen's horrible discovery of her lost son, and the entire Act V, which features the catastrophic unfolding of the tragic action.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

SOLIMAN, *King of the Thracians*

RUSTEN, *King's son-in-law*

ACMAT, *Soliman's counselor*

OSMAN, *Rusten's relative*

MUSTAFA, *Soliman's son*

ADRASTO, *Mustafa's lieutenant*

ORMUSSE, *rector and Mustafa's counselor*

DESPINA, *Persian King's daughter*

ALUANTE, *Despina's minister*

QUEEN, *Soliman's wife*

QUEEN'S NURSEMAID

AIDINA, *Mustafa's nursemaid*

ALICOLA, *Mustafa's servant*

ACT IV, scene 10

(*Queen, Aidina, Alicola*)

QUEEN: And so even outside the royal residence

I am overcome by a strange feeling and new horror

As soon as the imprudent Prince arrives.

I feel renewed pity in my breast over his impending death,

And my heart refuses to gain pleasure from it

Even when reason says I should.

⁵ Kennard, *The Italian Theatre from Its Beginning to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, 1: 198.

But I should transfer
The pity I feel for him
To myself. Others should not think me unjust
If to save my life and the life of my beloved children,
I wished the death of the other,
Without which there was neither escape nor defense.

ALICOLA: Alas, do you hear this Aidina?
Does she delay because of us?

AIDINA: May you always live happily, dear Queen.

QU.⁶: May Heaven hear you, good women. And what
Brings you before me now? What do you wish?

AID.: We ask a favor,
Noble Lady.

QU.: Please ask, ask,
Because nothing can make me refuse
Your wish.

AID.: The glorious echo
Of your goodness, which resounds everywhere,
Has encouraged us
To ask and to hope for worthy assistance:
We beg you,
The source of all compassion,
To spare the life
Of the person whose death you perhaps until now had reason
To desire.
After we reveal strange secrets about this person,
Your heart will surely
Manifest, if still possible, the right affection,
And show pity without much harm to yourself.

QU.: Please explain what you are saying.
Tell me, who is this person?

AID.: Noble Queen,
It is the person upon whom Heaven
Has perchance wished death,
Not, I think, because of the perceived error,
But so that he will not inherit this Kingdom,
Not being its true and just heir.
Though it is certain too, that, not knowing his true identity,
He is innocent still.
I am referring to the Prince, you see,
Although he is no longer Prince, and actually no longer

⁶ In keeping with the original Italian text, names and titles will be abbreviated after their first appearance.

Even Mustafa, because the name is false.
His status is also different,
For as Heaven did not bestow upon him a Royal fate,
He must live as subject, and without a Kingdom.
Sovereign Queen,
For Heaven, for earth,
For your own life and that of your sons,
I submit myself to you, weeping,
And beg and implore you
To be kind, and to piously
Save his life with your prayers.
May the sorrowful state of myself, nursemaid,
And my fellow servant,
Both of us unhappy in our maternal love,
Move you to pity.
Guided by maternal affection,
We have always kept abreast of his
Fate and movements.

QU.: Rise, wretched women. My Heart
Is moved and touched by your pain;
And it seems distressed
Sensing your unending suffering.
Nevertheless, whoever the Prince may be,
I do not foresee any hope for his well-being.

AID.: Oh powerful Queen,
Nothing can refute your will;
If you will it, he is saved.

QU.: Then help me understand
How you can be so certain
That he is not the heir of this Kingdom.

AID.: Tell me, Queen, is it not certain and undeniable
That only Soliman's sons will inherit
This Kingdom's sceptre?

QU.: This is true.

AID.: Then Mustafa's right hand
Will never bear the weight of that sceptre.

QU.: What are you saying?
Is he not the King of the Thracians'
first son?

AID.: He is not, my Queen.

QU.: Why do you mock me, audacious old woman?
Is this not the son to whom the Circassian
Gave birth exactly three days
Before I gave birth to my first?

AID.: Now listen to me carefully and hear the truth.

That child died the very same day
Your own son was born.
To not lose favor
In the Kingdom and in the heart
Of the King, where she occupied a happy place
For having given birth to the Kingdom's first heir,
The Circassian silenced the cruel affair.
I secretly took the dead infant to Filandro,
An old and faithful servant,
Who followed my instructions
And quickly brought the child to those areas around
The City where foreigners reside
Separate from us.
He handed him over on my behalf
To be buried by this friend here,
Who at the time was of a different faith.
He then asked that in return and as early
As the next day,
She provide a live infant
To replace the dead one.
This she did, and the child
She gave me is the one
The Circassian then
Convinced the King, the Kingdom, the World,
And even the child himself, was her own.

QU.: These are strange things.

But tell me, is this man then your son?

ALIC.: He is not my son, oh great Queen.

QU.: Then who

Were his parents?

ALIC.: I do not know.

QU.: Did you steal him perhaps?

ALIC.: No, fate

Placed him in my arms.

QU.: I do not understand.

ALIC.: An entirely unknown woman gave him to me.

QU.: And why did she give him to you?

ALIC.: So that I might bring him to the West,

In a City located among the waves

Where I was to wait,

Because one day she or someone sent by her would come

For the boy.

QU.: What is all this, alas?

Tell me, did she give you anything else

Along with the child?

And did you give her anything in return?

ALIC.: I was given much gold and silver,
And precious materials and rich swaddling clothes;
And because she pleaded so vehemently
That I give her the dead infant
whom she saw in my arms
(And it was the one that in that very place
Had been sent to me), I gave him to her,
And she left happily with him.

QU.: What am I hearing?

ACT IV, scene 11

(Queen, Queen's Nursemaid, Alicola, Aidina)

QU.: Just in time, my nursemaid,
You arrive just in time.

NURSEMAID: My lady, why
Do I find you so disturbed
When I myself come to you for encouragement?

QU.: Now tell me, woman, could you in your heart
Recognize the woman who gave you the child,
If she were to appear before you now?

ALIC.: Even though the passing years
Tend to take our memories with them,
I might be able to recognize the unknown woman now,
Because at the time I secretly managed to
Catch a glimpse of her face.

QU.: Come here quickly, then, my nursemaid,
And look at her carefully,
Tell me if you remember
Ever seeing her. Look
And see if you recognize her.

NUR.: Her appearance, Queen,
Returns to my mind clearly, rather than confused.

ALIC.: My lady, I swear that this is the woman.

QU.: Alas!

ALIC.: My lady, it is she.

NUR.: Who? Who am I?

ALIC.: The one who entered Byzantium,
And now, exactly
Twenty years have passed
Since a live infant was strangely exchanged for a dead child.
Do not marvel, and try to remember

How you found me
Sitting on the steps of my humble home,
With a dead infant in my lap;
And that after walking a few steps ahead
You turned to me and asked
For the little cadaver,
Offering me in his place a boy
Whom you had hidden in a small basket
In a bed of assorted flowers.
And try to recall how, after I fulfilled your wishes,
You asked that I swear to the Heavens
and promise to quickly
Take your child to the place where the Sun sets
And where a City rises high in the middle of the Sea.
But do you doubt me still? Are you still not
Convinced by what I say? Wait and watch,
For I shall take from my breast
A thing that is faithful to the real sign,
A thing I have brought with me
Thinking precisely
That it would serve me well in the undertaking
For which we are now here.
Do you recognize it?

QU.: Oh Heavens.

NUR.:What do I hear now? What do I see?

This is from the infant son's
golden mantle,
The piece I had left, and you are the one
To whom I had given it. Now I recognize you completely.

QU.: Oh poor, wretched me! Oh unhappy woman! Oh fate!

NUR.:But why should this be a source
of sadness for you?

QU: Alas, nursemaid,
Alas I am dead. Tell me:
Where is the Prince now?
What has become of him?

NUR.:If he is still alive,
He lives in the arms of death and is dying.
What is your wish?

QU.: Run! Hurry! Let us be off! Come, women,
Follow this wretched woman! Oh Heaven help us,
Arrest your course so that I might arrive in time.

NUR.:What will happen now?

AID.: Oh we poor wretches!

ALIC.: Ah fate!

ACT V, scene 1

(Ormusse, Messenger)

- ORMUSSE: Ah, he was right when he said,
I would arrive late;
But alas, if I arrive late to prevent
The desired death, with time at least
I might be able to die with him as well.
But who is this person whom I see
Move hesitantly from the palace and with eyes cast downward
To hide tears?
Those arms crossed over the breast,
Those arched brows,
That pale countenance,
That plaintive gait, alas, shows,
What pain and astonishment encumber him.
I would like to know,
But do not dare ask,
that which I fear hearing, that which I avoid knowing.
- MESSENGER: Oh fortune, oh fortune, oh Kingdoms, oh World.
Now by my inclination,
Seeing myself outside the cruel shelter,
I shall be able to weaken the breaks
To the sighs, the voices, the tears, the cries.
- OR.: What am I hearing?
- MESS.: What if it falls and ruins the Sky?
What if the sun sets in such a way,
That it no longer returns to the East?
What if irate winds do not set flight,
And do not disperse the air?
Is it the earth's globe
As big as it is,
That is swallowed by the deep Sea?
- OR.: Why do I torment myself by remaining in suspense?
Quickly tell me my friend,
Is Mustafa alive?
- MESS.: Oh poor Ormusse, which blind
fortune guides you to these foul places,
Nests of treason, and pitiless,
Where the noble fruit of your labors
Lies felled, and lacerated in the earth?
Poor fool, what do you ask? The prince is dead.
- OR.: Alas, alas poor soul.
- MESS.: And the unjust death
of the beautiful Despina,

Daughter of the King of the Persians, mistress, and bride,
rendered his death even more crude, and cruel.

OR.: Alas, so that which has just been told me,
and I did not believe, is true?
But if Heaven allows, my dear friend,
Tell me, how I will die,
For, if my fate is indeed a happy one,
Be it that the knife
Of your tongue
Will ensure that by my death
No other trouble will rest in my hand.

MESS.: You will see, you will see, old man,
Events so fierce, and so horrible,
That will cause fear, and grave and mortal pain,
To those who hear them;
And I, who was present,
And in whose mind
The fierce matter has been so impressed,
Can still see, and hear
Every act, every word,
And can unfortunately fully narrate every fact to you.
Once the Prince and, with him, the Princess
arrived at the Palace,
The King welcomed them with such a smile,
That his face seemed blanketed
more by a flash of pride than by a grin,
And gushing he said: oh worthy couple
Of eminent spouses, may Heaven guide you, and preserve
The happiness I see in you; and in the meantime
They, genuflected prostrate at his feet,
Kissed them multiple times, and he looked
Around, and called Rusten to himself;
He whispered in his ear, and turned to
His son, and said: now take your bride
To her royal room,
To which Rusten will be the guide.
You will see me later, for an important matter,
That cannot wait, takes me from you.
They rose upon hearing this, and the humble Prince
Set to
Reasoning with his father,
But with a sign the father ordered,
That he leave without a word,
And in the meantime the king himself
Moved quickly, and while his foot

Turned towards me, I saw his eyes,
Swell with tears,
From the bottom of his heart,
Driven here with force,
I know not if for disdain, or pity.
And, alas, I still well see in the same place
The Prince become upset, and turn pale,
But he still quickly obeyed, and took
His woman by the hand, and
Walked behind Rusten, and I with him,
Because the King ordered it, and others followed as well.

OR.: And so it is in this way, that the children,
Pure innocent lambs,
Together go to their sacrifice?

MESS.: We descended many flights of stairs, and once we reached the end
We entered a remote and very dark room,
Surrounded by old and naked walls.
Rusten stopped here, and gave orders,
So that some
Closed the doors, while others
Hurlled themselves on the Prince, and others still on Despina,
And they were quickly bound up by a thousand knots;
Nothing helped them, neither force nor entreaties.
And the Prince, having already seen
The proud Minister with the naked sword in hand,
Said, turning to his mistress, and bride:
Oh most cherished part of my soul,
Here is the cruel sword,
Which will end life as it cuts the knot,
With which Love, and Heaven tied us together.
But why is it not enough,
He continued turned towards us,
For the atrocious blow to fall upon my head?
Why do you not forgive
The royal maiden?
Whose life cannot
Prevent anyone from attaining honors and ranks,
Nor take away the desired Empire from others.
Ah, forgive her now,
Forgive this wholly innocent woman,
If always having loved me
Has not already been charged
As a wrong, a sin.

OR.: Oh generous son.

MESS.: No, no, she answered,

I alone, I alone am
Guilty of your offences;
This is the innocent head,
That has impressed in it that face,
And because you like him,
The paternal ire was awakened against you,
He remains the only one punished, and beaten.
But the Prince is not appeased, so that between them,
In this way they vie for death,
And they could have
Made a Tiger's heart shed tears.
But she too was taken
From that middle room, and in leaving
By the Prince's side, gazed at him, and cried.
She wanted to embrace him, but, her arms tied
Behind her could not
Carry through the heart's beautiful desire,
So she said crying: oh beloved husband,
I am so miserable;
I go towards death, and I am not permitted
In such a bitter parting,
From you, to leave as I would desire;
But because nothing else is possible,
At least my heart,
Which so loved you in life,
Will embrace you, dying.
Stabbed by pain, he
Did not reply, dumb, and pale,
But little, by little,
He looked at her,
And from his breathless breast
Let out silent sighs.
And it was then that, looking around me,
I saw everyone of us
Out of pity lift our eyes to the cries,
So that someone wished to cover the Royal maiden's
Eyes with a white veil,
As she sat already kneeling, head bent,
Saying in a languid tone: oh God,
Why have I not even been granted
A brief moment,
To see my beloved's face?
Loosen please, loosen,
For this piteous act
Is for me pitiless;

If you wish, for death
To frighten me less,
Allow, that I gaze
at the light of my life.
But the minister ready
To strike,
Only awaited a sign from Rusten,
Which was finally given;
And so in a flash
The cruel sword sings as it falls, and severs,
The honored head, sending it far,
So that it bounces three times, and at every bounce
Falls closer to the Prince, where I think
It was led by lovers' spirits;
And it seemed, that in bouncing
You could hear these words
Variously emitted:
Oh Husband, oh Father, oh God.
And so Despina died,
And that same blow,
That severed her head,
Cut the Prince's heart, for which he would have fallen
If I had been less ready to sustain him;
But then when he saw,
Almost under his feet, the beloved head,
He broke the mortal silence, and cried out:
Ah sight, ah bitter sight.
Why? why the delay?
Here is the dear mouth,
That came to call me.
And impatient to die,
He runs where his expired love
Lay, her bust wrapped in blood,
And here rapt with rage he bows,
And gives himself
A formidable blow, to his naked neck;
And he cries: oh wounds,
Wounds sever by now,
What use is there in delaying? why am I not yet dead?
You could hear then in the room
A murmur of plaintive sobs,
That caused even Rusten to cry;
That proud Minister,
Moved by fear, and grief, and remorse,
Casts the unjust blow,

So that the wounded Prince
Of the rough and mortal wound,
Drowns in his blood.
In that horrible spot
He already loses his invincible heart,
But his dying lights,
Made smiling and happy in their fall,
Said: oh in dying blissful eyes
You can at last now
See, since every other way has been denied you,
My blood united and mixed with that of my woman.
But this last sound
He did not entirely express,
For his soul, taking sudden leave, cut it off.

OR.: Alas, alas it is really true.
But where friend, where
Do I have to turn to witness
The atrocious spectacle
Of the dear lifeless son?

MESS.: Ah poor man, what do you desire?
Perhaps to see
The frightful display
Of Death's triumph?
Or perhaps cruelty's sole example?
But this you desire in vain,
Because in parting Rusten
Left many guarding the site.
Change your thoughts, and remain here,
For I must leave,
I must follow, where pain leads me.

OR.: Oh unfortunate old man,
Therefore even in such misery
A woeful comfort is still denied me?
But if my unfavorable fate
Today denies me every thing, in the end
It will not deny me death, which is granted to everyone.

ACT V, scene 2

(Soliman, Acmat)

SOLIMAN: Alas, royal fortune
Is in a sad state, subject
To others' will and to others' advice,
Which so rarely yield a faithful soul.

Alas Soliman; Soliman, alas!
 What will you do if the Queen
 Does not arrive in time
 To repair the damage done?
 What will become of you? But quick, someone
 Run! Hurry and find out
 Why the Queen takes so long.
 Here is my old friend. But his expression, alas,
 Confuses and greatly saddens me.

ACMAT: Sire, a fierce and muddled din, most unpleasant to the ears,
 Resounds of new and frightening orders and strange happenings.
 And now that I find you here,
 So pensive and mournful and virtually alone,
 I think some extreme misfortune may have befallen you.
 Now, Sire, if I may be so bold
 To ask that you reveal the truth to me,
 So that I may at least immediately
 And loyally marry my sentiments to what is happening to you.
 Tell me, is it true that you sentenced
 Those unfortunate royal youths to death?

SOL.: Alas it is true, but in this way
 I have deceived myself infinitely more than others.

AC.: So you learned of
 Your son's innocence and the other's deception?
 And that the Queen accused
 Him herself,
 And then discovered
 Through strange means
 That Mustafa was her own son?

SOL.: This is all true.
 Precisely after having looked in vain for me in various parts
 Of the Royal Palace,
 She arrived (only a short while ago) in the room
 Where I, immersed in grief and horror,
 had retreated alone, away from everyone.
 With a broken and frightening voice,
 And before saying anything else, she implored me to
 Immediately suspend the sentence,
 Because she had strange things to tell me.
 I did what she requested, whereupon, crying,
 She told me everything in brief,
 While two foreign women and the nursemaid
 Swore that the facts were indeed true.
 The Nursemaid, however, then also fully revealed
 The letter's deceptions, until then

Unknown to the Queen herself.
Aluante was also present, and, after
Hearing about
The traps and the means used to set them,
Revealed, causing more shrieks and cries,
That he himself was the cause of the initial trouble:
He himself had today
Torn those pages
From which, as the Nursemaid said,
Rusten had derived the imprint and the name of King Tamas
With which he had falsified the letter.
With heart dazed and anguished
I urge and command that we hurry
Without delay to prevent
The crude effects of those unjust deaths.
But the Queen, herself impatient,
Has run, and has not yet returned,
So I fear, alas,
That she has arrived there too late.

AC.: Alas, Heaven's will and decrees
Are so abstruse and difficult to understand.
Who among mortals,
With their feeble intelligence,
Can extract the truth from such a deep abyss?

ACT V, scene 3

(Second Messenger, Soliman, Acmat)

MESSENGER: Poor, wretched me! Cruel fortune!

SOL.: What woeful and sorrowful voice
Comes from the Palace and wounds my heart so?
It is the Queen's servant
Who comes crying, and I can only imagine what trouble he heralds.

AC.: Sire, stand strong against Fortune,
And arm your breast with your royal strength
To endure its blows and fury.

MESS.: Oh Sire, what announcement
Must this wretched Messenger bring you!
The Princes have died, and trouble grows.
Soon your sad and moribund consort
Will come before you with a trembling and weary gait.

SOL.: Oh endless misfortunes, I cannot
Bear them all again without my heart
Breaking and my dying.

AC.: Temper your pain, sire,
Temper it. Stop the contemptible voices.
Who knows if he really
Tells the truth? Tell us, servant, how
The fact happened and how you came to know it?

MESS.: I followed the Queen,
Who ran quickly, and with her I reached
The miserable place.
When she saw the door closed
And guarded by many,
She yelled from a distance: Open up,
Guards! Open the door for me! And they obeyed her.
But as soon as she passed the threshold
And saw (alas, a terrible sight)
A sea of blood
In which two severed busts
Were immersed, and then
Not far two heads,
Horrid and soiled with blood and dust,
She let out a dreadful scream.
And at one point, furious at seeing her son's decapitated head,
She fell to the ground,
And washed it with her streaming tears. Her wailing and screaming
Resounded throughout the place.
But then finding her voice, she said: Son,
My son, in what condition do I find you?
Did I try to save your life through someone else's hands
Only to kill you myself? Oh misery,
Oh wretched me, who delays my own death now?
Only death could
Completely fulfill
The veiled troubles foretold by the cards.
So why do I not die now?
What pleasure
Gives life the most joy?
How can I enjoy motherhood
If I murder my own children?
How can I delight in being a Queen
If the Kingdom is the cause of all my troubles?
How can I take pleasure in this World
If the World holds me in disdain and is horrified of me?
It is time to die, to die,
She added. And all of a sudden
She rose, swept the candlelight around the room,
And not seeing any other sword,

Lunged for this one.
But I quickly moved back, and she said:
Ungrateful servant,
You cannot prevent me from realizing such a beautiful deed!
She then put her hand in her hair,
Pulled out a small, shining gold vial,
Quickly brought it
To her lips, and drank from it.

SOL.: It was poison,

Which causes irreversible death.

MESS.: And so I thought, because at that moment

The foreign women, the nursemaid, and Aluante arrived.

The nursemaid exclaimed

Over the Queen's act: Alas, my Lady,

Alas daughter, you are dead!

And she herself fainted.

The old man ran to Despinia and the other women to the Prince,

And, tearing out their hair

And with their nails scratching new bloody furrows

Into their wrinkled cheeks,

Filled the Heavens

With unconsolable voices and sobs.

The sound of violent wails

Joined to the sound of pounding hands

Made that place sound like a suffering hell.

The Queen, feeling herself slowly languish,

Took her son's cherished head in her hands

And said: Now that my cruel fate

Has prevented me from

Being with you in life,

I want it to concede to me

That you at least be with me in death.

Let us go then. Who will support me

As I make my way to be in

My beloved consort's presence?

I want to die there,

I want to breath my soul into his breast.

So, sustained by her women,

She comes forth in slow steps

And can no longer wait. Here she is, Sire.

SOL.: Oh, what a scene, what a sight!

AC.: Sire, may this remind you

That you are Soliman:

This is the final proof of your virtue;

Your valor is consummated here.

ACT V, scene 4⁷*(Queen, Soliman, Acmat)*

QU.: Dear merciful Women,
 Hold on tightly to the falling corpse,
 And help me support
 The delicate weight of this severed head,
 Which weighs heavily on my weak arm.
 I see the King. Soliman,
 Wipe your tear-filled eyes and look here,
 Look at our son,
 Whom I took away from you two times, and from me as well,
 The one time with compassion, the other with ruthlessness and cruelty,
 And both times blindly and foolishly.
 I have come to give him to you, but alas I cannot!

SOL.: Wretched me.

QU.: Here, I will give him back to you,
 Even though cruel destiny returned him to me,
 Or better still, my proud will.
 But, sweet Sire,
 As I have sought vengeance against myself
 For my failures and the offenses we have suffered,
 I implore you to take pity and temper
 Your rightful ire and just disdain.
 Do not wish that my soul
 Wander tormented among the spirits,
 Pursued by these furies.
 Let me die reassured of this,
 And you shall live as happily
 As Heaven and your destiny allow.
 I place our son Selim and his fate
 Into your hands, for, alas,
 I can no longer go on.
 I feel anguish in my breast,
 And I hear the beating wings
 Of a fleeting soul. Lord, I am dying.

SOL.: Oh unhappy me!
 Oh you wretched Woman! my beloved son!
 Fortune has been pitiless and cruel to us all.
 Oh Queen, Queen,
 How could the well-being of one son

⁷ In the original text, scene 4 is titled "scene 5" and scene 5 is titled "final scene."

Compel you to harm the other?
And then, unwilling to live
You quickened your own death.
Oh you unhappy, unfortunate mother.
But you, my innocent son, in what state do I see you?
Oh head worthy of forever breathing,
Spirit of a glorious, happy life;
Oh head, first anointed by Heaven,
And then by your own merit
To wear noble crowns.
So this is how I see you now,
Crowned by blood and full of death?
Did I too do this to you? Was I
The evil murderer of such a praiseworthy and innocent son?
Alas, as foretold by the sage,
It is for this sin
That Heaven's ire will fall upon me.
And I, wretched man,
Have unfortunately already seen
The sage's other prophecies come true.
But even if Heaven's will
Should strike wrath upon me and my Kingdom,
May Soliman never live through
Such dreadful events and such terrible pain
As that which he now bitterly suffers.
Alas, alas, I feel, I feel
My heart failing! Oh my son, my son!
You too have died!
You, who were this Kingdom's most worthy heir!
You, who were Soliman's most grateful son!
You are dead, and I killed you! Oh such pain!
Oh wretched me, who will hold me up? I feel faint!

AC.: Great Lord, what is happening? Servants, run!
Quickly, to the Court, to the Court!
And you, women, bring
This poor wretch elsewhere!
Go there, in those deserted rooms
Close by! Oh what a terrible sight!
In this mirror, every mortal's gaze
Sees in the dead and dying Royals
The incarnation of human fate.
Why do I hear warrior drums and trumpets?
What do I see? Do I see Adrasto, Adrasto
made rebellious? And with him

All the royal standards and the Captains
 Raging all around?
 Oh unending misfortune, why should I suffer so?
 No, no, it is through prayer, at least, for all else is vain,
 That I will attempt to take action
 To impede the cruelest of these grave misdeeds.

ACT V, scene 5

(Adrasto, Acmat)

ADRASTO: Follow me, follow me!
 Set fire, kill everything in sight
 While the others there flee the guards!
 And may such foul lands,
 Contaminated and polluted by so much error,
 Be cleansed by fire,
 Washed by the blood
 Of whomever dwells there and defends it!
 We shall enter the Palace, while some
 Of you shall remain inside the door to ensure
 That no one escape
 Until the cruel tyrant is caught at last.

AC.: This alone remains to guarantee his total ruin,
 My good Adrasto.

AD.: You are up to the task, Acmat, for I know you.

AC.: Lord, I do not pray for me.

AD.: Go then,
 For you would pray in vain for anyone else.
 And so, should only
 The innocent die nowadays?
 Should I not then vindicate
 An unjust death
 With a thousand just ones?
 And should I not celebrate
 Final funeral honors
 Worthy of the fate of our beloved Prince,
 With the misery and blood of others?
 Should not the cruel King, ensnared,
 Explain the reasons for his misdeeds to the Camp?
 Ah, yes, yes, he must. To arms! To arms!
 Follow me, men!
 Slaughter, slaughter! Rage, flames, vengeance!

AC.: Oh woeful day! These, alas, are fortune's

Cruel and deadly games.
Now here comes Soliman. Here is the famous
Subjugator of every Province and Kingdom;
Dominator of the fiercest peoples;
Terror of the East, no, of the World,
Surrounded by squads and invincible in arms;
Proud of his great son, and able to disarm assassins
With the charms of a woman in love: His heart was
Full of great hope and joy.
And now, in just one day,
He is like a wild beast,
The dreadful example of all misfortune.
Oh mortals, mortals,
You who think yourselves
Blessed in your Kingdoms,
From this you shall learn
That if a man has sovereignty over another without first
Governing himself with reason, he shall possess a vile Kingdom,
Or in the right hand hold
With pleasure, and vain and false honor
Only the fleeting shadow of the Royal Sceptre.

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Chapter 11

Jean Desmares, *Roxelana* (1643)¹

Foreword by Galina Yermolenko
Translation from French by Andrzej Dziedzic

Not much is known about Desmares's life and work. His *Roxelane* came out at a time when tragicomedies and Turkish plots were in vogue on the French theatrical stages.² This was the first French play, however, to deal with the Soliman-Roxolana plot,³ or the story of how Roxolana tricked Soliman into marrying her in violation of an age-old Ottoman tradition, according to which sultans were not to marry their concubines. The story was originally related as Rosa's (Roxolana's) clever ruse in Moffan's 1555 pamphlet on the murder of Prince Mustapha.⁴ Desmares is believed to have relied on the later accounts of this story in several French Turkish chronicles and in Madeleine Scudéry's novel *Ibrahim Bassa* published just two years before. These later accounts elaborated on the origins of the Ottoman custom: the story goes that when Bajazet I (1389–1402) and his wife were captured by Tamerlane, the Sultan suffered great humiliation from seeing his wife treated as a slave and servant. He then decreed that Ottoman sultans were never to marry their women in order to avoid such disgrace.⁵

Bonarelli's influence is palpable in Desmares's play, in terms of the neoclassical "unities" (of time, action, and space) and the cast of characters. Although Mustapha does not appear as a character here, his name is mentioned several times by his mother Circassa and other characters. In this way Desmares interwove the

¹ Translated from Jean Desmares, *Roxelane* (Paris: A. de Sommaville, et A. Covrbé, 1643). See also Andrzej Dziedzic's plot summary of the play in Appendix I and my comments on the Roxolana figure in this play in Chapter 1 of the present collection.

² Henry C. Lancaster, *A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, pt. II: "The Period of Corneille 1635–1651", 2 vols (New York: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1932; rpt., New York: Gordian Press, 1966), 2: 373–5.

³ See my Introduction (n. 79) to this volume.

⁴ See the English translation of Moffan's account in William Painter, *The Second Tome of the Palace of Pleasures* (London: T. Marshe, 1575), 401–2, and my summary of it in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

⁵ See Laonicus Chalcondyle, *Histoire de la decadence de l'Empire Grec, et établissement de celuy des Tyrcs*, trans. B. de Vigenère, ed. Thomas Artus (Paris: H. le Gras et I. Guignar, 1612), 676–7; Michel Baudier, *Inventaire de l'histoire generale des Tyrcs* (Paris, 1641), 263–4; and Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahim ou L'illustre bassa*, 4 vols (Paris: A. de Sommaville, 1641), Pt. II, Book V. See also Clarence D. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature, 1520–1660* (Paris: Boivin, 1938), 457–62.

tragic Mustapha plot with the comic “marriage trick” plot, thereby producing a tragicomedy.

In addition to Soliman and Roxelana, one finds here several other characters that usually appear in early modern plays on this subject.⁶ In his conventional role as Soliman’s advisor often speaking in defense of Mustapha and against Roxelana, Acmat takes Circassa’s side in this play. Rusten Pasha, on the other hand, supports Roxelana, as he always does in other plays, being her son-in-law and conspirator. Interestingly, the cast includes three figures—Circassa (“Circasse” in the original), Roxelana’s daughter Chameria (“Chamerie”), and the Mufti—that appeared rather rarely in early modern European plays on this topic.⁷ Desmares developed the characters of Circassa and the Mufti in more detail than any playwright before him.

As Henry Lancaster wrote, “The play lacks popular appeal in that neither side wins our sympathy [...]. On the other hand, with the law of Bajazet, the mufti, the Koran, and the harem, the author gives a more Turkish atmosphere than most of the rivals, and the action of the play, which steadily advances to the final victory of the heroine, is worthy of considerable commendation.”⁸

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

SOLIMAN
RUSTAN
ACMAT
ORMIN
OSMAN
THE MUFTI
PAGE
ROXELANA
CIRCASSA
CHAMERIA

ACT II, scene 1

(*Soliman, Acmat, the Mufti, Ormin*)

⁶ See Galina Yermolenko’s foreword to the translation of Bonarelli’s *Il Solimano* in Chapter 10 of this volume.

⁷ Circassa’s character was mentioned but did not appear in Mairêt’s tragedy *Le Grand et dernier Soliman ou la mort de Mustapha* (1635) and in Dalibray’s tragicomedy *Le Soliman* (1637). Rossa’s daughter appeared as “Camena” in Greville’s *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1609; 1633).

⁸ *A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, pt. II: “The Period of Corneille 1635–1651,” 2: 406.

SOLIMAN: No, no, this magnificence whose splendor surrounds me,
Superb Palaces, the Scepter, the Crown,
So many subjugated peoples, so many subdued Nations,
Are only a small part of my happiness.
A more desirable good whose intense pleasure
Ignores the fickleness of capricious fate
That I take upon myself, and which depends upon me
Alone establishes my glory, and makes me live as a King.
A delicious fire, a divine flame
Fills my heart and my soul with so many good things.
The Empire pleases me only
Because in it I possess such a charming treasure.
Far from blushing because of it, Acmat, I want stories
To recount my love as much as my victories,
May the posterity too declare me
A victorious Prince and a happy lover.

ACMAT: Master, I know that in vain a remedy is offered
To whoever takes pleasure in the sickness, which possesses him
And which wounds the lover's imagination,
While the truth fights against passion.
Nonetheless, it is my duty to warn you.

MUFTI: Learn by way of a maxim
That whoever criticizes a King, perpetrates a crime,
And that by offending the will of Kings or Gods,
One commits a sacrilege.

ACMAT: I know well that the throne is a venerable place
From which nothing can come out lest it is adorable,
And it is true that the kings are gods,
Their voice is an oracle arrested in Heaven.
But just as the pity of human misery
Disarms quite often the divine anger,
A Prince can and must revoke his decrees,
When it is in the best interest of a Nation.
One does not contradict, one begs, one reprimands,
And a wise King decides, in favor or against.

SOLIMAN: Speak, speak, Acmat, I am listening willingly,
To your thoughts I submit my love.
Like to a Dictator it is the utmost happiness,
Not to accept laws from anyone but himself,
I know that his unhappiness is unparalleled
When he does not surrender to the laws of reason.

ACMAT: Victorious Prince in whom Heaven puts together
Goodness, strength and wisdom.
Vigilant in sleep, unrelenting in dangers,

Respected in your Nations, but feared by foreigners,
Who, in order to live for us, died for himself
Since your head had been crowned with a Diadem.
Until now, by your efforts, your country has tasted
Perfect sweetness of happiness,
And in order to provide it with such prosperity,
You would often put its interests ahead of your own,
And make yourself miserable
So that your people justly deliberate
Whether they should call you their Master or their Father:
And of the felicities which we all enjoy
The most significant is to be loved by you.
Although undeserving such great and desirable honor,
In former times, we considered it nonetheless more durable
When tired of preoccupations and away from dangers,
You rejoiced in transient pleasures,
And several beauties invading your thoughts
Cleansed your spirit of its past sorrows.
But seeing now that a single beauty
Retains in her love your infatuated mind,
By offering her the Royal authority
You become weaker in order to make her your equal.
It is not without a reason that your people believe
That for them your love has grown weaker,
And that carrying elsewhere the forces of your soul
You are abandoning their love for a love of a woman.
I know well that our destiny is determined
By the temper of our Kings that Heaven gave us,
And that their will, favorable or not,
Should be in their Nations a necessary law.
Therefore whatever you decide to do with us,
We shall lament our unhappiness, without accusing you,
And if our interest alone arouses our fears
Our respect for you is too important to complain to you.
But this deceptive love, this corrupted Demon
Which takes possession of the honor of an exiled soul,
The tyranny of which defies you insolently
Transforming you from an Emperor into a slave of a slave,
Yes, Master, that love which has enthralled you,
Troubles my mind with these thoughts.
This tyrant entangles you to the point of contempt,
That even your enemies take advantage of it,
And those who only thought of warding off your attacks
Are now in a position of triumphing over you.

Would it be true, Master, that your wisdom
Confessed its weakness to fortune?
I am imploring that you, the conqueror of so many nations
Not let yourself be vanquished by your passions.
Reset your mind and let the renown,
Which boasts the exploits of your armed hand,
Also praise the strength that your reason will have
To deliver its soul, and to shatter its prison.
I know that by this speech I risk my head,
But, Master, please, here it is ready,
I will die in glory. My faith would be blemished,
If I were not able to survive in my King's honor.

SOLIMAN: You are obliging me, Acmat, and it does not displease me,
But you speak of Kings, as if they were common people,
If it is true that they are Kings, their supreme power
Cannot be conceived by the mind of a mortal.
Know that their power is like light
Which remains undivided to the Sun that emanates it
And although Roxelana shares my greatness,
Do you believe that my glory is consequently losing its splendor?
On the contrary, by twisting its fate,
I want my renown to triumph for many years,
May these enemy Kings know that above them,
I can in one moment raise to eminence whoever I want,
And that the true signs of magnificence
Are to put a slave above Monarchs:
But the borrowed glory needs support,
To make one person more powerful than another,
For my people I love her, and the love of a woman
Will never efface the friendship of my soul.
I treasure two objects alternately, each in a different way,
Friendship of my people, love of Roxelana.

ACMAT: Love is the enemy that friendship should fear.

SOLIMAN: I am her protector who cannot subdue his feelings,
Judge of the destiny of a thousand nations
I can easily reconcile the two weak passions.

ACMAT: It is true that love is weak in its infancy,
But as soon as a heart dissents from its power,
It reigns as a tyrant, and never leaves
Except in happiness or in disquietude.

SOLIMAN: Whatever it is, Acmat, forgive me for loving.

ACMAT: You are offending yourself. Forgive yourself.

SOLIMAN: Acmat, your temerity worries me tremendously,
But since my reasoning does not satisfy you

Summon Roxelana so that her presence
 Much better than my discourse can speak in her defense.

ACMAT: I submit to your wish, Master.

SOLIMAN: Go, Ormin, go.

And do not tell her why you are summoning her.

ORMIN: Uncontrollable Master.

ACMAT: Since my reasoning is condemned,

I am abandoning my obstinate thoughts.

I submit to you, Master, and am ready in front of you

To adore Roxelana on my knees,

If, in order to better raise her to the rank of sovereign

You wish to marry her as a Queen.

SOLIMAN: This speech surprises me, but do not assume

That Soliman's heart would ever be sad.

I know how to keep both my rank and my love together.

ACMAT: Your rank and your love have nothing in common.

SOLIMAN: The love that I offer her is on the condition

That she shall be modest in her ambition.

ACMAT: As much as your rank should not permit her anything,

Your love of your children seems to permit her everything.

SOLIMAN: I love them, that is true, but I love more the laws

Which make legitimate Kings out of legitimate children,

By respect of the ancient laws,

I want to oblige the future generation to respect mine.

Finally I know how to maintain intact

The laws that Bayezid⁹ passed on in his testament.

MUFTI: I am amazed, Master, at your patience,

And this is what compels me to break the silence.

I can no longer suffer that an individual in front of me

Criticizes without a reason his King's choices,

That Acmat points out your flaws and weaknesses,

Feeling neither shame nor remorse.

Far from the dealings and the rumors at the Court

I am quite ignorant in matters of love:

But the condition of an Emperor is worse

Than that of any minor subject in his Empire,

If it is true that it is not permitted to prominent Kings

And to their subjects to gain friends,

Then friendship, Acmat, this laudable virtue,

⁹ Bayezid (Bajazet) I was Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1389 to 1402. He ascended to the throne following the death of his father Murad I in the first Battle of Kossovo and immediately had his younger brother Yakub strangled to prevent him from staging a coup. The comments in this and subsequent footnotes are by Andrzej Dziedzic.

For them only, is a condemnable crime.
Get out, get out Acmat, of this absurdity
Which convinces you of an error or infidelity.

ACMAT: Master, do not believe that I would ever question
That friendship is a divine virtue,
But prominent Kings would be equal to their subjects
If the objects of their love were not more noble.
The Princes' friendship is to love their peoples,
Their provinces and their confederates.
In order to live happily, each individual
May join in friendship a particular person,
But the Kings are public figures,
And royal souls, should seek friends of equal rank.

MUFTI: The Emperor is then wrong to have raised you
From misery to greatness where you are now.

ACMAT: A King rewarding those who serve him
Does not do it because he loves them, but to do justice.

SOLIMAN: But, Acmat, Roxelana is approaching.

ACMAT: Master, I submit to your will and lay down my arms.

SOLIMAN: Do not let her know anything about this conversation.

ACT II, scene 2

(Soliman, Roxelana, the Mufti, Acmat, Ormin)

SOLIMAN: At last you are honoring me with your gracious presence.

ROXELANA: My soul is destined to please you,
Master, I come here to obey your commandments.

SOLIMAN: Keeping inside the desire which oppresses it,
Your soul cannot express its sadness.

ROXELANA: Nature, Master, is endowed with powerful laws
Which cannot force either the fate or the Kings.
It wanted to settle my moods, but in such a way
That melancholy is always the strongest,
Yet, despite your favors and contrary to reason
My bewitched heart retains this poison.

SOLIMAN: By nature, you consider yourself restrained, but wrongly so.
All sadness comes from desire or from fear:
But what could have caused you to fear so much,
And what prevents you from hoping?
Do you not know well that in the position where you are,
You see under your feet storm and tempest,
That in your mind you cannot make wishes
Which my love would not promptly grant you.

Find out the reason of your suffering, know that I love you,
 Ask, command, proceed.
 You must fear nothing and dare everything,
 Cowardly demands are often refused.

ROXELANA: Master, if my reason were not weakened
 When blood is vanquished by melancholy,
 The rank with which your love wanted to honor me
 Would keep me in a state of desiring nothing,
 But, Master, this is why I feel sorry for myself,
 Neither the vanities of the Court, nor this supreme honor,
 Nor the moment in which I am granted your affection
 Have ever given me ultimate joy.
 I do not know what always opposes my pleasures,
 My weak reason cannot find the cause of it,
 If it is not the earth with all its treasures,
 Which can only satisfy corporeal pleasure,
 And the mind created for heavenly desires
 Outside its center only sees fateful objects.
 This is what makes me sad and this thinking
 Seems to reprimand me for my imperfect judgment,
 For having given my heart to short-lasting pleasures,
 Even though it could have acquired more durable treasures,
 For having believed in finding true good things here
 And for having loved the earth more than Heaven:
 This is why from now on my thinking is better informed
 And wants to change its course, if you permit it,
 And make every effort to please you, Majesty,
 And also to please the divinity,
 If your goodness gives me permission to do it,
 For heavens' sake I will make a useful contribution:
 But whoever asks for too much deserves to be rejected,
 I do not dare justify myself.¹⁰

SOLIMAN: You are confusing me,
 And this discourse accuses you of impertinence,
 Or me of little love, or of little power,
 What can Roxelana finally ask for?
 What does Soliman not want or cannot grant?
 Besides your asking for my honor or my life
 My love can and want to satisfy your desires.
 What then are you asking for? A Kingdom?

¹⁰ In this scene, the ease and the cleverness Roxelana displays in manipulating the language to her benefit clearly demonstrates the degree to which she excels in the art of deception.

ROXELANA: Ha! much less,
I limit, Master, both my wishes and my desires,
And my wish is to be granted
A permission to build a temple,
To build a hospital, to create altars,
Where one can in my name serve the immortals.
That is all I want.¹¹

SOLIMAN: Ha! extreme weakness,
Simple woman or rather the very simplicity.
This is asking too little of a generous Prince,
Especially when he is in love.
But since your temper leads you to this desire,
Though not worthy of me, you shall obtain it,
Father, you happen to be here
This is a pious work, take care of it,
May this temple be such that art and nature
Compete about the honor of its architecture,
May art embellish and present to our eyes
Nature's most precious things,
At last I wish to engrave for the Ottoman's glory
What Soliman can do, what Roxelana wants to do,
But let us hurry.

MUFTI: Master, this is an undertaking
Which should not have entered the mind of a sane person.
Build a temple in favor of a slave?
This unprecedented enterprise is not within reason.

SOLIMAN: Why not?

MUFTI: A slave depends on another person
And whatever he can do, he does nothing for himself,
Divine service is of no benefit to him,
His Master alone has the grace and merit of it.
And although Roxelana has the favor of a King,
She still remains a slave and may not do anything by herself.

SOLIMAN: Father, so you consider my request uncivil?

MUFTI: It is not uncivil, but it is useless.

SOLIMAN: Is it not at all possible to solve this problem?

MUFTI: I can only see one solution.

SOLIMAN: What?

MUFTI: It is her freedom.

You may, if you wish, liberate her from slavery
And make her enjoy the fruit of her work.

¹¹ Roxelana is expressing a common Mahometan desire based on the belief that religious and charitable foundations are among the surest guarantees of the immortality of the soul.

SOLIMAN: So be it, in her favor and for the sake of her freedom,
I renounce all my rights of sovereignty.

ROXELANA: What are you saying Master? Liberate me from slavery?
In this freedom I find harm.
By doing that you deprive me of my greatest happiness,
Since my servitude determines my honor.
From the glorious chains of this exemplary slavery,
I draw my greatness and receive my prestige.
No, no, I am not leaving, no, no, I belong to my King.

SOLIMAN: No, no, you are free, you are no longer mine.

ROXELANA: Since it is my Master's order,
May he give me to myself: I am giving myself back to him,
And I only want from him this freedom
To die as a slave.

SOLIMAN: But I only want obedience from you,
That you will live freely outside my power.
Whatever you may say, you are arguing in vain.

ROXELANA: With these words, you show your magnanimity.

SOLIMAN: Father, make haste to build this temple
Which shall be a true image of my magnificence.
Let her choose a site, you, Acmat, follow me.
This is an important endeavor for which I demand your assistance.

ACT II, scene 3

(Roxelana, the Mufti)

ROXELANA: Fortune, obedient to our wishes until now,
Promises to crown our endeavors with success,
Father what do you say about this initiative?

MUFTI: Although it seems admirable, I still fear it.

ROXELANA: Fate would not have shown me her true face,
Had it not been to save my boat from sinking.

MUFTI: Fear her fickleness until it reaches the port
If it were not fickle, it would not be strong.

ROXELANA: I believe it is for me, the first sign
Of a happy outcome gives me hope.
I had told you that all immortals
Wanted to use their altars to serve me.
Did they not lend me their temple, and this sanctuary?
Did they not make me find my freedom easily?
Freedom which makes me equal to Soliman
In possessing the Ottoman Empire,
And carries my fortune to the height of glory.

MUFTI: But before the time comes when you can rejoice at your victory,
 Hope, but fear, entering a combat
 The end of which elevates you, or brings you down,
 Which, leading you to the throne, or to destruction,
 Gives you either glory or torment.
 Whoever by force or by artifice wants to gain the throne,
 Must be determined to win or to die.
 Let him wait, without abandoning the hope of retreat
 Where it is either complete victory or complete defeat.
 Nonetheless whatever great suffering may happen to you
 Having started well, try to finish even better,
 Do not miss the opportunity, which presents itself to you.

ROXELANA: It is not very far, one only has to wait for it:
 But, my dear confidant, do not abandon me.

MUFTI: I will not abandon you even in death.

ACT V, scene 1

(*Circassa, Acmat*)

CIRCASSA¹²: On this day when Heaven must show to my sorrow
 Either its ultimate grace or its ultimate condemnation,
 Should I, full of hope, take it or leave it,
 Should I rejoice or should I despair?
 The dangerous state in which I see my rival
 Gives me equal reason to weigh both,
 When I think, Acmat, that Heaven allowed
 That today I am involved in such a scandal,
 And that the King fired up with legitimate wrath,
 Summons the Advisors to be the judges of the crime.
 I have the right to wait for the happy outcome,
 Which would bring an enamored Monarch back to me,
 But when my uncertain soul grapples again with the thought,
 That in his favor love is still fighting hatred,
 That Roxelana's mind is full of tricks and ruses,
 I fear something that I cannot foresee.

ACMAT: May I, or rather, must I let you hear
 A rumor which is spreading around and which I just heard.

CIRCASSA: What, my dear Acmat?

ACMAT: I fear.

¹² Circassa, whom Roxelana replaced in the Sultan's affections, is the mother of Mustapha, who does not appear on the stage. The development of the role of Circassa is Desmares's own creation.

CIRCASSA: Nothing will surprise me.

ACMAT: It is rumored among the people and even at the court
That Soliman, urged by his utmost love,
And realizing that the law forbids him to act upon it,
Found another way.

CIRCASSA: What?

ACMAT: Marry her.

CIRCASSA: Who?

ACMAT: Roxelana.

CIRCASSA: Oh God, you are announcing to me my misfortune,
One must not doubt it any more, the ruse has been discovered.
I see clearly, but too late, and in vain
That all she had done had only one purpose.
Unfortunate Mustapha, ill-fated Circassa
Will you see without dying the ruse come to fruition?
No, no, we have to die rather than see it,
Let fears and suspicions yield to despair.

ACMAT: But why make you heartbroken before finding out,
Perhaps this rumor is not true,
The Advisors gathered here,
In no time will verify these suspicions.
When unhappiness afflicts us so strongly,
It is then that we must fight more courageously
And we must show to the harsh fate
That whoever has a heart, will never be unhappy.
As for me, may Heaven make my head fall
By a strike of a lightning or a blow of a storm,
I shall die honorably while still fighting,
And if you believe me, you will do the same thing.

CIRCASSA: Through your counsel, Acmat, my soul is lifted up,
Let us fight until the end the evil that oppresses us.
I concur with the Advisors to oppose
Whoever shall open the marriage debate,
And as much as they close doors to women
They can only make me leave dead.
But Mustapha, my son: here is the Emperor,
Let what follows confirm my suspicion.

ACT V, scene 2

(Soliman, Circassa, Acmat, the Mufti, Rustan, Ormin, Osman)

SOLIMAN: Friends, whose heroism and experience
Strengthen my crown, assure my power,
And who share with me the reign over so many nations

Of which I am the head, and you are the hands and the arms,
 After so many battles, shattered fortifications,
 Thrones brought down, and grandeurs struck down.
 Having nothing more to defeat, it seemed from then on
 That the universe forced us to make peace,
 But Hell, enraged to see that in war
 Everything was succumbing to the blows of our scimitar,¹³
 Was in vain making plans against my glory,
 When of his subversive advocates I was making my subjects.
 When Hell saw the happiness of my life
 Impenetrable to the blows it was so eager to inflict,
 It provoked me with enemies even stronger
 Than the entire universe it saw submitted to me.
 It found in this heart bigger than the whole world
 What it could not find on Earth or in the seas.
 In me my enemies, my powerful enemies,
 All the more that the soul is above the senses,
 A war more than civil, and which goes to the extreme:
 A King conquerer of all except himself.
 Decide where this sedition can lead,
 One passion overwhelms another passion.
 Indecisiveness forces patience,
 The tenderness of the heart opposes vengeance,
 And in my mind triumphing by turns
 Pity, anger, hatred and love.
 However, I wage these wars,
 I help enemies, who ravage my land,
 Even though they all want my destruction.,
 I am nonetheless leader of each faction.
 And as if I were the enemy of my soul,
 I forbid if from resting and I bring flame into it.
 Father if your advice does not heal
 The many torments, which afflict my mind,
 This heart that neither the assaults of besieged cities,
 Nor the fights and waged battles,
 Nor even unhappiness could make fall
 Is now conquered by itself and ready to surrender.
 MUFTI: I violate the laws which respect imposes upon me,
 But you speak of effect without mentioning the cause,
 How can we know an evil hidden deep inside
 Which only appears to us by random chance?

¹³ A curved, single-edged sword of Oriental origin. The edge is on the convex side of the blade.

SOLIMAN: What are you saying to me? My wound is so deep
That I fear dying from it,
But I have to do it: do not doubt it,
In one word Roxelana causes all these combats
You know how much I loved this rebel,
Today her misdeeds make her a criminal
And although she is a criminal,
Despite all those wrongdoings she pleases me and captivates me.

MUFTI: This war, Master, is for you a field of glory,
You can achieve a great victory.
Fight, only fight, and by doing so
Your virtue will elevate itself to perfection.
The victory of the universe is quite common,
Among you, your soldiers, and even fortune,
But here you can do all alone as much as everybody else
And this will be enough to make you a winner,
Rid yourself of these passions whose force controls
Only those who submit to them and fears only those who despise them.
In order to win this war, a generous man
Needs only say, I want to do it.

SOLIMAN: Pompous speech, magnificent words,
Great for the discourse, but of pointless use.
Instead of giving me advice on how to heal my wound,
Father, you are giving me advice on how to die.
I love my passions and I live by their flame,
I no longer have another heart, another blood, nor another soul
Neither do I want to lose them forever,
But I would like to put in between them a nation
I love passionately and you know it,
The woman whose refusal compels me to vengeance,
And who says that the laws forbid her to love
A Monarch who loves her and whom she managed to charm.
Tell me if this excuse is legitimate
And if this reasoning is not a criminal act,
Reconcile, if you can, my love and the law,
If you do not want to see your King die
In the name of Mahomet, Father, I beg you.

MUFTI: I find myself perplexed when confronted with this situation,
This complicated affair presents from all sides
To my confused mind a thousand difficulties.
Roxelana, being free and on her own,
The Koran forbids you to love and desire her.
Without displeasing the Prophets and violating the Laws
You may not love her as you did before.

SOLIMAN: Me, never enjoy the pleasure of loving her?

MUFTI: Here your speech touches me deeply.

I see that this love ignites your passion to the point
Of having to possess her or no longer live
But my mind is also weak
In finding useful advice for you.

CIRCASSA: How the traitor pretends; Acmat, do you not see
How he misleads the King, how he sets a snare.

MUFTI: Thanks to a certain thought that comes to my mind
We can give remedy to your wounded soul,
And without contradicting either Heaven, or its rules,
Reconcile love and the Laws.
However, the remedy with the most unpleasant taste
Is often the most beneficial to the patient:
Hence, by this slightly inauspicious method
Your love and the Laws can be reconciled,
You can rejoice in the love of Roxelana
Without violating the laws of conscience.

SOLIMAN: Why are you so slow in offering this remedy to me?

CIRCASSA: What is he going to say?

MUFTI: You can marry her.

SOLIMAN: Marry a slave, what are you saying, Father!¹⁴

MUFTI: The remedy is harmful, but it is salutary,
Master, of the two, which one is not worthy of you,
Having been born a slave or being a spouse of one?

ACMAT: Is it possible, Heaven, that Soliman would bear
Such a great injury inflicted to his glory
That in favor of a slave, laws would be violated
To make her ascend to the throne of our Kings?
This treachery, Master, planned for a long time
Unveiled in front of you without being thwarted.
Do you not see that this holiness,
This Temple, these Altars, and this freedom,
All these refusals to love which Roxelana made
Were aimed at the Ottoman's crown?
And do you not see that in order to confuse you,
They quote the Law, which forbids to love,
But wanting passionately to see her crowned,
They silence the law, which prohibits marriage?
Thus this impostor that Roxelana instructs
Says everything that suits her, silences everything that harms her.
MUFTI: I do not get offended by these discourses which,
Pronounced by Acmat, vilify my life.

¹⁴ The final victory for Roxelana depends upon the breaking of the tradition against the Sultan's marriage, which has been respected by all sultans since the days of Bayezid I.

And speaking in front of a King
 Who knows whether Acmat or myself serve him better.
 It is true that the laws in this nation do not include Queens,
 But Acmat, these laws are only human,
 For common interest they can be repealed,
 And since a King made them, a King can change them,
 But the divine Laws are sacred Laws,
 They must be inviolable.
 The human Law does not allow the Ottoman Princes
 To ever become spouses, but only lovers
 And Heaven forbids the same Princes to love,
 A free woman, outside their power.
 In the end decide, Master, which one will prevail
 The earthly Law or the Heavenly Law?

SOLIMAN: Which of the three will have more power over my soul
 Honor, love, or conscience?
 To marry a slave is a flawed piece of advice
 Which deprives me of honor in order to please love,
 No, no, let us rather follow a contrary opinion,
 May she, who does not want my love, face my wrath.
 She will die in disgrace, Ormin,
 But if love is opposed to death,
 This traitor [i.e., death] in her favor,
 Joins reason to quell my anger,
 And before my justice and against all my rights.
 For her, we must speak about the authority of the Laws:
 But the Laws are against her; is she not subject to them?
 Must she contest what her King says?
 A subject must always obey: but a King
 Must not command to her but what the Law dictates.
 Contradictory feelings, which are present within my soul,
 Sweetness is against me and suffering is killing me
 Without a remedy I cannot bear my hardship,
 And medicine makes it even worse
 Either treachery, or reason, or truth, or pretense,
 Excruciate my mind from all directions,
 Coerce me into loving while disregarding the Law
 A free person who depends upon herself.
 But will I be able to extinguish this sweet flame
 Which kills my body and afflicts my soul?
 In order to appease this amorous ardor
 Will I follow this fatal advice?
 Marry a slave against the Law?
 The Law is only human, but I love a slave.
 Human and divine Laws, love and majesty

Will you always hold me in this extreme confusion?
 But why even think, may Heaven decide
 Yield, human Law, yield to Heavenly law,
 Yield, the interest of the nation, yield to God's will,
 Yield, proud grandeur to the impact of two beautiful eyes,
 Yield, yield finally, false splendor, vain glory
 The fight is over, love is the winner.
 Bring her here.

CIRCASSA: O marvels of the Kings,
 I embrace your knees for the last time.
 The last favor which I ask of you
 Is my death, it is the end of my unfortunate fate,
 Death which will make me happy after what I see
 If it can be granted to me by the order of my King,
 I lay my life before you
 And if you want to grant me death,
 May the death of my son accompany my fate.
 Master, have mercy on Mustapha
 Let him die in combat, and not by hanging,
 Let him die from a sword, not by poisoning,¹⁵
 Let him die by your orders, and not by treachery
 And do you not see the deceitful conclusion
 And the tragedy to which this marriage leads,
 Marriage which Roxelana uses
 To elevate her children above mine.
 In order to accomplish it, her supporters
 Come to you to encourage this infamous marriage.
 And to satisfy her ambitions
 The Laws are interpreted as she pleases.
 But, Master, go back to your origins,
 Remember, that you belong to a divine race
 Of Mahomet's blood and of so many Kings,
 Having their throne, at least respect their Laws.
 But if, despite the honor and the Ottoman's glory,
 You decide to marry Roxelana,
 In order not to see my King's shame
 I demand death for myself and my son.

RUSTAN: What, Master, endure such insolence?
 What, accuse you of lack of prudence?
 Do not speak any more, Master, of sovereignty

¹⁵ By portraying Circassa as dreading the consequences of Roxelana's children coming to the throne and as hysterically appealing to Soliman for an immediate sword thrust for herself and for Mustapha, Desmares makes a reference to a common Turkish belief and practice.

Since one can act against your will,
 Well, do not lose sight of the maxime
 If one opposes the sovereign, one commits a crime.¹⁶

CIRCASSA: All that my reason attempts uselessly,
 Your treachery does it effectively,
 The crime committed by artifice and imputed to me
 Will let my enemies triumph over my fall,
 And their power to influence the King's thoughts is so strong,
 That even with my prayer I am refused death
 Master, grant me this last wish.

SOLIMAN: Your life is mine and I will take care of it.

CIRCASSA: And Master, could you defend it against attacks
 Of the woman whose treachery triumphed over you?

SOLIMAN: Suffice it to say, I will take care of it, Circassa.

CIRCASSA: What can an emperor, who has no credibility any more, do?

SOLIMAN: Well, I see the object of my desire.

ACT V, scene (last)

(Soliman, Roxelana, the Mufti, Circassa, Acmat, Rustan, Ormin, Osman)

SOLIMAN: Come, chaste beauty, Queen of the Musulmans,
 Come, Soliman's legitimate wife.

CIRCASSA: Alas, I will be the victim of this marriage,
 Mustapha's blood will sign this contract,
 Do not delay death, Circassa.
 You who offer friendship in our unhappiness,
 Acmat, not being able to live, let us go die together.

ACMAT: Let us go and by a generous move let us show
 That whoever knows how to die well is never unhappy.

ROXELANA: What are you doing, Master, this unforeseen grace
 Fills with awe my ear and my sight,
 I, unhappy object of your resentment
 Who you wanted to plunge in distress,
 In one moment elevated to such supreme honor.
 This is incredible and I doubt it myself,
 Where are you taking me?

SOLIMAN: To my throne, to my rank.

ROXELANA: Where no person of my rank has ever ascended, Master?

¹⁶ Roxelana is a much stronger character in this play than we have seen before. She is not at all dependent on Rustan, her traditional evil counselor, and though the Mufti is of great assistance to her, he is only a tool in the plan that she has conceived and directed herself.

SOLIMAN: I say, come and take the crown
Which by the hands of love your virtue is giving you.
Reign over my people and give them the laws,
I give you half my rights,
And although the law seems to contradict it,
I name your children successors to the Empire.
Everybody else, since you are here
Take an oath of fidelity.

MUFTI: Master, I promise you all my loyalty
To live and to die obeying her.

SOLIMAN: What else do you want?

ROXELANA: In this high rank of honor
My weak mind cannot comprehend its happiness,
So many goods, which Heaven is sending me through your graciousness
Make me almost die of shame and of joy,
But, Master, I protest Heaven and the law
To always give you honor that I owe you,
To live like a slave and not like a Queen
Like a humble subject and not like a sovereign.

THE END

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Chapter 12

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Giangir, or the Rejected Throne* (1748)¹

Foreword and translation from German by Beate Allert

Lessing's dramatic fragment, first published in 1786, is derived from the so-called Breslauer manuscript begun in 1748,² when he was 19 years old. Lessing's brother Karl said this was probably the earliest of Lessing's efforts at tragedy.³ It is his only attempt to write in unrhymed Alexandrines, a form which in German had only been used by Johann Elias Schlegel (1719–1749). Jürgen Stenzel, the editor of the 1989 edition of Lessing's earliest plays, notes that Lessing was influenced by Voltaire's plays *Zaïre* (1732) and *Mahomet* (1736),⁴ even though Lessing criticized the former of the two in the fifteenth section of his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767) after having seen it in performance.

There is some debate over the question whether Lessing had recourse to the works of Busbecq and de Thou. Stenzel also notes that Lessing was influenced by Racine's *Phèdre* and argues that Lessing “replaced” the motif of political treason as the reason for Mustafa's execution with that of personal incest, thus taking it out of the political sphere into a private one.⁵ I do not concur with this reading, because Lessing leaves much to the imagination of the readers and does not actually

¹ Translated from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, “Versuch eines Trauerspiels: Giangir oder der verschmähte Thron,” in *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Wilfried Barner et al., 14 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–2001), 1 (*Frühe Lustspiele. Werke 1743–1750*, ed. Jürgen Stenzel, 1989): 243–7. For the discussion of this fragment, see my essay in Chapter 5 of the present volume.

² The *Giangir* fragment is item no. 14 in MS IV F 88d in the Biblioteka Uniwersytecka Wrocław, Poland. See Wolfgang Milde, ed., *Gesamtverzeichnis der Lessing-Handschriften*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1982), 243.

³ “Vermuthlich war es seiner ersten tragischen Versuche.” Quoted from the introduction to the *Theatralischer Nachlass*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1786), in *Werke und Briefe*, 1: 1080–81.

⁴ *Werke und Briefe*, 1: 1081.

⁵ “Unter dem Einfluß von Racine's *Phèdre* [...] ersetzt Lessing das Motiv des Hochverrats durch das des inzestuösen Ehebruchs: Mustapha soll, so behauptet seine Stiefmutter Roxelane, ihr nachgestellt und damit seinen Vater entehrt haben. Scheinheilig bittet die Machtgierige ihren Gatten Soliman auch noch um Gnade für ihren Sohn” (“Influenced by Racine's *Phèdre* [...] Lessing replaces the motif of high treason with that of the incestuous adultery: Mustapha apparently has, as his stepmother Roxelane claims, harassed her and thereby dishonored his father. Hypocritically the power-hungry [step-mother] asks her husband Soliman after all for mercy for her son”). *Werke und Briefe*, 1: 1082–3.

elaborate on this question at all in his play. Cihangir (“Giangir”) after whom the play is titled does not appear onstage in the surviving fragments, although he is listed among the dramatic personae and is, in my interpretation, much more at the core of the play than earlier commentators and critics have conceded.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

SOLIMANN, *Emperor*

ROXALANA, *his second wife*

MUSTAPHA, *son of Solimann and his first wife*

BAJAZET, *son of Roxalana*

GIANGIR, *son of Roxalana*

TEMIR

ACT I, scene 1

ROXALANA: My bold attack succeeds. Then I shall yet govern—
 A throne—for a throne—yes—everything I would dare.
 Once Mustapha is dead, then my son will be fortunate.
 Once he governs first through me, then soon I shall govern through him.
 The Emperor arrives—How easy, how easily he lets himself be led.

ACT I, scene 2

ROXALANA: And finally I see yet that Solimann loves me.
 Me, and in me also himself, his fortune, and his fame.

SOLIMANN: And finally I forced myself. My son is not my son. The tender bond of blood connects him to me in vain as long as in his wild breast he suffocates nature and duty. Whoever hurts his father does not hurt him, just as a child would not normally do. Therefore, if a father punishes, he does not punish as a father either. A horrible prison already holds Mustapha confined.
 The Offender—who! Me? Who carried the dagger towards me?
 The Offender: My spouse—the crime is too horrid.
 Mustapha, even if you had strangled me a thousand times—
 Mustapha, even while dying, still I would have forgiven you.
 Yet my spouse—you, however—

ROXALANA: Absorbing memories!
 With an everyday face and without red shame,
 He offered me to do the crime which, were heaven not inclined to be neglectful, would neither have passed his lips nor entered his mind without him being instantly shattered.

SOLIMANN: The blessing would be too great if by the hand of the Almighty such a sinner would die. Such death would be much too

beautiful. Whoever fails too ignominiously, the prince of princes, who are us, the worldly-princes, punishes only through his slaves.

ROXALANA: With trembling I have revealed to you his vice. Whether I should tell you, whether I should not tell you—my soul, confused over this, it quickly made up its mind (One usually tends to decide for the best the latest) in forgetfulness, in its silent night it cannot annoy anyone, to act out of judicious duty. Yet your honor—

SOLIMANN: Yes—rightly so—Yes my honor may well be in the future dear to you. O son! O misfortune! My heart, otherwise favorable towards you, feels, now that I must punish you, the punishment of a hundred times, which falls upon you only once. My heart! Deny him—the same way as he denies you. Yes—even today his head shall be cut off.

ROXALANA: Do you want to proceed so harshly? This I would not have believed—

SOLIMANN: So you did not believe that I would proceed with justice?

ROXALANA: Who is the rare hero in whom nature becomes silent, in whom blood does not speak when all too severe laws draw into even harsher punishments guilty loved ones, offenders even so, but at the same time children in the offense? Do you want to be a phenomenon? Do you alone not want to feel, as if you were more than a human, what normally all fathers feel? Absolutely correct! He has deserved death—more than death, and justice will be angry if he escapes it. Yet—yes his fate will even today be reversed. Mustapha, fear nothing, your judge is your father.

SOLIMANN: You think too little of me. My son means much to me. Yet justice and you count more than he. Justice and you quickly expel the father. Therefore, offender, fear me, your father will be your judge. He takes after his mother. She was not like you. She loved my throne and me because I possessed it.

ROXALANA: Damned selfishness! Yes, heaven, I demand your punishments for me, unprecedented punishments, if ever a mad desire were to enter into my breast aiming not for the husband but only for the throne. If through the decision of fate my Solimann were born in huts, from an unknown womb, in lowly dust: I would choose to love him nonetheless. If he occupied no throne, enough, my Solimann would be worth a throne.

SOLIMANN: O! Who so nobly thinks cannot love less unnobly. You shall also see my faithfulness—you shall see it today—Mustapha—

ROXALANA: will straight away make you aware of other conclusions, as soon as you shall see him, the deceptive son.

SOLIMANN: Me? Me?

ROXALANA: The father, yes.

SOLIMANN: No, and to prevent this I shall send him to his death without a hearing, I see Temir comes, let me be with him alone—

ROXALANA: But for my sake, lord, do not shed his blood. Revenge does not drive me. I wish keenly to forgive him—if you can forgive him, well then, he may live!

SOLIMANN: Generosity speaks out of you. To you it would bring fame, but to me only blame—No—Go!

ACT III

SOLIMANN: Temir, just come closer!

Do you yet know my misfortune? Have you already lamented me?

Do you recognize my son in this sinner?

And do you recognize me in him? Does he manifest his blood?

O this damned son! To whom nothing—nothing—is sacred.

TEMIR: I would have sought flames first in the deepest ocean, in mountains on the lake, and in darkness in the sun than the ugliness of vice in Mustapha's breast. Think about it, Solimann, how childishly faithful he seemed to you?

When did he annoy you? I have educated him and know his pliable heart that knows and loves virtue.

Fathers I portrayed to him as Gods in the world through whom the God of Gods constrains impulsive youth; Their blessing and their condemnation be God's condemnation and blessing; Whoever honors them sincerely that person has honored God. The sacred bond of marriage through which the world exists, the strict law of chastity, the disgust of nature for the rival of the father, to become the husband of the mother, all this I imprinted while young on his impressionable heart.

And this impression he lets be without any effect? What wonder when now the greatest guilt is upon me?

What wonder when jealousy now makes me look like him?

"From his teachings he has drawn this poison—

This one should be punished instead of him—he who intends the Emperor's death—

Mustapha had to be only his suffering tool."

So cruelly does he scold me. Even if you are not going to believe it,

The mob believes it nevertheless since it always believes the worst.

Just like when a young tree that promised profit and fruit to our pain withers and deceives our hope, the gardener must suffer, so shall I have to suffer too—

Yet God shall be witness—

SOLIMANN: No—I shall testify,

How much devotion and diligence you have applied to this tree.

If a well taken care of tree withers because of a worm inside,

One absolves the gardener, just as I absolve you,

And one lets the blazing fire devour the useless wood.

Chapter 13

Denys Sichynsky, *Roksoliana; Historical Opera in Three Acts with a Prologue* (1911)¹

Foreword and translation from Ukrainian by Galina Yermolenko

Composer Denys Volodymyrovych Sichynsky (1865–1909) was born and lived in Galicia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His compositions include numerous works for symphony and chamber orchestras, a liturgical score, a choral cantata, and approximately 20 songs to texts by famous Ukrainian and European poets (Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, and Heinrich Heine).² Sichynsky was a very active figure on the musical scenes of Lviv, Stanislaviv (now Ivano-Frankivsk), Berezhany, and Kolomyia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He organized and conducted music concerts and performances, and he actively participated in establishing the first “Боян” [‘Boyan’]³ society of music and song in Lviv and several of its branches throughout Galicia and Bukovyna. He also founded a music school in Stanislaviv and set up a wing of the “Музична бібліотека” (“Muzychna Biblioteka”) [‘Music Library’] association, which printed works by Ukrainian composers.

Sichynsky wrote *Роксоліана* [*Roksoliana*] in 1907–1908, at a time when heroic and patriotic themes in music were in high demand. The opera was first performed by the Lviv Ukrainian Theatre in Kolomyia on April 10, 1911.

The text below is the literal translation of the libretto into English. Although Sichynsky’s name adorns the title page, the libretto was not composed by him. The first redaction was written by a Galician amateur poet, I. Lutsyk. A mixture of several languages (Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Church Slavonic), it was poetically weak and overly sentimental and patriotic. Later, poet S. Charnetsky translated it into Ukrainian and Polish, but the dramatic design and characterization remained the same. The heroine, Roksoliana (Roxolana), lacks heroic stature here, while Suleiman appears as either too sentimental or too brutal.⁴ The libretto does

¹ Translated from Denys Sichyns'kyi, *Roksoliana. Opera istorychna v triokh diakh z prolihom*; libretto (Kolomyia: W. Brauner, 1911). This opera is discussed in Galina Yermolenko’s essay in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

² See S. Pavlyshyn, *Denys Sichyns'kyi* (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraïna, 1980); “Sichynsky, Denys,” *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 305.

³ *Boyan* was a famous bard of the Kievan Rus.

⁴ See Pavlyshyn, *Denys Sichyns'kyi*, 39–40.

not follow the conventional format either, as it at times narrates the plot and at times quotes the songs and arias.

Sichynsky's music, however, redeemed the weak libretto. *Роксоляна* was received enthusiastically by the public and enjoyed numerous other performances. It was later staged by the Sadovsky troupe in Kyiv. As stated in a review published in the *Paда* [*Council*] newspaper on 26 March 1912, "Fortunately, Sichynsky's music is by far superior to the text and situations of the libretto."⁵

The Libretto

Roksoliana was a wife of Suleiman the Great. She was a daughter of the Russian priest Lisovsky from Rohatyn. Captured and sold to the powerful Sultan's court, she managed to gain his affection with her unusual beauty and intelligence. Not long ago, some of her letters were found, which she had written to the Polish King Sigismund August.⁶ She died in 1568.⁷

The opera was first performed by Lviv Ukrainian Theatre, under the direction of Josef Stadnyk, in Kolomyia on 10 April 1911.

CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE

DEDICATION (in the opera, ROKSOLIANA)

HISTORY (in the opera, FEDORA)

CHORUS OF MERMAIDS, CHORUS OF CAPTIVES, CHORUS OF CHILDREN

PLACE: the bank of Bosphorus, near Constantinople

CHARACTERS OF THE OPERA

ROKSOLIANA [*Filyomena Lopatynska*]⁸

SULEIMAN [*Kuzma Luhovy*]

IBRAHIM, *Grand Vizier* [*Ivan Rybchak*]

ABDUL BAKI, *councilor to the Sultan* [*Vasyl Petrovych*]

⁵ "На щастя, музика Січинського не може йти ні в які порівняння з текстом і ситуаціями лібретто." Pavlyshyn, *Denys Sichyns'kyi*, 40.

⁶ Reference is to Roxolana's letters that were discovered and published in Poland in 1896. See Szymon Askenazy, "Listy Roxolany do Zygmunta Augusta," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 10 (1896): 113–4.

⁷ Inaccurate date, as it is known from the Ottoman archives that Hurrem died on 18 April 1558.

⁸ In brackets are the names of the singers who performed in the premiere of the opera in Kolomyia on 10 April 1911.

THE FOOL [*Trofym Ivlev*]
DANYLO [*Vasyl Kossak*]
AGLAY–KHAN [*Ivan Donchak*]
FEDORA [*Emilia Petrovycheva*]
THE SULTAN'S CHORUS, CAPTIVES, GUARDS
TATARS, JANISSARIES, HAREM SERVANTS, TORTURERS.

PLACE: Constantinople

TIME: during the reign of Suleiman the Great. Ten years pass between Act II and Act III.

Prologue

The wooded suburbs above the Bosphorus, with a view of Constantinople in the background. To the right is a big mound, at the foot of which stand the spirits of War, Death, Destruction, and Slavery. A chorus of captives-spirits wearing death clothes and shackles gather around the mound. In the sea, mermaids are basking under the moon, throwing ferns into the water and singing:

Lightly, freely in the nighttime
We are floating on the waves,
Then we completely dive again
Into the deep and silent waters.

Both choruses are complaining about the Turks who cruelly destroy the Ukrainian lands and kill their inhabitants ...

The allegorical characters of Dedication and History enter.

History tells Dedication that here begins captivity. Dedication is astonished that this wonderful land

... steeped in beauty,
Should be so unhappy?
Such a lovely land, such a beautiful land?

History points to the mermaids and says that these are the maidens who preferred drowning in the sea and become mermaids to living in the Turkish harem. History also points to the flies of St. John the Baptist, saying that these are the spirits of the children who died unbaptized in captivity.

The Chorus of the captives tells her how their bones are thrown around the entire Turkish land and that it is very hard for them to lie buried in a foreign ground, in captivity, waiting in vain for the assistance from their compatriots, who may have forgotten about them.

Dedication says that she will do everything in her power, even at the cost of her own life, to save the unlucky people from captivity ...

The entire Chorus implores her to do so.

ACT I

(In the Sultan's court.)

The henchmen of Sultan Suleiman (Ibrahim-Pasha, Abdul Baki, and the Fool) praise his wisdom and bravery. He swears to them that he will not rest until he conquers all the nations of the world.

Suleiman's closest assistant, Ibrahim Pasha, says that no one in the world is able to put obstacles in the Sultan's path. Then the Fool steps forth and sings that death will find everyone and will overcome even the powerful Sultan ...

There was a glorious Shah, a courageous fighter,
an awesome Shah!
He fought like a lion,
full of fame and power,
on all sides.
He conquered all the lands.
The world was praising him
all days and nights.
But once he was bitten
by a little grass-snake.
And this is how this young
and glorious man died ...

The Sultan agrees that it is true:

Bright and simple truth
is in this song.
Death devours everyone, even the Prophet!—
what a mighty force ...
 There will come a time, unknown to anyone,
 When Suleiman's eyes
 will close forever.
 Whether short or long
 that life is ...
As long as I have power in my hand,
and can hold my sword in it,
I assure you that
from that sword's luster,
thrones will tremble,
and will perish down.

The Chorus of captives sings again in honor of the Sultan.

The Sultan informs his men that tomorrow, at the sunset, he intends to launch a war campaign against the Persians, but for now they are free to make merry and carouse.

At the Sultan's order, two Cossacks begin to dance.

The whistles and cries of the Tatars can be heard. There must be new captives. Aglay-khan steps forward and informs the Sultan that he has just returned from Ukraine:

Ukraine is totally devastated;
there are ruins in place of villages and houses.
The entire Ukraine has been covered
with blood—all in honor of Suleiman!

Aglay offers the Sultan the best Ukrainian people as his new captives.

At the sight of the captives, Suleiman is filled with anger and cruelty, and he gives an order to behead all of them at once.

The captives are singing their last death song:

We are praying for the last time
to Thee, o Lord Father—have mercy upon us! ...
Take our blood as a tribute,
and give rescue to Ukraine,
Our Almighty God! ...

Suleiman is further angered by the captives' composure,—he orders for his sword to be brought in, so that he himself could behead the captives.

The Tatars bring in Roksoliana. Once Suleiman sees her, he puts down his sword in confusion. He is stunned by Roksoliana's beauty:

What is it, do I see an earthly creature,
or an angel from heaven has assumed this shape?

Suleiman asks her who she is, and Roksoliana answers:

I will not say many words:
I am Roksoliana,
whom none of you know.
I was captured by your army,
I am a priest's daughter,
and your captive here!
And these poor, unlucky people
are my brothers and sisters,
from the Ukrainian lands ...

She then begs the Sultan to pardon her fellow captives ...

Suleiman, impressed with her beauty, promises to do so:

I take them all
under my protection,
trust me,

I will forgive them all!
I grant life to all of you.

Roksoliana fall don to the ground, thanking him for this kind act ...

Suleiman gives an order to put a veil on Roksoliana's face and to take her to his harem.

Danylo, Roksoliana's brother, rips apart his shabby clothes, dashes to the Sultan, and begs him to be beheaded, for he cannot live without Roksoliana.

Roksoliana, already covered with the veil, asks Suleiman to forgive her brother this rashful act.

Suleiman not only forgives him, but also sets him free.

Roksoliana is taken to the Sultan's harem.

ACT II

(The scene is set in the seraglio garden. All around are cypress trees; a wall and a tower made of scabbed stones are seen on one side.)

As the curtain is being lifted, the Chorus of captives is heard singing:

Oh, ye, blue sea, quickly, quickly
bring us a note from Ukraine,
whether they still remember, still recall
their unhappy brothers ...

The Fool and Ibrahim enter. The Sultan is said to have changed greatly:

FOOL: Ha-ha-ha!
Our Master does unusual acts,
his own glory he has tarnished, —
he wants to find paradise in his serail,
I tell you!
He, who captured kings,
the glory of the East, a lion on the throne,
now, ha-ha-ha, what a joke!
he writes poems for Roksoliana!

The Sultan enters. Ibrahim tells him that he has received news that the people are very dissatisfied with their Sultan's actions. A rebellion might break out ... The Sultan cuts him short and throws him out; he then sings:

Is it my fault that my heart
has been awoken in my chest?
that I have to love
that girl with all my heart?

In the entire world
there is nothing that brings me joy,
I cannot sleep, I feel sorrow,
I feel pain ...
Here I am, ruler and master of hundreds of thrones.
I could have her in my bed,
coiling like a snake,
as any other girl,
but no, never! ... (etc.)

Suleiman and Abdul-Baki move further to the backstage.
The Chorus from the tower is singing a sad song:

Death, Death, you that can save us,
why do you not reply to our supplications? (etc.)

Roksoliana and Fedora enter.

Fedora asks Roksoliana why she goes to the tower so often. Roksoliana replies that her heart calls her there, to listen to the singing that can be heard from the tower. Though rich and enamored of the Sultan, she does not feel happy. Then she asks Fedora to sing a song.

FEDORA: Small, silent, and bitter tears
Fall like rain on Ukraine,
and where you fall, there you grow
like blue forget-me-nots!
Where the Dnieper sparkles, and the snowball tree is sorrowful,
where beautiful bells are ringing,
where children are playing in cherry orchards,
where a sad song is trembling in the air!
Oh, my bitter tears,
fall down onto my native land! ...

They both burst into crying ...

The Chorus of the captives can be heard again from the tower:

Our native Land, our Mother!
Show us your mercy!
We beg you: look at us
in the dark dungeons! ... (etc.)

Roksoliana is again touched by their singing; it hurts her heart ... She is suffering along with her brothers and sisters.

Suleiman approaches her and asks her for a word of endearment. If she stops treating him so indifferently, the captives will no longer suffer ...

He reveals his feelings toward her:

You are like water for me in a hot summer.
 You fascinate me, and my heart is aching.
 The fire of love is burning in my soul.
 How unfortunate I am!
 Tell me if you want to be crowned?
 If you say one word, I will take my sword
 To conquer the entire world,
 And warm blood like a river will flow.
 But if you want, the sun of happiness will shine
 Onto the whole world!

Roksoliana falls down on the bench and faints.

Abdul Baki advises the Sultan to leave her alone—and they both leave the stage.

Roksoliana is deeply preoccupied with her thoughts. She sees her native Ukrainian village. It seems to her that everything, even the soft wind blowing in her native fields, is whispering to her:

“Give your consent to be crowned and release us.”⁹

She then has a vision of the graveyard in her native village; she sees her father by her mother’s grave. It seems to her that he asks her the same:

“My dear, give your consent to be crowned and release us.”

Afterwards she hears a sad song—a supplication coming from the tower:

The sons and daughters of the same land that she comes from pray to God asking him to change their fate through Roksoliana’s sacrifice.

Moved by this, she decides to sacrifice herself for the happiness of others. —
 Danylo enters and implores her to escape with him to their native land,

—where the sun does not burn so much,
 where wheat grows profusely,
 where warm winds blow,
 where periwinkles grow by the houses ...

Their escape, says he, is a sure thing, as all the guards have been bribed.

But Roksoliana is determined to save her compatriots. She says that love will make the Sultan more merciful to them.

Having heard that, Suleiman embraces her, and they both sing:

⁹ These two emphases are used in the original libretto.

Those hearts cannot be blamed,
For they are chained together by love.
And these chains cannot be broken,
And their happiness will be endless,
As happiness and paradise are,
Where strong faith and love exist!

Afterwards, Suleiman gives an order to open all the prisons and set the captives free,—and he introduces Roksoliana to the viziers as his wife, the tsarina of the East.

Everyone falls on their knees and bows down before her.

ACT III

(A kiosk in the seraglio garden.)

The viziers are filled with indignation, as the Sultan influenced by Roksoliana wants to live in peace with his neighbors and does not allow the Tatars to invade Ukraine. They join in a conspiracy against Suleiman, at the head of which is Suleiman's son, Mustafa. Suleiman is to be chained, and Roksoliana is to be thrown into the waters of Bosporus ...

FOOL: Mustafa and his army are ready.

But they do not want to shed anyone's blood any more ...
The Sultan must be chained, and Roksoliana
Must be condemned!
Could anyone imagine or hear, in the whole world,
A more amusing word than "tsarina"?
White-faced enchantress,
She does what she wants.
She receives ambassadors,
Tells them to live in peace.
She protects the guilty people,
She defends her Rus' ...

They agree to act at midnight, after which they leave the stage.

Suleiman and Abdul Baki enter. From their conversation, it is clear that they know about the conspiracy. Abdul Baki advises Suleiman to abdicate the throne and to live a long and happy life with Roksoliana. Otherwise, he must follow the will of his people and turn himself into a cruel tyrant ...

Suleiman loses his patience:

I will become a tyrant!
I am out for blood!
Warm blood!

The Fool enters. He has also joined the conspiracy against Suleiman. Suleiman gives an order to put the Fool into a dark underground prison, where he is to be killed.

Then the Sultan orders Aglay-Khan to take the guards and to entice his son into the kiosk and to kill him there. Aglay-Khan executes the order.

Suleiman sings:

I have murdered my own son! ...

No, I am a Ruler of the East,
from an imperial line! ...

...

If God asks me,
Why I shed my own blood,
He will understand
The stars of happiness fall down!

Roksoliana enters and asks Suleiman why he is so sad. He mumbles something to her. Then Roksoliana tells him that she knows everything about the conspiracy ...

Suleiman begs her to return to her native land, as some terrible things are about to happen here.

SULEIMAN: I call you my Wife,
You are my happiness, sun, and light!
You are more important for me than the throne,
And you know that!
Now I beg you;
Go back to your country,
And as you leave, you will take my heart with you
I beg you!
When you go back home,
I will be sure you are safe.
Please go back, go back home!

But she refuses to do so, saying that a wife must share with her husband both happiness and grief ...

Suleiman gives an order to bring in the traitor Ibrahim and the entire council.

The Chorus of viziers enters, along with Ibrahim, the janissaries, and the guards. Everyone greets the Sultan. They praise him for his wisdom and bravery. The Sultan asks Ibrahim whether he knows anything about the rebellion. Ibrahim assures him his people are content. Then the Sultan orders to bring in a cup of poison and tells Ibrahim to drink it. Ibrahim refuses, but the guards force him to do it. Ibrahim falls down dead ...

Suleiman gives an order to open the door to the kiosk and shows the viziers the body of his son. Everyone is frightened, and a great stir takes place ... The Sultan orders the janissaries to imprison all the viziers, and to call for Roksoliana ...

When she enters, he sings:

SULEIMAN: Have a look at my throne, I had a woman
She was the sun for me
She was like an angel
I do not want to live in this world without her
Everything I have belongs to her!
But look, look!
I am Sultan again!

He strikes Roksoliana with a dagger. While falling, she says:

Ah, farewell!
Do not be sad, for soon
there will be no sorrow, nor pain.
I will be where the stars shine,
Where the days are warm!
I'm coming.
What do I see? my native house,
our cherry orchard—my father and mother
are calling me ! ...

and she dies.

The Sultan falls into a fit of rage; he gives orders to torture all the rebels and to assemble his troops, with who he intends to march onto Hungary, when the sun rises, in order to drink the blood of his enemies! ...

THE END

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Appendix 1

Plot Summaries

Lope de Vega, *LA SANTA LIGA* (1603)¹

Act I

The first act deals with the great love of Sultan Selim II for his favorite concubine Rosa Solimana. In her presence, after taking a bath, he declares his great love for her, even kneeling at her feet. While this is happening, he is interrupted three times: first by his two pashas and then by the King of Algiers, who urge him to abandon his comfortable lifestyle (baths and women) and to embark on new war campaigns in order to preserve what he had inherited from his father and to extend his domains further. The pashas and the King of Algiers make Selim angry, and he throws them out threatening to have their heads cut off. While watching this, Rosa tries to calm the Sultan and speaks in defense of these three men. That night, Selim has a vision of the ghost of his father followed by an army and himself. This vision makes him change his mind and, after leaving Rosa in the middle of the night, he summons back his three advisors. The Sultan shares with them his plans and entrusts one of the pashas, Mustapha, with an errand: to go to Venice and ask the Venetians to give him back Cyprus; otherwise, war will be declared. The day Mustapha arrives in Venice and before reaching the Senate, the senators are already assembled to celebrate an event: the arrival of the famous Venetian painter Titian who has just come from Constantinople where he had stayed for some time in order to paint Rosa Solimana's portrait. Titian tells the senators about Selim's easy life of idleness, love, and sleep. Later Titian shows the senators a copy of Rosa Solimana's portrait, and they exclaim in wonder and admiration of her beauty. Titian leaves, and unexpectedly Mustapha enters with the Sultan's mission, which is not accepted by the Venetians. Mustapha returns home.

Act II

The news about the Venetians' refusal to surrender Cyprus—which is brought back to the Sultan's court by Ali, a Turk who went with Mustapha to Venice—reaches Selim when he is in the company of another concubine, Fatima, who is very jealous of Rosa. Rosa enters the scene and, upon seeing Fatima, becomes jealous of her as well. In the presence of the two women, Ali tries to gain favor with the Sultan

¹ Prepared by Ana Pinto from Lope de Vega, *Obras Completas, Comedias*, ed. Manuel Arroyo Stephens, 15 vols (Madrid: Turner, 1994), 10: 565–75, which is based on one of the earliest editions of the play published by Viuda de Alonso Martín in Madrid in 1621.

by speaking evil of Mustapha Pasha. Selim questions Ali in order to find out what has happened between him and Mustapha. Finally, he discovers that Ali feels a grudge against Mustapha for a matter of love. Constance, the beautiful Christian captive—who was on board of Mustapha's brig on his way to Venice and supposed to have been left in Cyprus, once freed from her captivity in Constantinople by a Trinitarian friar—has been coveted by both Mustapha and Ali, and hence rivalry arose. Then Mustapha enters the scene and tries to explain himself. But both Ali and Mustapha begin to argue and accuse each other in the presence of the Sultan and his two concubines. While listening to their personal complaints, Selim finally gets cross with both men, even threatening to have them impaled, but through the intercession of the two women, who speak in favor of the two men, the Sultan entrusts the Cyprus campaign to both men. Ali is appointed commander-in-chief of the fleet and Mustapha, commander-in-chief of the army. Once the decision concerning the two men is made, the Sultan arrives at another decision concerning his two concubines, trying to appease each other's jealousy. Addressing only Rosa, the Sultan entrusts one woman with his body, and the other, with his soul. He does not make explicit, though, which of the two women is entitled to which part of him: "Rosa, you two, do the same: / Share me between you both, / one is to have my body, / and the other one, my soul." The campaign against Cyprus takes place, and the island is captured by the Turks under the leadership of Ali and Mustapha.

Act III

After the Venetian defeat at Cyprus and the capture of Famagusta, which was the last stronghold in Cyprus against the Turks, Pope Pius V summons several countries to prepare an alliance against the Sultan. The alliance, called the "Holy League," is concluded between the Pope (Pius V), the King of Spain Philip II, and the Venetians. The principal leaders of the alliance will be King Philip's brother, Juan of Austria, and Giovanni Andrea Doria, an Italian admiral from Genoa and great-nephew of the famous Genoese admiral Andrea Doria, the one who entered the service of Emperor Charles V. Meanwhile in Constantinople, Mami, an envoy from Ali—commander-in-chief of the Ottoman fleet—has arrived. He has been sent to ask Selim's advice about the opportunity to go into battle against the Holy League in the Gulf of Lepanto, where it has retreated. The reason for his arrival has been that there was no accord among the Sultan's men-of-arms. Uluc Ali, King of Algiers, who had bravely taken part in the Cyprus campaign helping the Turks, considers the advisability of returning to Constantinople. Contrary to Ali and Mustapha, the King of Algiers is not in favor of fighting the Christian league in Lepanto. Once the Sultan has heard the envoy's news in the presence of his two concubines, he takes the two women's advice and grants him permission to embark on the battle against the "Holy League." After a fierce sea battle, seen from the Christian allies' point of view, the Ottomans are defeated. Ali is beheaded, and his head displayed on a pike, and Uluc Ali is forced to flee. The song of two Spanish rogues puts an end to the play, whose lyrics serve to glorify the Spanish and insult the Turks.

Prospero Bonarelli, *IL SOLIMANO* (1620)²*Act I*

Scene 1: Soliman, King of Thrace, thinks that the Persian King will come humbly to declare defeat and that the Persians' famous empire will fall under his, the true dominator of the East. Acmat and Rusten, Soliman's counselors, pledge faith in and commitment to the Sultan. Rusten takes leave to go to the Queen.

Scene 2: Osman, Rusten's relative, sent by Soliman to get news from Prince Mustafa, comes on the scene with news that Mustafa will soon arrive in Aleppo. Acmat advises that Soliman do the honorable thing and go greet Mustafa in the camp. Soliman agrees.

Scene 3: Aluante, Despina's minister, warns Despina that they should return to her father, the Persian King, to warn him about Soliman's plan to move the camp of 10,000 men against him. Despina would rather stay to witness Mustafa's arrival. But Aluante insists that she return to safety, as fortune may change for her. Despina notes that if she were to leave, she would leave her happiness, her kingdom, and her honor. She also reveals to Aluante her love for Mustafa.

Scene 4: The Queen's inner conflict: her hatred for Mustafa, her attendant's advice to feign love, and the Queen's admission that her love for Soliman has weakened. This weakening of her feelings for Soliman was caused by her discovery that Soliman will pass his reign to Mustafa.

Scene 5: Mulearbe, the King's soothsayer, prepares a book of the Queen's past and future exploits. His son Corimbo delivers the book to the Queen. Through the book the Queen discovers what happened to her infant son Selino. She learns that the attendant gave him to another woman, who is shown in queen's clothing, and that he will die by Mustafa's hand.

Act II

Scene 1: Soliman and Mustafa confer about war. Soliman tells Mustafa to ready for war with Persia.

Scene 2: Rusten complains to Osman that Soliman has shown preference for Mustafa, charging him with a task that will bring him glory, when in fact he, Rusten, has the experience and, for his position, the right to carry out Soliman's orders. Rusten now seeks revenge. He asks Osman to spy on Mustafa and his camp.

² Prepared by Virginia Picchietti from Prospero della Rovere Bonarelli, *Il Solimano; tragedia* (Firenze [Florence]: P. Cecconcelli, 1620).

Scene 3: Rusten visits the Queen. Rusten and the Queen discuss what benefits Mustafa's death would bring to them. The Queen learns from Rusten of Soliman's directive to Mustafa.

Scene 4: The Queen and Rusten visit Soliman at the Palace. The Queen tells Soliman that she suspects Mustafa of planning to usurp his kingdom.

Scene 5: Aluante encourages Despina to tell her story about her encounter with Mustafa. Despina relates the story of their encounter during battle, in which she revealed herself to Mustafa, and he pledged his sword and his heart to her. Aluante warns that love born in war can only end in blood and death.

Act III

Scene 1: Despina and Aluante discuss Mustafa's supposed betrayal of Despina, when Mustafa had not recognized Despina. Aluante advises Despina to think about her life, but Despina resolves to take her life in front of Mustafa and instill in him eternal regret and horror.

Scene 2: Soliman tells Acmat he is calling Mustafa to his court to talk to him personally. Acmat reminds Soliman that Mustafa has always been loyal. He tells Soliman that the worst monster is suspicion; that Soliman, a wise man, would have already perceived it, if in fact Mustafa were disloyal to him, and that out of all of Soliman's children, Mustafa is the rightful heir of his kingdom. Soliman concedes that Acmat's assessment of the situation is most likely correct.

Scene 3: Rusten gives Soliman a letter written by the Persian King to Mustafa.

Scene 4: Osman reveals to the Queen's Nursemaid that the letter in question was in reality falsified by Rusten. He tells her that the Queen was not told of this plot so that she would react naturally when reading about it in the letter.

Scene 5: Ormusse, rector and Mustafa's counselor, warns Mustafa about the meeting with Soliman, because he suspects that Rusten and the Queen have a hand in it. He tells Mustafa that Rusten is motivated by envy of Mustafa's position. The Queen, for her part, worries that she and her children will die by Mustafa's hand once he is sultan. Mustafa affirms his love for Despina, a fact he realizes Rusten and the Queen could hold against him. He vows to kill himself if his father is hurt or his own love betrayed.

Scene 6: Adrasto, Mustafa's lieutenant, advises the Prince to leave quickly, or he will be killed. He tells Mustafa that Rusten and the Queen have already planted seeds of vengeance in Soliman's heart. Mustafa pledges to face the false accusations and defend himself.

Scene 7: The Messenger warns Mustafa that his life is in danger. Ormusse advises Mustafa to rectify the lies before they spread among the soldiers.

Act IV

Scene 1: Rusten tells Osman that he hopes Soliman will kill his son today, or his (Rusten's) plot will be discovered.

Scene 2: Rusten sees Soliman talking to Acmat. Soliman worries that Mustafa's return to the camp is a sign of his guilt. He tells Rusten that Mustafa must pay for his felony. Acmat reminds Soliman that he is a father and a man and that he should therefore act honorably. He should not allow Mustafa to die unheard. Acmat tries to convince Soliman to be humble, while Rusten tries to convince him of the contrary. Soliman remains steadfast in his plan for vindication.

Scene 3: Mulearbe tells Soliman that Mustafa will be the reason for all his worries, but that he is innocent.

Scene 4: Giafferro, a guard at the city gate, tells Soliman about Despina's arrest: dressed as a man, she appeared with trembling heart and eyes full of horror. Her appearance and demeanor raised suspicion, so she was imprisoned. In prison, she revealed she is a Persian spy.

Scene 5: Aluante begs Soliman to calm his ire against Despina, and says that if he spares her life, he could win the kingdom too. Soliman demands to know who Aluante is, but Despina asks him to not reveal her identity so that she may die. Aluante tells him that the King of Persia would give Soliman the bigger part of his kingdom if he spares her life. Aluante reveals Despina's identity and that she loves Mustafa. Soliman is angry and calls Mustafa "a crude and unjust son." He orders that Despina be taken to a dungeon and that Aluante be made a slave. Despina confesses her happiness with her sentence.

Scene 6: Giafferro reveals that his pity for Despina is born of her beauty, age, sex, status, and love for Mustafa. Despina sees Mustafa arriving and is overwhelmed.

Scene 7: Mustafa says he has returned to die honorably rather than live an unworthy life. Despina, who does not realize that Mustafa had not recognized her, lashes out at him, telling him he has a villainous heart and belongs with the beasts. Mustafa is in disbelief to see that it is Despina and demands that she be released. Mustafa asks her to pardon him for his involuntary error, but she remains convinced of his betrayal. Despina lists his betrayals, including his tearing up the letter she had sent declaring her love and negating that he had promised his hand in marriage to her. Mustafa is mystified about the letter and negates denigrating her name.

Scene 8: Aluante is happy to see Despina and Mustafa together. He confesses that he himself had torn the letter and spread falsities about Despina, motivated by his hatred of their love. Mustafa pardons Aluante. Aluante warns Mustafa and Despina that Soliman has sentenced them and requested that the pair be conducted together to him. Despina is still perplexed, because she thinks that the error committed against Mustafa is graver than that committed against her.

Scene 9: Aidina, Mustafa's nursemaid, declares that the Queen will orchestrate Mustafa's death to secure the throne for her son, but thinks that if the Queen sees Mustafa, her resolve will fall away. Alicola, Mustafa's servant, warns that they need to proceed lightly with the Queen, so that she may reveal her thoughts.

Scene 10: The Queen reveals to Aidina and Alicola that the thought of Mustafa dying stirs pity in her heart. But she remembers how his death will preserve her sons' lives and her own. Aidina pleads for Mustafa's life. She asserts that Mustafa is not his real name and that his status is different. The Queen is moved by their maternal feelings and asks how they know Mustafa is not the heir to the throne. Aidina tells her Mustafa is not Soliman's first-born son. His first-born, born three days before the Queen's, died and was buried outside the city walls and replaced by another infant. Alicola reveals that she received the child from an unknown woman.

Scene 11: In the presence of the Queen and Aidina, Alicola recognizes the Nursemaid who had given her the child, and produces swatches of the infant's swaddling cloth.

Act V

Scene 1: Ormusse wonders who the man is who is approaching him—a man with tear-filled, downcast eyes and arms folded. The messenger tells Ormusse that both Mustafa and Despina are dead, and recounts the circumstances of their death. Soliman told Mustafa to accompany Despina to her appointed room, guided by Rusten. Mustafa wanted Despina spared, but she refused and said she alone was guilty. Despina is beheaded and her head rolls until it reaches Mustafa. Mustafa is so distraught that his cries sadden even Rusten. Mustafa, stabbed in the heart, declares his happiness to be with Despina in death.

Scene 2: Soliman admits to Acmat his discovery of his son's innocence, Rusten's fraud, and the Queen's discovery of Mustafa's true identity. After Aluante had inadvertently torn Rusten's letter, the Queen had tried to reach Soliman to have him alter the sentence against Mustafa.

Scene 3: The second messenger recounts to Soliman how the Queen arrived on the scene of Despina and Mustafa's death, mourned her son's death, and felt guilty for having caused it. She poisoned herself and grabbed Mustafa's head.

Scene 4: The dying Queen holds her son's head for Soliman to see, begs him to placate his ire so that she may find peace in death, and entreats him to take care of her son Selino. Soliman bemoans his role as his son's murderer.

Scene 5: Adrasto calls for vengeance against the tyrannous Soliman.

Jean Desmares, *ROXELANE* (1643)³*Act I*

In the first scene, Circasse, the former favorite concubine of Sultan Soliman, laments her former glory and implores sympathy and consolation from Acmat Bassa, her only friend. She not only fears for her son, Mustapha, but also expresses deep sorrow for her abandonment and her replacement by concubine Roxelane in Soliman's affections. Acting on an impulse, Circasse talks of using a dagger and poison to take action against Roxelane. Acmat advises dissimulation and patience. In response to this, Circasse vows to find allies at the court by bribing them with money. Using a more rational argument, Acmat compels Circasse to think again about the possible unfortunate consequences, should her secret plan be discovered. He then encourages her to meet with Roxelane in order to find out the latter's true intentions. The second scene witnesses an encounter between Roxelane and the Mufti, an interpreter of the Islamic Law. With her own fears for the day when the son of her rival may come to power, Roxelane reveals to the Mufti her resolve to legitimize her own sons. The Mufti believes that the absolute power bestowed upon her by Soliman should suffice and questions the need to gain the crown. He then cites the traditional Ottoman law, which forbids sultans to marry. In no way discouraged by this obstacle, Roxelane hints at a scheme that will make the Sultan himself entreat her to accept the crown. In the third scene, the two rivals, Circasse and Roxelane, engage in a lengthy conversation, with mutual hatred and fear masked by sweet words. Roxelane purposely uses evasive language and false modesty to obscure her intentions. The act ends with the fourth scene, a long soliloquy by Roxelane. Undeterred by Circasse's threat of revenge, she is willing to use any possible means, including murder, and make her sons gain the throne, to the detriment of Mustapha. While justifying crime as a pious act and assassination as a virtue, she swears to shelter and protect her children.

Act II

The act opens with Soliman's statement about the great treasure that he has found in Roxelane. Comparing his love to his victories, he wishes to be remembered by posterity not only as a courageous prince, but a happy lover as well. Acmat ventures to warn him that Roxelane's increasing authority is weakening his position and causing his people to feel that his love for them is diminishing. Soliman asks Acmat to keep this speech secret. Surprised at the suggestion of Roxelane becoming queen, he insists that he does not intend to break the law and tradition. The Mufti opposes Acmat's stance and defends the Sultan. In the second scene, Soliman summons Roxelane to defend herself. She piously condemns

³ Prepared by Andrzej Dziedzic from Jean Desmares, *Roxelane* (Paris: A. de Sommaville, et A. Covrbé, 1643).

herself for wordly preoccupations and asks for a permission to build a temple and other charitable institutions for the good of her soul. Soliman orders the Mufti to carry out her wishes, but the latter wonders whether the work will be credited only to the good of her master's soul. Soliman exits with Acmat, while Roxelane rejoices at the first victory in her scheme. In the third scene, the Mufti expresses his skepticism, doubt, and fear for Roxelane's quest for the throne and for power. At Roxelane's request not to abandon her in this difficult endeavor, he pledges his unconditional support.

Act III

In the first scene, Soliman is very surprised when a page informs him that Roxelane has refused to admit him to her bedchamber, claiming that from now on, physical love is a crime for her. In a fit of anger Soliman orders her head brought to him. Rustan dissuades Soliman from making a hasty decision and asks to give Roxelane a chance to defend her actions. Soliman agrees and sends Rustan to bring Roxelane. In the second scene, Acmat and Circasse attempt to find various reasons, which may have prompted Roxelane to rebel against Soliman. In the end, they both agree that this is one of the tricks planned by her. In the following scene, Acmat suggests to Circasse that they go see the Emperor in order to regain his favor, even at the risk of their deaths. The fourth scene is comprised of four stances in which Roxelane, once again, ponders the motives propelling her actions. Going through ambivalent and often contradictory feelings of love, fear, hope, ambition, and yet unwilling to yield to hesitation, she is determined to carry on her plot and marry the king. In the fifth scene, Rustan confronts Roxelane with an ultimatum: either find a way to appease the King's wrath or die. Roxelane's daughter, Chamerie, begs her mother to change her mind. Roxelane persists in refusing to love a king who adores her. She is ready to die, especially since her death would come from the King. Soon after, she claims that only a tyrant would kill an innocent person. Ormin enters with two Janissaires, bringing her a summons to appear immediately before Soliman.

Act IV

This act opens with several verses pronounced by Soliman. Unable to control his feelings, he is torn apart and oscillates between wrath and love. Faced with an alternative to follow the law and punish Roxelane, or to forgive her, he defers his decision until after hearing Roxelane's defense. In the second scene, Circasse pleads with Soliman to judge Roxelane fairly. When, in the third scene, Roxelane enters, she admits her crime, refuses to defend herself, and demands punishment without delay. Soliman reiterates that he is a just and fair king, not a tyrant, and although he abhors the crime that has been committed, he does not despise the person who committed it. After Roxelane states that she feels unhappy to no longer be his slave, the Sultan relents and passionately begs Roxelane not to complicate his life with formalities. She remains firm in her adherence to Divine Law, which

forbids a free woman to be a man's mistress. Enraged, Soliman sends her back to prison. In the fourth scene, Roxelane demands death as a punishment for her crime. Soliman refuses her request claiming that in this situation, death would be a grace, and not a torment. The act closes with him confirming his love for Roxelane.

Act V

In the opening scene, Acmat reveals to Circasse a rumor spreading at the court that Soliman intends to marry Roxelane. Outraged, Circasse awaits a verification of these suspicions and a decision of the council of advisors (Acmat, Rustan, Osman, Ormin, and the Mufti), summoned by Soliman. In the second scene, Soliman is so captivated by Roxelane that he is unable to control his feelings of love and desire. The Mufti insists that Roxelane's interpretation of the Koran is correct, but he is somewhat confused, and he finds it difficult to offer useful advice. However, after giving it some thought, the Mufti reluctantly comes up with a decision that Soliman may marry Roxelane. Acmat opposes this decision on the grounds that it violates the law forbidding sultans to marry. But Soliman is swayed by the Mufti's point that human laws are changable, while Heaven's law is inviolable. In the final scene, the Sultan welcomes Roxelane as his wife, gives her half his rights and declares her children to be successors to the Empire. Hopeless Circasse invites Acmat to go seek death with her, while Roxelane, until the very end of the play, is still protesting all the accusations of her untruthful intentions.

Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, *IBRAHIM BASSA* (1653)⁴

Act I

"Kaiser Solimann's" Grand-Vizier, Ibrahim, a French Count from Genoa, and his beloved Isabelle, the Countess of Monaco, have fled the court. Isabelle attracted Süleyman's amorous attentions during Ibrahim's absence in Persia. Süleyman asks Grand Admiral, Ali Pasha ("Hali Bassa") and Ahmed Pasha ("Achmat Bassa") for news of the fugitives and how to punish Ibrahim when he is captured. Ahmed responds he should be condemned to death. Rüstam Pasha ("Rustan Bassa") brings the pair before Süleyman who admonishes Ibrahim. Ibrahim denies treachery, stating he fled only to protect Isabelle. Rüstam Pasha accuses him of plotting with the Holy Roman Emperor in Vienna. Isabelle protests her innocence. En route to prison, they lament their unhappy situation and part with assertions of mutual love. Ahmed and Ali discuss the dangerous situation. A Chorus of Christian prisoners bemoans its fate and call on God for rescue.

⁴ This plot summary, prepared by Beate Allert, is based on the synopsis that first appeared in the 1689 edition of *Ibrahim Bassa*: Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, *Türkische Trauerspiele*, ed. Klaus Günther Just (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1953), 83–7. Proper names follow the conventions adopted in historical writings.

Act II

Süleyman mulls over the situation. He decides to risk gaining Isabelle's love after Ibrahim's execution. Rüstam reports on Ibrahim's and Isabelle's behavior in prison, news which dismays Süleyman. His wife, Sultana Roxolana ("Roxelane"), attempts to calm him. She advises he get rid of Ibrahim. Süleyman objects reminding her of Ibrahim's great military achievements and of their former friendship. He succumbs to Roxolana's insistent arguments, promising to order Ibrahim's death. Yet he remains restless and doubtful. The Chorus, Desire, and Reason, argue with each other over their relative powers.

Act III

The imprisoned Isabelle laments the many mishaps her love for Ibrahim has caused. Süleyman visits her, threatening to kill her after Ibrahim and adding violently that she must love him. She remains unmoved and Süleyman leaves angry. Rüstam announces the death sentence to Ibrahim and gives him the condemned man's garment and silk cord. Ibrahim prepares himself during a quiet meal. As he lies on the floor with the cord placed around his neck, Süleyman enters, tells Ibrahim to get up, and embraces "his friend." Ibrahim promises with profuse thanks to always put the Sultan and Empire before his own well-being. A Chorus of Saracen priests celebrate the approaching Ramadan and thank Mahomet and the other prophets for the rescue of Ibrahim.

Act IV

Rüstam tells Roxolana that Ibrahim and Isabelle have been spared. Roxolana is astounded and vilifies the Sultan as "a womanly man." She confers with Rüstam on how best to advance Ibrahim's death. Süleyman enters and tells his wife about a strange encounter with ghosts in the garden, which he interprets as an indication of his own future misfortune. She scoffs at this and sternly rebukes him for having changed his mind over Ibrahim, telling him to revert to his original decision and advising him to consult the Mufti who has devised a plan to insure Ibrahim's death on Rüstam's urging and Roxolana's bribes. The Mufti meets Süleyman and persuades him to have the death sentence carried out while Ibrahim is asleep, since a sleeping man may be considered dead. Nor would this violate the vow in which Süleyman promised always to keep Ibrahim from harm. Süleyman adopts the Mufti's reasoning and again orders the death sentence to be carried out. A chorus of the Senses and Sleep argue their powers and fight over their dominance.

Act V

Ibrahim and Isabelle celebrate their release from confinement. Rüstam enters and orders their return to prison. Süleyman commands Rüstam to have Ibrahim strangled as soon as he falls asleep. A Chorus of singers praises Süleyman's power

and warns the high court officials to see themselves in Ibrahim's situation. The ghost of Prince Mustafa ("Mustapha") comes to Süleyman in a dream, condemning his father's cruelty and showing him the corpses of Cihangir ("Giangir"), his wife, his son, and Ibrahim. Süleyman wakes in horror, regretting Ibrahim's death sentence and criticizing Rüstam for carrying it out. Rüstam will be punished severely for having killed the Sultan's "best friend." Ali Pasha is ordered to bring Rüstam's head and heart to the Sultan, while Ahmed Pasha is sent to Isabelle trying to find an excuse for Ibrahim's execution. The play ends with her laments and her blaming Süleyman.

August Adolph von Haugwitz, *OBSIEGENDE TUGEND: ODER DER BETHÖRTE DOCH WIEDER BEKEHRTE SOLIMAN; MISCH-SPIEL* (1684)⁵

Act I

Doria, Alphons, Horaz (Genoese countrymen of Ibrahim's) and the Markgraf of Turin sing an Ode thanking the Sultana for having bestowed honor on Ibrahim who has returned victorious from a campaign against the Persians. Horaz and the Markgraf thank Isabelle ("Isabella") and the support she gave her fiancé Ibrahim at which she is happy. The Markgraf comments on secrets among friends and how one should never desire anything belonging to a friend. The Markgraf and Emilia, Isabelle's chambermaid, reveal that while Süleyman (Solimann) enjoys respect, he is not to be trusted. The Markgraf sings about the danger caused by a certain "rival lover." Then Süleyman confesses his uncontrollable love for Isabelle, recounting a vision of her surrounded by thorns and looking angrily at him, from which he awoke shaking. He is puzzled by this upsetting image, perhaps sent by the gods, and feels confronted by his own mortality. He tries to pressure Isabelle into loving him but she rejects him for Ibrahim. He gives her eight days to live before she must either give in to his desires or be executed. Isabelle claims she does not fear death but respects her honor and virtue. Süleyman leaves in frustration. Asterie, Süleyman's daughter, enters, whom Süleyman had once offered unsuccessfully to Ibrahim in marriage. She and Emilie console Isabelle. One of Süleyman's slaves enters telling Isabelle she is now a prisoner. Süleyman visits Isabelle in prison and describes his emotions to her, promising to hold her equal to Sultana Roxolana ("Roxana") until his death, besides as an Emperor he does not brook disobedience especially from his slaves.

Isabelle complains to Emilie and Asterie about Süleyman's betrayal of Ibrahim, who had been a faithful prince and warrior, eager to die for his Sultan's honor. She cannot believe that Süleyman wants to dishonor her in such a way. Süleyman's feelings for her are not love, but lust. Emila says if Isabelle dies, that would mean

⁵ Prepared by Beate Allert from August Adolf von Haugwitz, "Obsiegende Tugend," *Prodromus Poeticus*, ed. Pierre Béhar (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1984), 3–112.

Ibrahim's death. A Chorus of Love Gods sings to the enamored Süleyman about their poison, their fire, and their invisibility, saying they come when least expected. They admit that they cannot do anything about Isabelle for the only one ever able to move her is Justinian (Ibrahim's Genoese name) to whom she is completely devoted.

Act II

Süleyman muses over Ibrahim's successes and the problems they pose. Ibrahim enters, informs Süleyman of the military successes and asks permission to visit Isabelle. They meet and he is upset to learn what has happened. His friends advise him to flee immediately in order to save Isabelle. There is a long interlude sung by the Chorus of the Passions over the misled Süleyman, in which Love, Hatred, Desire, Happiness, Sadness, Hope, Despair, Anger, Jealousy, Cruelty, and other Passions comment upon their influences over Süleyman and Roxolana.

Act III

Roxolana ("Roxolane") reviews her family history and how she used her wiles to influence Süleyman. She and Rüstam ("Rustan") plot how to get rid of Ibrahim and how to exert influence on Süleyman. Süleyman responds to Roxolana's proposal by citing Ibrahim's military successes, his loyalty and popularity. Eventually he is persuaded Ibrahim should be beheaded. Rüstam reports Ibrahim is already planning to escape and that speed is essential. Süleyman orders Ibrahim summoned and then receives a letter in which Ibrahim explains that his concern for Isabelle is the reason for his departure. An angry Süleyman condemns letter and author. A Chorus of the Courtiers bemoans Ibrahim's ill fortune, singing Ibrahim will soon be hanged and praising the high seas as a much safer place than the court, where everything depends on the favor of the powerful.

Act IV

Ibrahim summarizes his life, his past friendship with Süleyman and everything the Sultan has done for him. He reflects on life's instability. After assertions of mutual love, Isabelle and Ibrahim agree to die together rather than give in to Süleyman's demands. On Roxolana's advice, Süleyman is about to kill Ibrahim and orders Rüstam to bring Ibrahim the black garment and the final meal. Rüstam does so, and Ibrahim accepts his fate. A Chorus of the Murdered Grand Viziers lament over the imprisoned Ibrahim.

Act V

Süleyman and Roxolana ask the Mufti for help to find a way to have Ibrahim killed without violating the law or compromising Süleyman's vow not to harm Ibrahim. The Mufti tells Süleyman that whatever is done during sleep does not

count as related to life and if Ibrahim is killed while sleeping, then Süleyman is not responsible. Süleyman approves of this plan. He is seen asleep surrounded by the personified virtues warning him of Ibrahim's approaching death. Rüstam approaches and assuming Süleyman asleep is ready to order Ibrahim's death. Süleyman awakes and describes his dream which has made him reconsider Ibrahim's execution. Reason prevails. Süleyman lets Ibrahim and Isabelle leave peacefully, illustrating how one at first beguiled has now recovered his senses. Süleyman has regained his integrity and taken control of his unruly desires. He offers the happy couple peace and friendship as they depart.

Christian Felix Weisse, MUSTAPHA UND ZEANGIR: EN TRAUERSPIEL IN FÜNF AUFZÜGEN, (1776)⁶

Act I

Scene 1: Rüstam ("Rustan") reports to Roxolana ("Roxane") how Mustafa ("Mustapha") is welcomed by the entire city. She responds by saying if he humiliates Mustafa, he will marry her daughter. She plans for her son Cihangir ("Zeangir") to inherit the throne. Rüstam's objections are silenced and he agrees to provoke Süleyman anger against Mustafa, accusing him of having a "female heart" for idolizing his wife and son. Roxolana worries about Mustafa's persuasive powers, but knows Süleyman's anger is not easily assuaged. Roxolana leaves matters to Rüstam having achieved her goal.

Scene 2: Roxolana is visited by Cihangir, happy at Mustafa's arrival. She declares Mustafa not worthy being called "brother." Cihangir affirms his love for Mustafa who has fallen from Süleyman's graces. Roxolana attempts to change his mind saying things are not always what they seem and that he could very well desire the throne for himself, there being "only one small life" between him and that goal. Cihangir completely rejects the idea and is upset with his mother.

Scene 3: Süleyman ("Solimann"), informed of Mustafa's arrival, notices the excitement in the people's welcome. Rüstam says there is treason and rebellion afoot in which Mustafa is involved and Roxolana tries to open a gap between father and son. Cihangir asks Süleyman of the source of his bad mood; the Sultan scolds Roxolana for Cihangir's bold question, and is further angered at Cihangir's tears. Rüstam is to seal the building as soon as Mustafa enters. Amurath is to spy on Mustafa's friends and to ensure that Ahmed ("Achmet") does not escape.

Scene 4: Cihangir reaffirms to Rüstam his solid relationship with Mustafa, who is innocent. Cihangir values their friendship more than the throne. Rüstam, impressed

⁶ Prepared by Beate Allert from Christian Felix Weisse, "Mustapha und Zeangir," in *Trauerspiele*, 5 vols (Leipzig: Dyk, 1776–1780), 2 (1776): 128–244.

by this response, embraces the Prince, warning him that Süleyman cannot refuse Roxolana, and there is no escaping Süleyman's wrath.

Scene 5: Rüstam predicts this brotherly love will vanish when blood flows.

Act II

Scene 1: Mustafa reveals that the reported slaying of Ahmed indicates a threat to his own life. He expresses tender feelings for his wife Fatimah ("Fatime") and his son "Zopyr" as Cihangir enters.

Scene 2: Cihangir and Mustafa embrace. Mustafa realizes his step-brother still loves him. Cihangir reveals Ahmed has escaped, wounded but alive. Mustafa hopes to assure Süleyman of his innocence. Cihangir knows Süleyman has issued a death sentence and tells Mustafa that he would rather die than see him leave a wife and a son behind. They embrace again.

Scene 3: Mustafa asks Süleyman for a hearing to defend himself before being executed. Mustafa, upset his father no longer loves him, offers him his own life. Süleyman orders him to leave.

Scene 4: Süleyman tells Roxolana he feels Mustafa is innocent and a faithful son. She tells him everyone wants Mustafa dead. She loves him but Süleyman is much dearer. Besides if Ahmed and Mustafa join forces, they would wish revenge. Süleyman agrees.

Scene 5: Roxolana determines that Mustafa, Fatimah, and Zopyr must die. Cihangir will then occupy the throne alongside her.

Act III

Scene 1: Fatimah, with Zophyr, asks Cihangir of Mustafa's whereabouts. Cihangir signals danger by looking around with a fearful expression.

Scene 2: Mustafa enters for a joyous reunion with his family and Cihangir thinking Süleyman has forgiven him. Cihangir affirms his friendship, and they discuss if Rüstam can be trusted. Fatimah reports a dream in which Cihangir appeared as an angel. Mustafa had a dream in which he is brought across the waters to a place of golden trees and a palace with golden pillars and a diamond door. There two youths offer him a plate of the fruit of eternal life. He awoke after a wise man's welcoming voice said he had reached the Palace of Light after suffering in Labyrinth of Time. Distressed at being back in the world, he now fears nothing, neither father nor death.

Scene 3: Mustafa bids farewell to Fatimah and Zopyr, entrusting them to Cihangir, who he knows will succeed him.

Scene 4: Mustafa scolds Rüstam for betraying him. Rüstam says it is all a matter of fate and that Fatimah and Zophyr should leave. People are enraged after being informed of Mustafa's situation by Ahmed. Süleyman has ordered Mustafa and Fatimah's death. Anguished, Mustafa takes leave of Fatimah and Zopyr.

Scene 5: Mustafa laments his separation from his family.

Act IV⁷

Scene 1: Roxolana and Rüstam plot to punish Fatimah and Zophyr if Mustafa is spared by Süleyman.

Scene 2: Süleyman doubts Mustafa's guilt but is persuaded to kill Fatimah. Roxolana says Süleyman must punish Mustafa because of the ongoing rebellion among Mustafa's supporters.

Scene 3: Cihangir says the people only want to know if Mustafa still lives, adding even if he were given an entire world—here Süleyman abruptly leaves followed by Roxolana, who firsts scolds her son.

Scene 4: Rüstam tells Cihangir that Mustafa is still alive. However Fatimah must die at Mustafa's hands. In accordance with his and Roxolana's plot, Rüstam suggests Mustafa write a letter to the Persian King asking for his daughter's hand and by this save Fatimah by demonstrating to the Sultan her small importance. But this letter will show Mustafa guilty of making overtures to the Empire's chief enemy.

Scene 6: Rüstam reflects on Cihangir, a naïve and trusting child, and on Mustapfa, martyr to his own simplicity. Mustafa enter carrying a letter.

Scene 7: Mustafa requests Rüstam and Cihangir to tell Süleyman that he would rather die than see his wife killed. Rüstam tells him to go ahead, adding that nothing will prevent Fatimah's being strangled on his grave. Rüstam reads aloud Mustafa's letter.

Scene 8: Mustafa, unaware of the fateful letter, leaves Cihangir ready to die now he has rescued Fatimah.

Scene 9: Mustafa anticipates heaven, where he will be eventually reunited with Fatimah, Zopyr, and Cihangir.

Act V

Scene 1: Süleyman, sword in one hand and Mustafa's letter in the other, finds Mustafa guilty of treason and orders him killed.

⁷ This act contains eight scenes. In a printer's error, scene 4 is followed by scene 6.

Scene 2: Mustafa writes a letter. Süleyman and his attendants enter. Mustafa gets up quickly but is warned off from approaching his father, and mortally wounded. Süleyman orders the still breathing Mustafa to sign the letter with his own blood. He reads the note intended for Fatimah explaining that Mustafa was never unfaithful to her and that the letter to the Persian King was an attempt to save her life. Süleyman understands Mustafa has revealed innocence, but it is too late. Mustafa dies reconciled with his father, who puts the blame on Rüstam. Süleyman fears the vengeance of Mustafa's supporters.

Scene 3: Ahmed arrives ready to fight and finds the dying Mustafa. Süleyman claims he has been betrayed for he loved his son. Rüstam is responsible and orders Ahmed to take revenge, offering to make him Grand-Vizier and promising the throne to Zopyr. Ahmed expresses grief over his death.

Scene 4: Süleyman addresses Ahmed, Mustafa, and the hell around him, voicing suspicion that Roxolana is somehow involved.

Scene 5: Roxolana expresses happiness to see Süleyman alive and, feigning surprise, notices Mustafa's corpse. She praises Süleyman for his victory over the traitor. She sees Süleyman's regret when he refers to Mustafa as his soul's darling. Roxolana shifts all the blame on to Rüstam. Süleyman vows vengeance on all who speak against Mustafa.

Scene 6: Roxolana thanks heaven for her intuition to blame Rüstam, expressing fear he may betray her. Instead of a throne, Mustafa has obtained his grave.

Scene 7:⁸ Cihangir enters. Finding Mustafa dead, he calls his father a tyrant and accuses his mother of complicity. She orders him to be quiet, but he identifies her as the true villain. Cihangir embraces Mustafa saying he will soon be reunited with him. Speaking of another kind of happiness and ambition, he makes Roxolana angry. She confesses she was the one who wanted Mustafa dead. Cihangir pulls out a dagger and stabs himself falling beside Mustafa's body. He replies to Roxolana's anguished cry that he has taken revenge on her crime. She asks where she should flee to and he answers to remorse, if that is possible.

⁸ Called the "last scene" ("Letzter Auftritt").

Appendix 2

Names

On the Names

Galina Yermolenko

Traditionally, Western historians have used the Turkish spellings of the names and terms related to the Ottoman Empire, often omitting the umlaut and other diacritical marks of the Turkish alphabet: e.g., *Hurrem* (in place of *Hürrem*), *Suleyman*, *Sulayman*, or *Suleiman* (in place of *Süleyman*), *Ibrahim Pasha* (in place of *İbrahim Paşa*), *Rustem Pasha* (in place of *Rüstem Paşa*), *Istanbul* (in place of *İstanbul*). They also introduced slight spelling variations into the Turkish names: e.g., *Mustapha* (in place of *Mustafa*), *Bajazet* (in place of *Bayezid* or *Bayazid*), *Jihangir* (in place of *Cihangir*).

In European dramatic and literary texts, the names of these characters often followed established Western spellings. The name *Hurrem* was practically unknown in Europe probably until the nineteenth century, when it appeared in several multi-volume histories of the Ottoman Empire (e.g., *Khurrem* or *Churrem* in Joseph von Hammer's *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* and *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, respectively). Early modern western texts used the names *Rossa*, *Roxolana*, or their variants, which often reflected geographical and ethnic differences: e.g., *Rossa* (Italian); *Rose* (French), *Rosa* (English); *Rosa Solimana*, *Roxa* (Spanish); *Reussin* (German); *Roxelane*, *Roxolane* (French); *Roxelana*, *Roxalana* (English, German); *Rosselane*, *Rosselana* (Italian); *Roksolana* (Polish, Ukrainian), and *Roksoliana* (western Ukrainian). Occasionally she was called *Roxana* (by association with the wife of Alexander the Great) or *Roxane* (French), or simply *Regina* [Ital. 'Queen'], *la Reyne* [Fr. 'the Queen'], and *the (Grand) Sultana*. Modern historical and literary texts use either *Hurrem* or one of the variations of *Roxolana* listed above. Such diversity of variations testifies to the legendary, transcultural, and transnational status of the *Roxolana* figure.

The name *Soliman* and its variants (*Solyman*, *Solimann*, *Solymann*, *Soleiman*) were used predominantly throughout the early modern Western Europe.¹ It should also be noted that in the early modern period, Soliman I was sometimes referred to as *Soliman II*, because the biblical King Solomon was considered to be *Soliman I*. In Turkish history *Kanuni* Sultan Süleyman ['Sultan Suleiman the Lawgiver'] was the first (I); another Ottoman sultan by that name was Sultan Süleyman II (r. 1687–1691).

¹ Similarly, the names of other early modern sultans, or popular Turkish names, were spelt differently than today: e.g., *Acmat/Acomat/Achmat/Achmet* (cf., modern *Ahmed*, *Ahmet*, *Akhmed*); *Murat(h)/Amurat(h)* (cf., modern *Murad*).

There is a considerable variation in the name of Hurrem's hunchback son. In Turkish texts, he is *Cihangir*. In modern western texts, the name is often *Jihangir*, reflecting the pronunciation of the Turkish *c* as the English *j*. However, in early modern European sources, his name was spelled variously as *Cingir*, *Giangir*, *Gianger*, *Zanger*, *Zeangir*, or *Jangir*.

Roxolana's daughter Mihrimah is seldom, if at all, mentioned by that name in early modern western historical and literary texts. In some early modern plays and chronicles, she is called *Camena* or *Cameria* (*Chameria*, *Chamerie*).

Rustem Pasha's name also appeared in various spellings throughout the ages: *Rostan*, *Rosten*, *Rvstan/Rustan*, *Rvsten/Rusten*, *Rvstam/Rustam*, *Rvstem/Rustem*, and *Roostem*. The title *Pasha* was often spelt as *Bassa* in the early modern period.

On the Origins of the Name *Roxolana*

Oleksander Halenko

It was the Habsburg's ambassador to the Porte, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, who invented the name *Roxolana* and introduced it to the European audience in his *Turcicae epistolae* [*Turkish Letters*].² His invention was dictated by the epistolary style chosen for his report. Unlike Venetian and French diplomats, who wrote their reports in Italian and French, Busbecq wrote his letters in Latin, the only suitable medium for a memorandum addressing the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The medium dictated a choice of ethnic names as well. They were to be mentioned by ancient authors with regard to a given territory and to resemble phonetically the name of contemporary people living on the territory. That the ancient peoples were absolutely different from the later namesakes was not regarded as problematic. Baron de Busbecq, who was well read in ancient authors, chose the tribal name *Roxolani* of nomadic Sarmatians mentioned by the Roman geographer Strabo (63 B.C.–23 A.D.) in the description of the Northern Pontic area of his *Geographica* (*Lib. VII, cap. III: 17*).³ It somewhat resembled the name *Rus* (Lat. *Rutenia*), which was then the self-name of the ancestors of the Ukrainians. Polish poet Sebastian Fabian Klionowicz (1545–1602), in his 1584 poem about Ukraine, also used the ethnic name *Roxolania* in reference to this country.⁴ Marcin Broniowski, Ambassador of the Polish King Stephan Batory to the Crimean Khanate in 1578, noted in his *Tartariae descriptio* [*Description of Tartary*]: “Strabo writes about

² *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, eds Charles T. Forster & F. G. Blackburne Daniell, 2 vols (London: Kegan, Paul & Co., 1881), 1: 111.

³ Strabon, *Geografii*, trans. Grigorii Stratanovskii (Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka, 1964), 280–81.

⁴ *Sebastiani Sulmircensis Acerni Victoria deorum. In qua continetur veri herois education* (Cracoviae [Krakow], 1584); Sebastian Fabian Klionovych, *Roksolaniia: poema, z latyns'koï*, trans. Mykhailo Bilyk (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1987), 94.

Roxolanos, whom we now call Russos or Rutenos” (“Strabo scribit Roxolanos, quos nos Russos seu Rutenos nunc dicimus”).⁵

Ruthenian was another option for Busbecq, but, as can be seen from the passage above, it was rather colloquial, so he chose a more “scholarly” term. Having no reliable information about the ethnic origin of Roxolana’s rival in the Sultan’s harem, Busbecq also invented the name for her, *Bosporana*,⁶ which was derived from *Bosporos Cimmerius* (the ancient name for the Strait of Kerch in the Crimea, Ukraine).

Thus, the adoption of the name *Roxolana* for a Turkish sultana of a Ukrainian (then Ruthenian) origin was rooted in the diplomatic practices of the sixteenth century and the contemporary literary tastes of Western and Central Europe. This invented name was accepted throughout Europe very rapidly, owing to the great popularity of Busbecq’s *Turkish Letters*, which were reprinted many times by the end of the sixteenth century and were later translated into several European languages.⁷

⁵ Qtd. in Ahatanhel Kryms'kyi, *Istoriia Turechchyny* (Kyiv-Lviv: Olir, 1996), 202, n.2.

⁶ [It must be noted that the name *Bosporana* does not occur in other early modern Western sources in reference to Roxolana’s chief rival in the harem, the mother of Prince Mustafa. In historical novels her Turkish names *Gülbehar* (*Gülbahar*, *Gulbehar*, *Gulbahar*) or *Mahidevran* are mentioned, or none at all. Ed. Galina Yermolenko.]

⁷ The first of Busbecq’s *Turkish Letters* was published by Plantin at Antwerp in 1581. By 1595, there appeared four Latin editions, followed by twelve editions in the sixteenth century. The first German edition, translated by Michael Schweicker, appeared at Frankfurt in 1596; in English it was first published in 1694, then in 1761; in French—1649, 1718, 1748, and 1836; in Flemish, in 1632; in Spanish—before 1650. See also n. 16 in Chapter 1 of the present volume.

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Appendix 3

Chronology

- 1494 Suleiman is born to Prince Selim and Hafsa on 6 November, in Trabizon.
- ca. 1505 Roxolana is born to Orthodox priest Havrylo and wife Leksandra Lisovsky in Rohatyn, Red Rus (Ruthenia).
- 1509 Suleiman is appointed governor of Bolu, in Anatolia.
- 1509–12 Suleiman is appointed governor of Kefe (Caffa; Kaffa), in the Crimea.
- 1512 Selim I ascends to the throne.
- 1513 Suleiman is appointed governor of Manisa.
- 1515 Prince Mustafa is born to Mahidevran (Gulbahar/Gulbehar).
- ca. 1515 Roxolana is abducted in one of the Tatar slave raids on Red Rus.
- 1520 Selim I dies on 22 September; Suleiman ascends to the throne on 30 September.
- 1521 Suleiman invades Hungary and captures Belgrade (29 August); Hurrem gives birth to her first son Mehmed (d. 1543).
- 1522 Suleiman captures Rhodes; the Knights of St. John flee to Malta; Hurrem gives birth to daughter Mihrimah (d. 1578) and son Abdullah (d. 1526).
- 1523 Ibrahim Pasha, close friend of Suleiman I, is appointed Grand Vizier.
- 1524 Ibrahim marries Suleiman's sister, Hatice Sultan; Hurrem gives birth to son Selim (d. 1574).
- 1525 Hurrem gives birth to son Bayazid (d. 1561).
- 1526 Suleiman's army destroys the Hungarian forces at Mohacs on the Danube; Venetian *bailo* Pietro Bragadino writes his report to the Senate, in which he lists Roxolana's three sons (Selim, Morat, and Mamet)—the earliest mention of Roxolana in western diplomatic documents.
- 1529 Suleiman's army besieges Vienna in September–October.
- 1530 Circumcision of Princes Mehmed and Mustafa on 27 May.
- 1531 Hurrem gives birth to son Jihangir (d. 1553).
- 1532 Suleiman's Austrian campaign.
- 1533 Suleiman's mother and *valide sultan*, Hafsa, dies.
- 1534 Mahidevran leaves the harem, following her son Mustafa to Manisa; Suleiman weds Hurrem in a legal ceremony.
- 1534–36 Suleiman's Persian campaign against the Safavids.
- 1536 Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha is executed on 15 March.
- 1536 (or 1541) Hurrem moves the harem from *Eskiserai* to the Sultan's Palace (*Topkapi*).

- 1538–39 Hurrem's charitable complex is built by Sinan in the *Aksaray* district of Istanbul.
- 1539 Hurrem's daughter Mihrimah marries Rustem Pasha.
- 1541 Prince Mustafa is removed from Manisa and appointed governor of Amasia.
- 1543 Suleiman's second Austrian campaign (the siege of Budapest); Hurrem's eldest son and projected heir apparent, Mehmed, dies.
- 1544 Rustem Pasha is appointed Grand Vizier.
- 1545 Italian traveler Luigi Bassano da Zara describes the Turks' hatred of Hurrem in his travelogue *I costumi et i modi particolari della vita de Turchi*.
- 1548–49 Suleiman's second Safavid campaign.
- 1550 Roxolana is mentioned as Suleiman's beloved wife in the chronicle, *Michalonis Litvani de moribus tartarorum, litvanorum et moschorum*, by Mikhalon Lituanus, the Lithuanian ambassador to the Crimea.
- 1550–57 Construction of the *Süleymaniye* mosque by Sinan.
- 1553–55 Suleiman's third Safavid campaign.
- 1553 Prince Mustafa is strangled in Suleiman's tent in Aleppo on 6 October; Jihangir dies shortly after Mustafa; Mustafa's troops revolt; Rustem Pasha is dismissed from the post of Grand Vizier; anonymous report of Mustapha's murder, "Relazione anonima della guerra di Persia dell'anno 1553," is written from Aleppo and sent to Venice.
- 1554 Venetian *bailo* Domenico Trevisano writes his report of Mustapha's murder; Suleiman's third Safavid campaign; Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq arrives at the Sublime Porte as Ambassador of Emperor Ferdinand I.
- 1555 Rustem Pasha is reinstated in the position of Grand Vizier; Nicholas de Moffan's pamphlet, *Soltani Solymanni, Tvrcarum Imperatoris, horrendum facinus* ..., is published in Basel and is promptly translated into German, French, Spanish, and other languages.
- 1557 Hurrem's endowment is built in the al-Sitt district of Jerusalem
- 1558 Hurrem dies on April 18; she is buried in a mausoleum near *Süleymaniye*.
- 1559 Civil war escalates between Selim and Bayazid; Bayazid and family flee to Persia.
- 1561 Bayazid and his sons are executed in Tabriz in September.
- 1562 Ambassador Busbecq leaves Istanbul for Europe.
- 1565 Unsuccessful siege of Malta by Suleiman's forces.
- 1566 Suleiman dies during the siege of Szigetvár on 7 September; Selim II ascends to throne.
- 1571 Formation of the Holy League against the Turks; Selim II loses the Battle of Lepanto.

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