

## General Introduction

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### EARLY MODERN ENGLISH WOMEN STAGING ISLAM, 1696–1707

#### *I. Early Modern England and Islam*

The history of England's engagement with the Islamic world in the early modern period arguably begins and ends with a woman. Elizabeth I,<sup>1</sup> whose *via media* established Protestant England on a firm footing after over a decade of political crises and religious oscillations following her father's death,<sup>2</sup> actively pursued ties with Muslim sov-

1. Elizabeth Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, was born in 1553; she assumed the throne in 1558 after the death of her sister, Mary; she ruled as queen regnant (i.e., sovereign in her own right) until her death in 1603. I use the term "England" throughout as my focus is on English-language literature; however, Elizabeth I was generally designated as queen "of England, France and Ireland," as in "The answer of her Majestie to the aforesaid Letters of the Great Turke, sent the 25 of October 1579, in the Prudence of London by Master Richard Stanley," in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 5: 175. The English hold on Ireland during the Elizabethan era was tentative and their claims to France anachronistic; see Donald Stump and Susan M. Felch, eds., *Elizabeth I and Her Age* (New York: Norton, 2009), on the Calais debacle in France (125) and the Tyrone Rebellion in Ireland (487–89). The Laws in Wales Acts incorporated Wales into England from 1535 to 1542. Scotland was an independent kingdom until 1707, when the Acts of Union were passed; however, the Scottish king James VI, who was Elizabeth's successor as James I of England, ruled over both realms, as did his son Charles I until his trial and execution in 1649, when monarchy in England was abolished for over two decades. For more, see Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980).

2. Henry VIII (r. 1509–47) established the Church of England independent of the authority of the Roman Catholic Church in 1534. His immediate successor was his nine-year-old son, Edward VI (r. 1547–53), during whose reign Protestant reforms were intensified and English Catholics persecuted. When he died, his eldest sister, the Catholic Mary Tudor (r. 1553–58), assumed the throne. Her mother, Catherine of Aragon, was the daughter of the Catholic Sovereigns (*Reyes Católicos*), Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Her husband was Philip II of Spain, whose dominions stretched across the globe. Mary Tudor's persecution of Protestants led to her designation as "Bloody Mary." Elizabeth adopted a middle course, or *via media*, between these doctrinal extremes while retaining the independence of the Church of England from the authority of Rome.

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ereigns, especially those of the Ottoman empire and Morocco,<sup>3</sup> as a counterweight to the claims of the Catholic Habsburg empire.<sup>4</sup> Hence, while a series of uncertain trade missions were launched into Muslim lands prior to Elizabeth's reign,<sup>5</sup> the beginnings of the early modern English (and more generally British) engagement with Islamdom in the political sense, Islamicate culture in a broader sense, and Islam as a religion in a narrower sense occurred under her auspices.<sup>6</sup> By the 1580s, when the Turkey Company (subsequently absorbed into the Levant Company) was established "to finde out and set open a trade of Marchandize and trafique into the Lands, Islands, dominions, and territories of the great Turke, commonly called the Grand Signior [i.e., the Ottoman sultan],"<sup>7</sup> this trade became more propitious for several reasons, including England's isolation from Catholic Europe after Elizabeth's formal excommunication.<sup>8</sup> This edict from Pope Pius

3. The Ottoman empire dates from 1299 to 1923; Constantinople (Istanbul) was conquered from the Byzantines in 1453. The expansion of the empire came to a halt with the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, which followed the first significant military defeat of the Ottomans and the loss of a large portion of their European territories. Morocco remained an independent kingdom throughout this period, though it frequently allied with the Ottomans.

4. For instance, Goran V. Stanivokovic, introduction to *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), discusses possible Ottoman efforts in England's favor that contributed to the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 (5, 17 n. 16). For a comparable case, see Andrew P. Vella, *An Elizabethan-Ottoman Conspiracy* (Valetta: Royal University of Malta, 1972).

5. On the earliest missions, see Albert Lindsay Rowland, *England and Turkey: The Rise of the Diplomatic and Commercial Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1924). For the more established trade, see S. A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). For an analysis of the cultural impact of this trade, see Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005).

6. On this terminology, see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1: 56-60.

7. "The letters patents, or privileges graunted by her Majestie to Sir Edward Osborne, Master Richard Staper, and certaine other Marchants of London for their trade into the dominions of the great Turke, in the yeere 1581," in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 5: 192.

8. Pope Pius V issued the first papal bull excommunicating Elizabeth in 1570. Pope Sixtus V reiterated the papal stance in *A Declaration of the Sentence and Deposition of Elizabeth, the Usurper and Pretensed Quene of Englande* (1588), listing among the reasons for her excom-

V denied Elizabeth's "legitimacy as Queen," thereby "releasing her [Catholic] subjects from their oath of allegiance."<sup>9</sup> This led to a series of potential rebellions and assassination plots over the next decade

The struggles between the competing empires of the "Greater Western World"<sup>10</sup>—the Habsburg and the Ottoman, the former covering much of the western half of Europe and the latter covering the eastern half and constantly threatening the western half—led Elizabeth to seek strategic alliances with Muslim sovereigns as like-minded iconoclasts and monotheists. While most of the evidence for these negotiations remained secret, some was preserved as the widely read letters in Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598–1600).<sup>11</sup> Because the balance of power favored the Ottomans, and to a lesser degree their client states in the Maghreb and the rival Safavid empire in Persia, Elizabeth did not—and, indeed, could not—assume a dominating stance. Instead, she had to finesse Muslim sovereigns' perceptions of her as a supplicant and of her kingdom as a potential tributary. Nevertheless, the more open engagement during Elizabeth's reign introduced "other voices" from this region into English culture, including that of the *valide sultan* (mother of the sultan) Safiye in "A letter written by the most high and mighty Emperesse the wife of the Grand Signior Sultan Murad Can to the Queenes Majesty of England, in the yeere of our Lord, 1594."<sup>12</sup> It also highlighted the "otherness" of the English as bit players in these great power politics.

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munication the "procuring for the oppression of Christendome and disturbance of comon peace, to bring in our potent and cruell enemy *the Turke*."

9. Stump and Felch, *Elizabeth I and Her Age*, 138; cf. 313.

10. Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 8.

11. On these letters, see Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20–29; Robert Markley, "Riches, Power, Trade and Religion: The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600–1720," *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003): 494–516; and Jonathan Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000): 125–56. See also Bernadette Andrea, "Elizabeth I and Persian Exchanges," in *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I*, ed. Charles Beem (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 169–99.

12. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 6: 114–18, referring to Murad III (1546–95).

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Mary Wortley Montagu,<sup>13</sup> who from 1716 to 1718 traveled through the western half of the Ottoman empire as far as Istanbul, may be seen as marking the end point of the rapprochement with Islam in its multiple aspects initiated by Elizabeth.<sup>14</sup> As wife of the “Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Turkey,”<sup>15</sup> and as a promising participant in the sparkling and satirical literary scene of the age of Pope,<sup>16</sup> Montagu recorded her conversations with Muslim men and women in a series of letters circulated in manuscript during her lifetime and published posthumously in 1763.<sup>17</sup> In these *Turkish Embassy*

13. Born Mary Pierrepont, daughter of the duke of Kingston, in 1689, she eloped with Edward Wortley Montagu in 1712. After almost a quarter century in Italy, she returned to England to die in 1762. Her letters documenting her travels through the Ottoman empire were published posthumously despite the efforts of her daughter to suppress them; for bibliographical details, see note 17 below. For more on Montagu’s life and works, see Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

14. This embassy threaded its way through the major cities of Germany and the Habsburg empire, which encompassed modern-day Austria and Hungary (the latter acquired from the Ottomans between 1699 and 1737). Lady Mary and her husband officially entered the Ottoman empire in the regions of modern-day Serbia, staying in Belgrade for three weeks; here, she discussed Arabic language and literature and debated the status of women with the urbane Achmet (Ahmed) Bey. Their next stop at Sofia, now the capital of Bulgaria, was the *mise-en-scène* of the passage in Lady Mary’s account that has received most commentary: the Turkish bath scene. They then traveled to Adrianople (Edirne), and finally to Constantinople (Istanbul), where they lived in the European quarter of Pera (Beyoğlu).

15. Robert Halsband, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 55, citing the “*Eve[ning] Post*, 5–7 April 1716, and other newspapers” (55 n. 2).

16. Donna Landry, “Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and the Literature of Social Comment,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Restoration Literature, 1650–1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 307–29.

17. One letter was published anonymously during Montagu’s lifetime: *The Genuine Copy of a Letter Written from Constantinople by an English Lady, who was lately in Turkey, and who is no less Distinguish’d by her Wit than by her Quality; to a Venetian Nobleman, one of the Prime Virtuosi of the Age. Translated from the French Original, which is likewise added* (London: Printed by J. Roberts and A. Dodd, 1719). The full title of the posthumous collection runs: *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—y M—e: Written, during her Travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia, To Persons of Distinction, Men of Letters, &c., in different Parts of Europe. Which Contain, Among other Curious Relations, Accounts of the Policy and Manners of the Turks; Drawn from Sources that have been inaccessible to other Travellers*, 3 vols. (London: Printed for T. Becket and P. A. de Hont, 1763). The second edition was published in

*Letters*, the common shorthand for her magnum opus, Montagu constructs an authorial persona as a pioneer correcting the gender and religious biases in accounts of prior male travelers.<sup>18</sup> Over the course of this collection, she challenges patriarchal and orientalist stereotypes of the harem, which she correctly defines as the “women’s apartment,” and of Muslim practices of polygamy, about which she states “there is no instance of a man of quality that makes use of this liberty, or of a woman of rank that would suffer it.” She also critiques the western European view that Muslim wives are slaves, that Muslims “do not own [acknowledge] women to have any souls,” and “that Mohammed excludes women from any share in a future happy state [i.e., paradise].”<sup>19</sup> Her effort to understand Islam in its theological, legalistic, and cultural aspects through her conversations with Ottoman women and men thereby compares with Elizabeth’s attempted rapprochement in that it stressed commonalities with Muslims rather than differences. Even so, as a reputed deist, Montagu positioned her largely positive and fairly accurate representation of the Islam practiced in the Ottoman empire among the urban elite as a foil for what she deemed Catholic superstition.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, her sympathetic stance, voiced at the cusp of the Ottoman empire’s “decline” after its defeat in what is now Serbia at the battle of Peterwardein (1716), whose scorched-earth, corpse-ridden battleground Montagu traveled across, became increasingly anomalous as English imperialist discourses assumed a patriarchal *and* feminist orientalist tone.<sup>21</sup>

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Dublin the same year. For a modern edition, see Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Malcolm Jack (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993). Unless otherwise indicated, all citations are from Jack’s edition.

18. Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, indirectly (57) and directly (83) compares herself to Columbus.

19. *Ibid.*, 72, 100, 109.

20. A deist in Montagu’s era was “one who acknowledges the existence of a God upon the testimony of reason, but rejects revealed religion” (*OED*). For more, see Jane Shaw, “Gender and the ‘Nature’ of Religion: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Embassy Letters and Their Place in Enlightenment Philosophy of Religion,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 80 (1998): 129–45.

21. Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, 45–54. On feminist orientalism and its relationship to an earlier tradition of patriarchal orientalism, see Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 78–104. Katherine S. H. Turner, “From Classical to Imperial: Changing Visions of Turkey in the

Bracketed by the interventions of Queen Elizabeth I and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, men writing in a variety of genres, and a small but significant number of women from across the class spectrum, elaborated this encounter for English-speaking audiences through travel narratives, religious polemic, histories, translations, stage plays, prose fiction, and political pamphlets.<sup>22</sup> Landmarks from the first half of the seventeenth century include Richard Knolles's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603), which went into seven steadily expanding editions by the end of the seventeenth century;<sup>23</sup> a spate of stage plays, including Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604–5), inspired by the publication of contemporary travelogues;<sup>24</sup> and the publication of the first English version of the Qur'an in 1649, rendered from the French translation published the same year.<sup>25</sup> Later seventeenth-century works built upon this distinctly early modern English engagement

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Eighteenth Century," in *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. Steve Clark (London: Zed, 1999), 113–28, marks the chasm between Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* and Lady Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople* (published in 1789 shortly after she completed her travels). For a modern edition, see Elizabeth Craven, *Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople*, ed. Daniel O'Quinn (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009).

22. For a foundational literary history, see Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937). For a more recent effort, see Nabil Matar's trilogy: *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); and *Britain and Barbary, 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

23. Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes, from the first beginning of that Nation to the rising of the Othoman Familie* (London: Adam Islip, 1603); see also Chew, *Crescent and the Rose*, 111 n. 1, and Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), esp. 119–40.

24. See Kenneth Parker, ed., *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1999), and Daniel Vitkus, ed., *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). See also Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). For the influence of the Andalusian/Moroccan traveler Leo Africanus/al-Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan on Shakespeare's *Othello*, see Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 233–56.

25. Chew, *Crescent and the Rose*, 434–51. See also Ziad Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2009).

with Islam in its cultural, political, and religious aspects, which differed from both the medieval legacy of demonization and the modern imperialist manifestation of orientalism.<sup>26</sup> Questioning the anachronistic application of either model to the early modern period, some scholars have described the era as “proto-orientalist,” which “points up the relative weaknesses, not the incipient global domination, of early modern Europe.”<sup>27</sup> It is debatable whether we can lump together as “proto-orientalist” such works such as John Dryden’s heroic dramas of the 1670s, which feature positive albeit ambivalent portrayals of characters from the Islamic world reminiscent of Shakespeare’s Moor of Venice;<sup>28</sup> the Quaker leader George Fox’s *To the Great Turk, and his King at Argiers* (1680), which drew on his sympathetic reading of the recently Englished Qur’an;<sup>29</sup> and the diplomat Paul Rycaut’s introduction of the “oriental despotism” motif into English discourse in his popular accounts of the Ottoman empire.<sup>30</sup> It is clear, however, that by the end of the seventeenth century, when the first group of female

26. See John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); and David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto, *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

27. Richmond Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3. For related models, see Daniel Goffman, “Proto-Imperialist,” in *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 3–12, and John Michael Archer, “Para-colonial Studies,” in *Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1–22.

28. Cynthia Lowenthal, *Performing Identities on the Restoration Stage* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), examines Dryden’s “oscillations” in representing “imperial identities” (42). *Othello* was “revived in 1660 with the first recorded appearance of an actress” in the role of Desdemona, on which see Sandra Clark, “Shakespeare and Other Adaptations,” in *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. Susan J. Owen (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 276.

29. Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 54–61.

30. On Rycaut’s introduction of the “oriental despotism” motif into English discourse, see Aslı Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World” to the “Sick Man of Europe”: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), and Sonia P. Anderson, *An English Counsel in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667–1678* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

playwrights for the public stage made their debut, the prior Anglo-Islamic engagement in all its facets had established the basis for their ventures into sometimes orientalist, sometimes proto-orientalist, and sometimes counterorientalist themes.<sup>31</sup> Before turning to these female wits, we nevertheless need to trace some salient precursors among the steadily increasing number of women writing for publication in seventeenth-century England.<sup>32</sup> In this way, we can see them as part of the growth, not merely of English interest in the Islamic world, but of a specifically gendered perspective on this encounter.

## *II. English Women and Islam*

While the bulk of writing on “England and Islam” during the early modern period was by men, as was the bulk of writing overall, Englishwomen from diverse backgrounds contributed to this developing discourse over the course of the seventeenth century using a variety of genres. For instance, Lady Mary Wroth (née Sidney)<sup>33</sup> in *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* (1621), the first original (as opposed to translated) prose romance by an English woman,<sup>34</sup> explores

31. Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 78–104.

32. According to Patricia Crawford, “Women’s Published Writings, 1600–1700,” in *Women in English Society*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985), 211–82, in each half decade between 1600 and 1700 the percentage of women’s publications (not including their manuscript productions) ranged from only 0.8 to 11.1 percent of the total print production in English. Nonetheless, this period saw a steady rise in women’s participation in print culture.

33. On Wroth’s life and works, see Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010), and Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 243–307. Wroth was born in 1587. Lewalski lists her year of death as 1651; Josephine A. Roberts, in her edition of Wroth’s *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995), lists it as 1653. This is the standard modern edition of the 1621 published romance.

34. Appended to the romance was Wroth’s “Pamphilia to Amphilanthus,” the first original sonnet sequence by an English woman. The sonnet sequence is included in *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 85–142. For a modern edition of her manuscript continuation, see Mary Wroth, *The Second Part of the Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts, completed by Suzanne Gossett and Janel Mueller (Tempe, AZ: Renaissance English Text Society, 1999).

the “imaginative geography” of the Ottoman empire, albeit by putting it “under erasure” to promote the desire for a renewed Holy Roman empire encompassing the region.<sup>35</sup> In the manuscript continuation of this romance, Wroth turned to the less systematic English engagement with the Safavid empire by incorporating representations of the “first” Persian in England—Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley—into her imperialist fantasy of female agency.<sup>36</sup> Wroth, like Elizabeth earlier, strategically identified with women from the Islamic world as a means to challenge patriarchy at home.<sup>37</sup> Yet, she ultimately constructs a universalist Christian empire spanning Eurasia by effacing the reality of contemporaneous Islamic empires.<sup>38</sup>

As the most celebrated English women to record their “travails” (their travels, labor, and suffering) in the “multicultural Mediterranean,”<sup>39</sup> the Quakers Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers turned their three-year ordeal with the Maltese Inquisition into a book-length compendium encapsulating an impressive range of “rhetorical strategies and modes of discourse,” including “inspirational epistles to Friends [the Quakers’ term for themselves] . . . appeals to the unconverted, prophetic warnings to authority, rebuttals to attackers, and personal testimonies of persecution and of faith.”<sup>40</sup> This work

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For a related study, see Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

35. Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 30–42.

36. *Ibid.*, 42–52.

37. For an elaboration, see Bernadette Andrea, “The Tartar Girl, the Persian Princess, and Early Modern English Women’s Authorship from Elizabeth I to Mary Wroth,” in *Women Writing Back/Writing Women Back: Transnational Perspectives from the Late Middle Ages to the Dawn of the Modern Era*, ed. Anke Gilleir, Alicia C. Montoya, and Suzan van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 257–81.

38. For more, see Bernadette Andrea, “Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia: Ideas of Asia in Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” in *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*, ed. Walter S. H. Lim and Debra Johanyak (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 23–50.

39. For this term, see Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); on Quaker women’s “travails” in the region, see Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 61–69.

40. Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 141. I have deleted from Ezell’s list of the six varieties of texts produced by early Quaker women “prefaces to Friends’ books,” as it is the only one Evans and Chevers

helped shape nascent anglocentric discourses of empire about the region, including those with a feminist orientalist inflection.<sup>41</sup> Upon their release from Malta, where they were held after ignoring repeated warnings from the English consul not to engage in illegal proselytizing, the two women immediately resumed their twofold mission of condemning non-Quaker Christians and converting non-Christians at the short-lived English colony of Tangier.<sup>42</sup> We can assess the expatriate reaction to Evans and Chevers through their words: “But our own Countrey-men were much worse than most of them, so that they bid us go back to *Malta* again; and said the *English would use us worse than the Maltezes*.”<sup>43</sup> Mary Fisher, who was inspired to trek hundreds of miles from the coast of Morea in southern Greece to the camp of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed IV at Adrianople (Edirne), experienced similar treatment from the English in Smyrna (Izmir). Whereas Evans and Chevers were prolific in their written testimony, Fisher left the relation of her hardships to others.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, Evans and Chevers did not seek to assert an autonomous individual voice but believed themselves to be functioning as vehicles for the divine word, which was in line with other radical sectarians in the period.<sup>45</sup> This apparently negative agency carries its own drama, including structural features such as dialogue, which anticipates the emergence of the first women playwrights for the English stage around the same time.

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do not include in *This is a Short Relation of Some of the Cruel Sufferings (For the Truths Sake) of Katharine Evans & Sarah Chevers, in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta* (London: Printed for Robert Wilson, 1662).

41. Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 76–77.

42. For details, see Bernadette Andrea, “English Women and Islamic Empires, 1610–1690,” in *History of British Women’s Writing, 1610–1690*, ed. Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 287–302.

43. Katherine Evans and Sarah Chevers, *A True Account of the Great Tryals and Cruel Sufferings undergone by those two faithful Servants of God, Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, In the time of their above three years and a halfs Confinement in the Island Malta* (London: Printed for R. Wilson, 1663), 255. This is the expanded second edition.

44. Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 54–61.

45. On Quaker women in the movement’s “first period” from 1650 to 1664, see Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 126–261.

To His Grace,  
William,  
Duke of Devonshire, etc.

Lord Steward of His Majesty's Household, Knight  
of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and  
One of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy  
Council.<sup>4</sup>

My Lord,

Custom has so far prevailed that a play thrust into the world without begging the protection of a great man makes the poet be thought not modest but unfriended; thus persuaded, I could not hesitate a moment. Your grace's<sup>5</sup> name appearing in the front will, with undoubted sunshine, disperse whatever storm can be threatened; and when I shall have gratified my highest vanity in telling the town<sup>6</sup> that this piece had, in some sort, the honor of your grace's approbation before it came upon the stage, 'twill be security for me that none of sense will pretend to condemn what you seemed to approve.

Your grace, who is so justly the admiration of our sex,<sup>7</sup> cannot wonder to see new effects of it; your virtue commands the esteem of all who hear it; your wit (if the name be not too inexpressive) distinguishes you as eminently as your fortune; that happy turn which all who write endeavor after, but so few in any degree attain, seems natural to you; and when we would treat of inimitable perfections, it must be your grace's sense and happy way of explaining it.

4. William Cavendish, duke of Devonshire (1640–1707), was a “successful Whig politician”; “Manley's *The Lost Lover* [her first play from 1696] was also published under his patronage.” In her prose writings, Manley sides with the Tories; however, members of her family aligned with the Whigs. For more, see *Eighteenth-Century Women*, 220 n. 3, and Rachel Carnell, *A Political Biography of Delarivier Manley* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 84.

5. your grace] “a courtesy-title ... given to a duke, a duchess, or an archbishop” (*OED*).

6. the town] “the fashionable society of London” (*OED*); see Harold Love, “Dryden's London,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 113–30. As Love specifies, the emergence of “the new entity of the ‘Town’” during the Restoration was “an act of colonization, by the gentry, of a metropolis that had until that time been the preserve of the manufacturing and mercantile classes” (116).

7. i.e., in the modern sense of gender; here, women, females.

Hitherto, I have unenvied read and admired the eminent poets of our age; I dared not once presume to hope my pen should ever equal the least of them; but when thus employed, methinks the eloquence of both ancient and modern are too faint representatives; I could (by a noble ambition) wish them all united in me. But as your worth outdoes imitation, the orator who aims to define it must owe all the glory he shall acquire, not to his eloquence, but the subject itself, where the business makes the perfection.

'Tis to such a prince<sup>8</sup> as you, those who love sincerity should make offerings of this kind; here we are secured from the odious name of flatterers; all and more than we can say is yours; it seems particularly adapted to our sex to describe the graces of your person, what has employed our wonder should our expressions; your magnificence, knowledge, justice, liberality, etc.; but let me rest upon your goodness, which I hope can forgive all the errors of my pen and still permit me the title of,

My lord,

Your grace's most faithful and most humble servant,

Delarivier Manley

### *To the Reader.*

I should not have given myself and the town the trouble of a preface if the aspersions of my enemies had not made it necessary. I am sorry those of my own sex are influenced by them and receive any character<sup>9</sup> of a play upon trust, without distinguishing ill nature, envy and distraction in the representor.<sup>10</sup>

8. prince] "a person who or thing which is pre-eminent in a specified class or sphere; the chief; the greatest or best" (*OED*).

9. character] "a description, delineation, or detailed report" (*OED*).

10. i.e., the person representing, or misrepresenting, the play.

The principal objection made against the tragedy is the warmth<sup>11</sup> of it, as they are pleased to call it. In all writings of this kind,<sup>12</sup> some particular passion is described; as a woman I thought it policy<sup>13</sup> to begin with the softest, and which is easiest to our sex. Ambition, etc., were too bold for the first flight;<sup>14</sup> all would have condemned me if venturing on another I had failed, when gentle love stood ready to afford an easy victory. I did not believe it possible to pursue him<sup>15</sup> too far, or that my laurel<sup>16</sup> should seem less graceful for having made an entire conquest.<sup>17</sup>

Leonora in the double discovery and part of *Aureng-zebe*<sup>18</sup> have touches as full of natural fire<sup>19</sup> as possible. I am amazed to know the boxes<sup>20</sup> can be crowded and the ladies sit attentively and unconcerned at the Widow Lackitt and her son Daniel's dialect,<sup>21</sup> yet pretend

11. warmth] "an excited or fervent state of the feelings" (*OED*); in this case, sexual passion.

12. kind] "a literary genre" (*OED*), with Manley's play a "heroic drama"; see Derek Hughes, "Heroic Drama and Tragicomedy," *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. Susan J. Owen (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 195–210.

13. policy] politic or expedient behavior; prudence, shrewdness.

14. i.e., this is her first tragedy; she staged her first comedy, *The Lost Lovers*, in March 1696 at Drury Lane Theater.

15. Refers to "gentle love," symbolized throughout the play by Cupid, the ancient Roman god of love (Eros in Greek).

16. laurel] literally, a wreath made from the leaves of the bay laurel; "an emblem of victory or of distinction in poetry" (*OED*); also, for military distinction or achievement.

17. i.e., explicitly of love and implicitly of those who condemn women's writing for the public stage.

18. Manley refers to John Dryden's plays *The Spanish Fryar; or, The Double Distress* (1681) and *Aureng-zebe* (1675). The latter, based on the life of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (born 1618; reigned 1658 to his death in 1707), was the last of four heroic dramas Dryden staged over five years. The others include *The Conquest of Granada*, parts 1 and 2 (staged in 1670 and 1671 respectively and published in 1672, along with his essay "Of Heroick Plays") and *Amboyne, or the Cruelties of the Dutch to the English Merchants* (1673).

19. i.e., of sexual passion.

20. box] "a seated compartment in a theatre, at first specially for ladies" (*OED*); also increasingly for upper-class men in Manley's era.

21. Refers to Thomas Southerne's play *Oroonoko: A Tragedy*, which was staged in 1695 at the Drury Lane Theater and published in 1696; Southerne based his play on Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* (1688). On Behn, an important antecedent for Manley,

to be shocked at the meaning of blank verse,<sup>22</sup> for the words can give no offense. The shutting of the scene<sup>23</sup> I judged modester (as being done by a creature<sup>24</sup> of the princess) than in any terms to have had both the lovers agree before the audience, and then retire, as resolving to perform articles.<sup>25</sup> The pen should know no distinction; I should think it but an indifferent commendation to have it said she writes like a woman. I am sorry to say there was a princess more wicked than Homais; Sir John Chardin's *Travels into Persia*, whence I took the story, can inform the reader that I have done her<sup>26</sup> no injustice, unless it were in punishing her at the last, which the historian is silent in. Bassima's severer virtue should incline my audience to bestow the same commendation which they refuse me for her rival's contrary character.<sup>27</sup>

I do not doubt when the ladies have given themselves the trouble of reading and comparing it with others, they'll find the prejudice against our sex and not refuse me the satisfaction of entertaining them, nor themselves the pleasure of Mrs. Barry,<sup>28</sup> who by all that saw her is concluded to have exceeded that perfection which before she

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see Cynthia Lowenthal, "Two Female Playwrights of the Restoration: Aphra Behn and Susanna Centlivre," *Companion to Restoration Drama*, 396–411.

22. blank verse] unrhymed iambic pentameter; considered the "heroic meter."

23. Manley is defending the consummation scene between the adulterous, incestuous lovers, Homais and Levan Dadian. She refers to staging technologies of the era, particularly the "wing-and-shutter system"; see Edward A. Langhans, "The Post-1660 Theatres as Performance Spaces," in *Companion to Restoration Drama*, 3–18.

24. creature] "one who owes his fortune and position to a patron; one who is actuated by the will of another, or is ready to do his bidding; an instrument or puppet" (*OED*); Manley refers to the eunuch Acmat.

25. articles] literally, "a particular piece of business; a concern, a matter, a subject" (*OED*); here, a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

26. i.e., the historical Darejan, on whom see appendix A.

27. i.e., Manley should be praised for her virtuous character, Bassima, rather than condemned for her villainous character, Homais.

28. According to *Biographical Dictionary*, Elizabeth Barry (c. 1658–1713) was "the first great English actress" (1: 313). She "excelled in exciting pity in spectators when she acted tragic roles" (1: 316), including that of Homais in Manley's *The Royal Mischief*. She "appears to have been second in command to [Thomas] Betterton" at Lincoln's Inn Fields (319). For more on Barry, see Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 108–46.

was justly thought to have arrived at. My obligations to her were the greater, since against her own approbation, she excelled and made the part of an ill woman, not only entertaining, but admirable.<sup>29</sup>

*To Mrs. Manley.*  
*By the Author of Agnes de Castro.*<sup>30</sup>

Th'attempt was brave, how happy your success;  
The men with shame our sex with pride confess;  
For us you've vanquished, though the toil was yours;  
You were our champion, and the glory ours;  
Well you've maintained our equal right in fame,  
To which vain man had quite engrossed the claim;  
I knew my force too weak, and but assayed  
The borders of their empire to invade;<sup>31</sup>  
I incite a greater genius<sup>32</sup> to my aid.  
The war begun you generously pursued;

29. Manley seeks to protect the actress who played Homais from the slander that she is an "ill," or fallen, woman because she represents one, a slander that could be extended to Manley as playwright.

30. Catharine Trotter, whose *Agnes de Castro* (staged December 1695 at the Drury Lane Theater and published in 1696) was the first production staged by the group of playwrights subsequently known as "the female wits." Trotter based her play on Aphra Behn's novella of the same name, which was published in 1688. Manley's commendatory verse "To the Author of Agnes de Castro" prefaces Trotter's earlier play; here, Trotter is returning the favor. They collaborated on other projects, including a collection of poems, *The Nine Muses* (1700), in honor of the recently deceased John Dryden. Manley later broke with Trotter (whose married name was Cockburn), satirizing her in popular prose works, *The New Atalantis* (1709), *The Memoirs of Europe* (1711), and *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714). For more, see Anne Kelley, *Catharine Trotter: An Early Modern Writer in the Vanguard of Feminisim* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 19–21.

31. i.e., Trotter's first play, *Agnes de Castro*, which preceded Manley's.

32. genius] in addition to the meaning of exceptional intelligence or ability, "with reference to classical pagan belief: the tutelary god or attendant spirit allotted to every person at his birth, to govern his fortunes and determine his character, and finally to conduct him out of the world; also, the tutelary and controlling spirit similarly connected with a place, an institution, etc." (*OED*).

With double arms<sup>33</sup> you every way subdued;  
Our title cleared, nor can a doubt remain,  
Unless in which you'll greater conquest gain,  
The comic or loftier tragic strain.<sup>34</sup>  
The men always overcome will quit the field;  
Where they have lost their hearts, the laurel yield.

*To Mrs. Manley, upon her Tragedy called  
The Royal Mischief.*

As when some mighty hero first appears,  
And in each act excels his wanting<sup>35</sup> years;  
All eyes are fixed on him, each busy tongue  
Is employed in the triumphant song;  
Even pale envy hangs her dusky<sup>36</sup> wings,  
Or joins with brighter fame and hoarsely sings;  
So you the unequalled wonder of the age,  
Pride of our sex and glory of the stage,  
Have charmed our hearts with your immortal lays,<sup>37</sup>  
And tuned us all with everlasting praise.  
You snatch laurels with undisputed right,  
And conquer when you but begin to fight;  
Your infant strokes have such Herculean<sup>38</sup> force,  
Your self must strive to keep the rapid course;

33. i.e., her arms are used for writing and for attracting men, fine female arms being an erotic attribute in the era; the analogy is to arms as weapons or implements of warfare.

34. Manley's first play was a comedy; see note 14 above.

35. wanting] lacking, deficient in; with respect to "years," meaning relatively young.

36. dusky] "somewhat black or dark in colour" (*OED*).

37. lay] "a short lyric or narrative poem intended to be sung" (*OED*), associated with medieval women writers such as the twelfth-century poet Marie de France, who resided in England.

38. Herculean] "like Hercules, esp. in strength, courage"; "prodigiously powerful or vigorous; gigantic" (*OED*); the legendary hero of Greek (Herakles) and Roman (Hercules) mythology was known for his Twelve Labors.

Like Sappho<sup>39</sup> charming, like Afra<sup>40</sup> eloquent,  
 Like chaste Orinda,<sup>41</sup> sweetly innocent;  
 But no more, to stop the reader were a sin,  
 While trifles keep from the rich store within.<sup>42</sup>

*To Mrs. Manley, on her Tragedy called The Royal Mischief.  
 Sent by an Unknown Hand.*<sup>43</sup>

What, all our sex<sup>44</sup> in one sad hour undone?  
 Lost are our arts, our learning, our renown,  
 Since nature's tide of wit came rolling down;  
 From you it flows with unresisted force,  
 Nor can united envy stop its course;  
 Keen are your eyes, we know, and sure their darts;<sup>45</sup>  
 Fire to our soul they send and passions to our hearts;

39. Sappho] (early 7th century BC), Greek lyric poet who lived on Lesbos. The centre of a circle of women on her native island of Lesbos, she mainly wrote love poems in her local dialect (the term *sapphics* is used for verse in a meter associated with her)" (*Phrase and Fable*).

40. Afra] Aphra Behn, who was known as the Sappho of her era; for more, see note 21 above.

41. Orinda] Katherine Philips (1632–64), a British poet and playwright, whose translation of Pierre Corneille's *La mort de Pompée* (1643) appeared on the Dublin stage as *Pompey* in 1663. The volume *Poems by the Incomparable Mrs. K.P.* was published in an unauthorized edition in 1664; the "authorized" edition of the *Poems* appeared in 1667, with further editions in 1669, 1678, and 1710.

42. Marginalia reads "M. Pix" (Mary Pix), who is identified as the author of this poem. For more, see the introduction to Mary Pix in this volume.

43. *Eighteenth-Century Women* indicates that "this poem was reprinted in Manley's fictional autobiography, *Rivella* (1714), and has been tentatively ascribed to Manley's patron, William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire" (221n16). According to Ruth Herman, *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), Bevil Higgons, "a Jacobite Tory," is "reported to have written commendatory verses 'on a Blank Leaf of Mrs. Manley's Tragedy, call'd *The Royal Mischief*'" (19). Herman also identifies George Granville, a "gentleman poet" who "rose to become secretary-at-war and treasurer of the royal household," as having prefixed "commendatory verses" to this play (18–19).

44. i.e., presumably the male gender.

45. An allusion to Cupid, often represented as a young boy with a bow and arrows, which he uses to pierce the hearts of reluctant lovers; for more, see note 15 above.

Needless was an addition to such arms,<sup>46</sup>  
Where all mankind are vassals<sup>47</sup> to your charms;  
That hand but seen gives wonder and desire,  
Snow to our sight but with its touches fire;<sup>48</sup>  
You stroke our souls and all the passions move,  
By fierce desires made fit for raging love;  
Who sees thy yielding queen<sup>49</sup> and would not be  
On any terms the blessed, the happy he;  
Entranced, we fancy all his ecstasy.<sup>50</sup>  
Quote Ovid<sup>51</sup> now no more you amorous swains,<sup>52</sup>

46. "Arms" refers to her beauty as much as to her writing abilities, so it is a double-edged compliment; see note 33 above.

47. vassals] literally, "in the feudal system, one holding lands from a superior on conditions of homage and allegiance"; figuratively, "a humble servant or subordinate; one devoted to the service of another," especially with reference to courtly love, "a highly conventionalized medieval system of chivalric love and etiquette first developed by the troubadours of southern France and extensively employed in European literature from the 12th century throughout the medieval period" (*OED*).

48. A paradox typical of English Petrarchan poetry, based on the sonnet tradition initiated by the Italian Renaissance poet Francesco Petrarch (1304–74); for an eloquent instance, see Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (composed c. 1580s; published posthumously in 1591), sonnet 6, lines 1–4: "Some lovers speak, when they their Muses entertain, / Of hopes begot by fear, of wot not what desires, / Of force of heav'nly beams infusing hellish pain, / Of living deaths, dear wounds, fair storms, and freezing fires."

49. i.e., Homais, but could also apply to other female characters in the play; "yielding" has a sexual connotation here.

50. i.e., imagine his sexual climax; in other words, the male spectator (or reader) vicariously assumes the role of the male lover in the play.

51. "The Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC–AD 17) was probably the most widely read ancient poet of the Renaissance. The most popular works were the *Amores* (which recount Ovid's encounters with his mistress Corinna), the *Ars amatoria* (a seduction manual), the *Metamorphoses* (a collection of mythological tales), and the *Epistles from Pontus* (verse letters from his exile in Tomi, now Romanian Constanta)" (*Renaissance*).

52. swain] literally, "a shepherd; a countryman, rustic"; also, "a lover, wooer, sweetheart, esp. in pastoral poetry" (*OED*). Pastoral is "a highly conventional mode of writing that celebrates the innocent life of shepherds and shepherdesses in poems, plays, and prose romances" (*Literary Terms*).

Delia<sup>53</sup> than Ovid has more moving strains;<sup>54</sup>  
Nature alone in her exceeds all art,<sup>55</sup>  
And nature sure<sup>56</sup> does nearest touch the heart.  
Oh, might I call the bright<sup>57</sup> discoverer mine,  
The whole fair<sup>58</sup> sex unenvied I'd resign;  
Give all my happy hours to Delia's charms,  
She who by writing thus our wishes warms,  
What worlds of love must circle in her arms.

53. Delia = Delarivier.

54. strain] "a passage of song or poetry" (*OED*).

55. Maurice Cheney, *All of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), identifies "the great Renaissance theme of Art versus Nature" as follows: "Art is the application of human agency, imagination, learning, and effort to what is given by nature, but the debate is complicated by the idea that Art perfects Nature and makes what is nature even more natural-seeming through the intervention of human ingenuity and the aesthetic sense" (347).

56. sure] both the modern sense of "trustworthy, firm, steadfast," and the archaic sense of "surely," which is used throughout the play (*OED*).

57. bright] "lively, cheerful, brilliant or animated in conversation, vivacious"; by extension, "resplendent with charms," sexually attractive (*OED*).

58. fair] beautiful, with fairness associated with whiteness in early modern England; "applied to women, as expressing the quality characteristic of their sex. So, *the fair sex* (Fr. *le beau sexe*), *a fair one*" (*OED*). On "the racialized nature of the language of fairness and beauty," see Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 62–122.

*Ibrahim,  
The  
Thirteenth Emperor  
of the  
Turks:  
A  
Tragedy.<sup>1</sup>  
As it is Acted  
By His  
Majesty's Servants.<sup>2</sup>*

*By Mrs. Mary Pix.*

*London:  
Printed for John Harding,<sup>3</sup> at the Bible and Anchor in  
Newport-Street, and Richard Wilkin, at the King's-Head  
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1696.*

1. The copy text for this edition is *Ibrahim, the Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks: A Tragedy. As it is Acted by His Majesties Servants. By Mrs Mary Pix* (London: Printed for John Harding and Richard Wilkin, 1696). I have consulted the copy at the Folger Shakespeare Library (P2329). The Bodleian Library copy is available on *Early English Books Online* (Wing P2329), which I have also consulted.

2. This play, Pix's first, was staged at the Theater Royal, Drury Lane.

3. Harding also published Pix's *The Inhumane Cardinal, or, Innocence Betray'd: A Novel. Written by a Gentlewoman, for the Entertainment of the Sex* (London: Printed for John Harding and Richard Wilkin, 1696).

To the Honorable  
Richard Minchall,  
of Bourton, Esquire.<sup>4</sup>

Sir,

That sweetness of temper I have had the happiness to discover in the honor of your company in the first place, and your favorable opinion of my play in the next, gives me encouragement to claim your protection.<sup>5</sup>

I am often told, and always pleased when I hear it, that the work's not mine;<sup>6</sup> but, oh, I fear your closest<sup>7</sup> view will too soon find out the woman, the imperfect woman there.<sup>8</sup> The story was true<sup>9</sup> and the action gave it life;<sup>10</sup> for I should be very rude not to own<sup>11</sup> each maintained their character beyond my hopes. Then that pretty ornament, the ingenious dialogue, these might divert you at the theater, but these avail not me; the reading may prove tiresome as a dull repeated tale; yet, I have still recourse to what I mentioned first, your

4. Richard Minchall (Minshall, Minshull) was the son of Sir Richard Minshull, who was knighted by Charles I in 1626; the elder Richard was granted an estate in Boreton or Bourton, Buckinghamshire, in the northwest of England; as a royalist, his estate was sequestered and house plundered during the civil wars of the 1640s; although the family's fortunes were partially restored during the Restoration, they later fell into ruin; for a detailed "table of Pedigree" for "the Barony of Minshull," see *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, 11 (January–June 1873): 457–58.

5. i.e., she is seeking his patronage, which would include his support against detractors and perhaps financial support.

6. She adduces the patriarchal assumption that a woman's work is necessarily inferior.

7. "closet" in original.

8. Pix makes a concession to western patriarchal prejudices, based primarily on the Aristotelian notion that women are imperfect men, bolstered by the Judeo-Christian notion that woman derives from man, on which see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (1978; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 8.

9. Pix's play is based on actual events, as reported by Paul Rycaut in *The History of the Turkish Empire, From the Year 1623 to the Year 1677* (1687); for more, see appendix C.

10. She alludes to the Greek philosopher Aristotle's definition of tragedy in his *Poetics* (c. 330 BCE) as "the imitation of an action."

11. own] "to confess to be valid, true, or actual; to admit" (*OED*).

good nature, that I hope will pardon and accept it. I only wish myself mistress of eloquence, rhetoric, all the perfections of the pen, that I might worthily entertain Mr. Minchall.

Your noble family has been long the glory of my native country,<sup>12</sup> and you are what I think no other nation equals, a true English gentleman, kind to the distressed, a friend to all. I dare not proceed; my weakness would too plainly appear in aiming at a character<sup>13</sup> which I can never reach; therefore, I conclude, once more asking your pardon and leave<sup>14</sup> to subscribe myself,

Sir,  
 Your most humble  
 and obliged Servant,  
 Mary Pix

### *The Preface.*

I did not intend to have troubled the reader with anything of a preface; for I am very sensible those that will be so unkind to criticize upon what falls from a woman's pen may soon find more faults than I am ever able to answer. But there happens so gross<sup>15</sup> a mistake, in calling it *Ibrahim, the Thirteenth*, etc.,<sup>16</sup> that I cannot help taking notice of it. I read some years ago, at a relation's house in the country, Sir Paul

12. Her patron, Mr. Minchall, is from the northwest; see note 4 above. Pix was born in Nettlebed, Oxfordshire, in southeast England; as an adult, she lived in London with her husband, George.

13. character] "the estimate formed of a person's qualities; reputation" (*OED*).

14. leave] permission.

15. gross] "of conspicuous magnitude . . . plain, evident, obvious" (*OED*).

16. She is referring to the full title of the play, reproduced above; Ibrahim was actually the eighteenth sultan in the Ottoman (Osmanli) line (not counting the period from 1402 to 1413 when competing sultans ruled over the Asian and European provinces of the Ottoman empire). However, Rycaut, *History of the Turkish Empire*, in designating him as the "twelfth emperor" is counting from Mehmed II, who was known as Fatih or the Conqueror—in this case of Constantinople in 1453 (renamed Istanbul)—after which the Ottoman sultans styled themselves as emperors (or caesars), having assumed the Byzantine title; see appendix C.

Rycaut's<sup>17</sup> *Continuation of the Turkish History*;<sup>18</sup> I was pleased with the story and ventured to write upon it, but trusted too far to my memory; for I never saw the book afterward till the play was printed, and then I found Ibrahim was the twelfth emperor.<sup>19</sup> I beg pardon for the mistake and hope the good-natured world will excuse that, and what else is amiss, in a thing only designed for their diversion.

17. "Rycaut's" in original.

18. i.e., Rycaut's *History of the Turkish Empire*, from which Pix drew her story of Ibrahim; see appendix C. For Pix's alterations, see Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87–91.

19. Ibrahim, born 1615; "Ottoman sultan whose unstable character made him prey to the ambitions of his ministers and relatives and to his own self-indulgence; as a consequence, the Ottoman state was weakened by war, misrule, and rebellion during his reign (1640–48). Early in his reign under the guidance of the able but ambitious grand vizier Kemankes Kara Mustafa Pasa, Ibrahim established peaceful relations with Persia and Austria (1642) and recovered the Sea of Azov hinterland from the Cossacks. After the execution of Kara Mustafa (1644), Ibrahim, acting on the advice of his new ministers, sent an expedition to Crete; thus began the long war with Venice (1645–69). Having spent his early life in confinement, Ibrahim was mentally unstable and came increasingly under the influence of the women of the harem and his court ministers. His eccentricities and extravagance necessitated the imposition of new taxes, arousing discontent in Constantinople [Istanbul] and the outlying provinces. He was deposed on Aug. 8, 1648, by a Janissary uprising supported by the ulama (religious notables) and was executed 10 days later" (*Britannica*).