



“The Greatest Empresse of the East”: Hurrem Sultan in English Restoration Drama

Işıl ŞAHİN GÜLTER¹ 



¹PhD, Firat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Western Languages and Literatures, Elazığ, Turkey

ORCID: I.Ş.G. 0000-0002-2313-0997

Corresponding author:

Işıl ŞAHİN GÜLTER,
Firat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Western Languages and Literatures, Elazığ, Turkey
E-mail: igulter@firat.edu.tr

Submitted: 30.06.2020

Revision Requested: 29.09.2020

Last Revision Received: 09.10.2020

Accepted: 01.12.2020

Citation: Sahin Gulter, I. (2021). “The greatest empress of the east”: Hurrem Sultan in english restoration drama. *Litera*, 31(1), 203-227.
<https://doi.org/10.26650/LITERA2020-0093>

ABSTRACT

The interest in Ottoman court, history, and *harem* was on the rise in the aftermath of the Restoration of English monarchy. The Ottoman harem, especially, provided a fertile ground for the English playwrights. Thus, this study aims to analyze the representation of Hurrem Sultan who is regarded as one of the most prominent Sultanate women in Ottoman history in William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663), Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668), and Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa* (1676). In those plays which deal with Sultan Suleyman's reign, English playwrights rewrite the siege of Rhodes, the death of Sehzade Mustapha, and the relationship between Sultan Suleyman and Ibrahim Pasha in a new dramatical context with a special emphasis on powerful Hurrem Sultan image. By taking a critical look at the representations of Eastern women in Orientalist discourse, this article covers arguments ranging from the Western representations of the harem to Ottoman women sovereignty in the sixteenth century. The common ground which the selected plays share is that there appears a powerful woman of Sultanate image as this study intends to explore. In this context, the present study indicates that the representation of Hurrem Sultan in selected Restoration period plays which depict her both as a powerful Eastern Empress and as an important political actor challenges the particular image of passive, sexually permissive and decadent Eastern woman embedded in other Western representations of the harem.

Keywords: English restoration drama, harem, Hurrem Sultan, orientalism, Ottoman Sultanate women



Introduction*

The encounter between the West and the East has provided a source of 'knowledge' and many themes on the Islamic world since the medieval past. This encounter has constructed binaries between Western Self and Muslim Other and structured the East as an indispensable part of European identity formation. That is, as noted by Edward Said, "European culture gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the [East] as a sort of surrogate and even underground self," (1978, p. 3) thus, the East functions as the West's "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (p. 2). By taking a critical look at the position of the East, it should be noted that the Orientalists divide the world ontologically into two groups, the West and the East, without appreciating the cultural differences and historical specificities inherent in the East. According to this simple division, the East is fundamentally constructed as the opposite of the West. In the following quotation, Macfie demonstrates how the Orientalists represent the West and the East with an essentializing and homogenizing move in a clear-cut West-East division,

Europe (the West, the "self") is seen as being essentially rational, developed, humane, superior, authentic, active, creative, and masculine, while the Orient (the East, the "other") (a sort of surrogate, underground version of the West or the "self") is seen as being irrational, aberrant, backward, crude, despotic, inferior, inauthentic, passive, feminine, and sexually corrupt. (2002, p. 8)

It can be inferred that such a negative depiction is designed to construct the East "by nature mysterious, menacing, irrational, demonic, and sexually corrupt" in contrast to the West (Macfie, 2002, p. 87). In that sense, as mentioned above, Western attempts that identified the East with fixed and unchangeable characteristics have constructed a source of 'knowledge' and many themes on the East since medieval times. Among those themes through which the West identified the East, two of them appear most strikingly. As Kabbani points out, "the first is the insistent claim that the East was a place of lascivious sensuality, and the second that it was a realm characterized by inherent violence" (1986, p. 6). It is, therefore, not surprising that, the imagery of 'mysterious' and 'sexually corrupt' East mostly found expression in Western representations of Eastern women and harem. To put it differently, the sexualized image of Eastern women was reflected in terms of the European obsession with the harem which was regarded as

* Unless otherwise indicated in the notes, the translations from Turkish language sources are by the author.

the ultimate site of sexual perversion (Madar, 2011, p. 2). The harem became “the definitive topos of the Muslim woman and indeed of the entire world of Islam” (Kahf, 1999, p. 98) and by the eighteenth century “it becomes the proper space of the Muslim woman in Western literary representation” (p. 6). Until the twentieth century, the image of secluded and polygamous Eastern women was based on the layers of Western myth, rumor, and stereotype of a longstanding fascination. Thus, “the harem as a sexualised realm of deviancy, cruelty, and excess” stimulated Orientalist discourse that inevitably defined the condition of Eastern women in relation to the harem (Lewis, 2004, p. 96).

From the earliest encounters between the West and the East till the present, as mentioned by Melman, “the harem as the locus of an exotic and abnormal sexuality fascinated Westerners” (1992, pp. 59-60). The descriptions of harem typically focus on repetitive themes including “the lassitude and indolence of the women, opulence, and luxury, the sexually charged atmosphere of the harem, the lustful yet cruel sultan, and sexual perversion” (Madar, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, the harem and its connotations helped the Europeans to elaborate a myth of oriental/sensual despotism associated with the East by locating its essence in the sultan’s harem. In the same way, representations of the Eastern women have all intended to convey a particular image of them as passive, incapable of asserting their identity, always waiting for the Westerners to represent them. As Said further elaborates on this point referring to Flaubert’s encounter with an Egyptian courtesan, he claims that “[the Egyptian courtesan] never spoke of herself; she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. [Flaubert] spoke for and represented her” (1978, p. 6). Thus, as a wealthy Western man, Flaubert not only exerted physical domination on an Oriental woman but also hegemonic power that enabled him to produce an influential model of Eastern woman. In this schema, the point of departure in this study is the representation of Eastern women in Orientalist discourse asserting that representation of Eastern women in some heroic plays of English Restoration drama challenges this monolithic discourse of passive, sexually permissive and decadent Eastern women image. Rather, the Eastern women were significant “political actors” who exerted an extraordinary influence on dynastic issues and international diplomacy (Andrea, 2008, p. 17).

The Muslim sensuality has been the most prevalent theme in Western myths which constructed the concept of the harem. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman sultans and their court provided a fertile ground for the production of texts and images treating this theme (Peirce, 1993, p. 3). The

harem "is by definition a sanctuary or a sacred precinct [...] to which general access is forbidden," and it is also "a term of respect, redolent of religious purity and honor, and evocative of the requisite obeisance" (pp. 4-5). The harem also means a secluded and sacred space that derives from the word *haram* (Baran, 2012, p. 170). It should be acknowledged that, for the Ottomans, the meaning of harem refers to the most sacred and exalted places even to Mekka and Medina (Croutier, 2009, p. 19). The harem emerged as a place of power relations where the royal mothers had a great claim to authority during the long reign of Sultan Suleyman (r. 1520-1566). In other words, during Sultan Suleyman's reign a *haseki*, the Sultan's favorite, played an active role in state affairs. Thus, Sultanate women, Suleyman's mother Hafsa Sultan and legal wife Hurrem Sultan exerted an extraordinary influence on Ottoman politics for the first time (Öztuna, 1970, p. 4). In this regard, Sultan Suleyman's reign was also known for Hurrem Sultan's quick rise to a position of great prestige and influence in the harem. Hurrem Sultan rose from a captive girl to the queen mother in the Ottoman hierarchy soon after she entered the *imperial harem*. Then, she achieved the status of *haseki* following the birth of her eldest son Mehmed, subsequently begetting three more sons and a daughter (Andrea, 2008, p. 16; Yermolenko, 2010, p. 1). Hence, "one-mother-one-son" rule was violated in Ottoman history that profoundly disturbed contemporary Ottomans (Andrea, 2008, p. 16). Furthermore, Sultan Suleyman's legal marriage with a concubine was a radical break with the earlier tradition in Ottoman history guaranteeing the Sultan's persistent attachment to one woman which attributes Hurrem a unique status (Akgündüz, 2002, p. 318). Unable to comprehend these radical changes, the contemporary Ottomans blamed Hurrem for bewitching the Sultan. Thus, they called her "Ziadi," which means witch and defined her "as a practiser of witchcraft" (Peirce, 1993, p. 63; Busbeq, 1881, p. 114). In his seminal study, Richard Knolles also defines Hurrem Sultan as "the greatest empress of the East"; however, he blames her for "hateful thoughts" that caused familicide in the dynasty (1603, p. 759).

Notwithstanding the implications regarding Hurrem Sultan's influence on the Ottoman central government, there is one point that is hard to deny. As mentioned above, it should be acknowledged that she was never simply "seductress and schemer"; rather she was an important "political actor" who extended her influence beyond internal dynastic issues to international diplomacy (Andrea, 2008, p. 17). As Yermolenko argues, "various theories and interpretations have been offered throughout the ages to account for her long-term grip over Suleiman" changing from her beauty to her witty and quick mind or political genius (1995, p. 231). Nevertheless, she was ranked among

the most influential imperial women of Ottoman history. Hürrem Sultan's influence on internal and international politics, her fondness for fine arts and charity, and her esteemed and prestigious identity in the eye of Eastern and Western states can not be ignored (Sakaoğlu, 2008, p. 32). According to İnbaşı, Hürrem Sultan played a vital role in terms of constructing peaceful relations between Ottoman-Poland in the sixteenth century (2004, p. 27). Hürrem Sultan wrote letters to King Sigismund, which affected Sultan's positive foreign policy towards Poland and contributed to the peaceful relations between the two countries (Latka, 1991, p. 14). Moreover, Hürrem Sultan and her daughter Mihrimah Sultan wrote letters to Polish King Sigismund II to congratulate his kingship when he was coronated following his father's death (Uçtum, 1980, p. 697). In this regard, it is noteworthy that Haseki Sultan Hürrem established diplomatic relations with the king of a foreign country and tried to contribute to the politics of the state and to strengthen the state in a period in which Ottoman Empire was very powerful. Thus, it is important to note that Hürrem Sultan exerted influence on dynastic politics of primary significance and international diplomacy as Safiye Sultan did a century later. To put it more accurately, as Queen Elizabeth was involved in "negotiation, compromise, ingenuity, diplomacy, bargaining, and ingratiating ambassadors", those powerful Eastern women were engaged with international allies deconstructing the stereotypical harem images well rooted in Western representations (Kahf, 1999, p. 57). Especially during the Queen's reign, the diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the English flourished in which the correspondence between Queen Elizabeth and Safiye Sultan played a vital role (Barton & Pears, 1893, p. 465). In that sense, as an intermediary agent between the Queen and the Sultan, Safiye Sultan assumed an important role in international diplomacy. In other words, as mentioned above, those women of the Sultanate acted as the Sultan's voice in diplomatic correspondence and as "political actors" who extended their activities to international diplomacy exchanging gifts and letters with political allies (Andrea, 2008, p. 17).

In this context, the representation of Hürrem Sultan as a powerful woman of Sultanate is reflected in William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663), Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668), and Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa* (1676). Thus, it is possible to assert that the representation of Hürrem Sultan in those non-canonical male-authored seventeenth-century English plays deconstructs particular images of passive, sexually permissive, and decadent Eastern women image. In this regard, recent scholarly reevaluation of Eastern women provides a framework that challenges West's historical domination of the East and the particular Western discourse on Eastern

women (Peirce, 1993; Matar, 1996; Kahf, 1999; Andrea, 2008; Yermolenko, 2010). The recent evaluations, hence, turn the attention to the women of the Sultanate who exerted an extraordinary influence on the central Ottoman government and international diplomacy especially in the sixteenth century (Peirce, 1993, p. vii). Paying more general attention to the Western literary representations of Muslim women from medieval times to the period of Romanticism, it should be noted that the image of the Muslim woman in Western culture has been an evolving phenomenon (Kahf, 1999, p. 4). In her book *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (2008), Bernadette Andrea explores the Ottoman women's sovereignty within a special reference to "the age of the Queen Mother," dominated by Nurbanu, Safiye, Hürrem, Kösem, and Turhan (2008, p. 14). More specifically, in her *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture* (2010), Galina I. Yermolenko attempts to account for Hurrem Sultan's political influence on Ottoman politics and her appeal across the world. In this sense, it is obvious that the recent scholarly reevaluation throws light on the image of the powerful Muslim woman in Western discourse and argues that "[the Muslim woman] is rather presented as a powerful Eastern empress who with prideful attitude and boasting language complements her male counterpart" (Öktem, 2013, p. 31). In the light of those arguments, a deeper reading of those plays will illuminate how Hurrem Sultan is represented as a powerful Eastern empress who challenges the sexually permissive and decadent Eastern woman image as identified in Western discourse.

The Image of Hurrem Sultan in William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663)

The English interest in Ottoman history was on the rise following the Restoration of monarchy in England. Between 1660 and 1714 at least 40 plays set in Asia or Levant appeared on the London stage (Orr, 2001, p. 61). When the curtain was raised on the first legitimate English stage following the Restoration of monarchy in 1660, William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* managed to dazzle Restoration audience through the display of Ottoman court, Sultan Suleyman's harem and a parade of Eastern costumes (Gülter, 2019, p. 1). The English audience had already been familiar with Hurrem Sultan, known as Roxolana, Roxelana, Rossa, or Rosa Solimana in the Western world, as she was previously introduced by Fulke Greville in *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1594). William Davenant deals with Sultan Suleyman's reign and his sources for this play include Knolles's *The Generalle Historie of the Turkes* and Thomas Artus's *Continuation de l'histoires des Turcs* (1612) as well as various French plays (Thaler, 1924, p. 624). In

The Siege of Rhodes, Davenant's characters including Sultan Suleyman, Roxolana, Mustapha, Pirrhus, Haly and Rustan are the names in Turkish history. Phillippus Villerius Lilidama, Grand Master of the city, and Alphonso, captain of a Rhodian galley, could be found in the history of the period. However, the historical prototype of lanthe alone of all Davenant's leading characters is unhistorical and could not be found in the history of this period (Campbell, 1898, p. 178). Davenant's incorporation of lanthe character into the play aims to reinforce cultural differences between the Ottomans and the English evoking Roxolana's sexual jealousy which is indexed to her being an Eastern sultana and Islamic faith (Yermolenko, 2010, p. 36). In other words, in his attempt to juxtapose Roxolana's excessive passions of jealousy and sensual love with lanthe's pure love, Davenant aims to legitimate "Englishness against otherness, Christian against [non-Christian]," or "European against non-European" (Wiseman, 1998, p. 139). However, it is Roxolana herself who is of interest in this analysis, which explores Davenant's construction of this strong-willed Sultana in the play. Standing as she does at the intersection of state and court politics in the play, Roxolana offers not only an opportunity to explore the image of the powerful woman of Sultanate but also to deconstruct particular Western images of Eastern women whose essence is located in Sultan's harem.

During Sultan Suleyman's reign, the accession to the mechanisms of power in the imperial harem has been recorded as one of the most dramatic political developments, since Hurrem Sultan enjoyed an extraordinary degree of political power and public prominence. Accordingly, in her first appearance in the play, Roxolana is introduced amid of a conversation with the Ottoman statesmen Pirrhus and Rustan Viziers. In this scene, Roxolana affirms her jealousy of lanthe stating that "Yet jealousie does spring from too much love;/ if mine be guilty of excess,/ I dare pronounce it shall grow less" (1 *The Siege of Rhodes* III.iii.12–14). In the following line, Pirrhus states that: "You boldly threaten more than we dare hear" (1 *SOR* III.iii.15). Having been informed about lanthe's presence at the Sultan's court as a war prisoner, Roxolana's anger grows and she says that: "Lead to the sultan's tent! Pirrhus, away! / For I dare hear what he himself dares say" (1 *SOR* III.iii.27–28). It is possible to illustrate the quotation as a reflection of Roxolana's excessive passions of jealousy and her influence over the Ottoman statesmen. To put it differently, Roxolana is introduced in the midst of managing state affairs, as Viziers solicit her favor. As lanthe's conduction before the Sultan after she is taken prisoner during the siege of Rhodes really disturbs Roxolana, she cannot hide her jealousy and utters that:

Let Solyman forget his way to glory
increase in conquest and grow less in story.
That honor which in vain
his valour shrinks to gain,
when from the Rhodians he lanthe takes,
is lost in losing me whom he forsakes. (1 *SOR* IV.iii.24-29)

Davenant's dramatization of Roxolana in the first part of the play displays the fact that Roxolana is not a passive, sexually permissive, and decadent Eastern woman; rather she is an effective actor who exerts influence on Ottoman central government even on the Sultan. In this sense, it is possible to assert that Davenant refers to Hurrem Sultan's extraordinary degree of political influence. In other words, Davenant aims to display Hurrem Sultan's engagement with the matters of government and sovereignty as Suleyman concludes the first part of the play stating "My war with Rhodes will never have success, /till I at home, Roxana, make my peace" (1 *SOR* V.iv.19-20). With regard to Suleyman's conclusion, it is not possible to place Roxolana on the basis of those arguments as the subordinate group in the imperial realm. It is to a great extent an expansion of Roxolana's influence. In the first part of the play, lanthe is presented to the audience as a brave Christian wife who sold her jewels, crossed oceans to join her husband Alphonso and fought in defense of Rhodes. However, Roxolana is introduced in the midst of managing state affairs, as she threatens the Viziers to obey her commands as mentioned above.

The second part of *The Siege of Rhodes* deepens the contrast between the two women, as argued by Orr: "lanthe is cast as a figure of gentle modesty and Roxolana as an ambitious virago" (2001, p. 70). However, it may be noted that Davenant shifts attention from Roxolana's jealousy to her political power as he exemplifies in her welcoming ambassadors and their gifts in the second part. Thus, the construction of a strong-willed Sultan in this part displays Roxolana as an influential political figure who extends her authority to international diplomacy. The audience witnesses Roxolana's political power as observed as follows:

Roxolana: Th'ambassadors of Persia, are they come?
Haly: They seek your favor and attend their doom.
Roxolana: The vizier bashaw, did you bid him wait?
Haly: Sultana, he does here expect his fate.

...

Mustapha: Th'Egyptian presents which you pleas'd t'assign
as a reward to th'eunuch Salladine,
are part of those allotments Haly had.

...

Pirrhus: Th'Armenian cities have their tribute paid,
and all Georgian Pricences sue for ay'd.

Roxolana: Those cities, Mustapha, deserve our care.
Pirrhus, send succours to the Georgian war.

Mustapha: Th'embassador which did the jewels bring
from the Hungarian Queen, does the audience crave. (2 *SOR*
II. iii. 1-22)

It is obvious that as a woman of Sultanate, Roxolana is presented amid handling international affairs including welcoming ambassadors and their gifts. As quoted above, she welcomes Persian ambassadors, assigns Egyptian presents, controls tribute payment, and orders the Viziers. In that sense, it should be acknowledged that Roxolana acts not only as of the Sultan's sexual partner in his harem; rather she is presented as an influential Eastern empress who exerts influence on the Ottoman central government dealing with international diplomacy in the absence of the Sultan. Thus, she acts as the Sultan's voice in diplomatic correspondence (Andrea, 2008, p. 17). In the following lines, Roxolana is proud of her international influence over the Europeans and contrasts herself with European queens: "But they shall find, I'm no European queen, / who in a throne does sit but to be seen;/ and lives in peace with such state-thieves as these/ who robb us of our business for our ease" (2 *SOR* II. iii. 49-50). In this regard, it should be noted that Davenant's dramatization of Roxolana both deconstructs West's historical domination upon the East and the Western discourse on the Eastern women as far as the image of Roxolana is concerned. In the play, Davenant gives Hurrem Sultan an inflated sense of her own authority and an intense craving for power as it may be observed in her boasting language and prideful attitudes:

These are court-monsters, corm'rants of the crown:

[...]

then sawcily believe, we monarchs wives were made but to dress't for a
continu'd feast,

to hear soft sounds, and play away our lives.
[...]
They with bold pencils, by the changing shape
of our frail beauty, [...] judge our hearts as loose, and soft, and slight
as our summer vests of silk;
our brains, like to our feathers light;
our blood, as sweet as is our milk... (2 *SOR* II. iii. 31-46)

As the above quotation indicates, Roxolana's boasting language and prideful attitudes challenge the subordinate role of Eastern women, widely accepted as one of the hallmarks of traditional Islamic society. Roxolana concludes this part asserting that "But they shall find, I'm no European queen,/ who in a throne does sit but to be seen" (2 *SOR* II. iii. 49-50). Roxolana, thus, projects an image of authority and power to an audience both European and Ottoman proclaiming her own authority. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the reign of Sultan Suleyman inspired many English playwrights who dramatized the issues of monarchy, family, and power relations in their plays.

In the course of the play, the Rhodians are reduced to great distress during the Turkish siege of Rhodes. Thus, they beg lanthe for help who goes in person without any protection to Sultan Suleyman's court to sue mercy as Villerius states: "The people find that they have no defence/ but in [lanthe's] beauty and [her] eloquence" (2 *SOR* I.i. 227- 8). That is, the Rhodian Council concedes that in the face of Ottoman military attacks, the European Christians should seek ways of a treaty with the help of lanthe. lanthe's presence in the Sultan's court would bring amnesty for the Rhodians as Mustapha informs the Rhodians. Villerius states that:

But does request us to consent
that fair lanthe may get longer stay
in pow'rfull Roxolana's tent;
and that request we understand as a command
which, though we would not grant, we must obey. (2 *SOR* IV.i. 37-42)

In his statements, Villerius affirms both Ottoman power and "pow'rfull Roxolana's" influence on international diplomacy to which they should obey as a command. Roxolana hosts lanthe in her chamber and promises to spare lanthe and her husband Alphonso's life: "Are Christian wives so true, and wondrous kind?/ lanthe, you can never

change my mind,/ for I did ever mean to keep my vow,/ which I renew, and seal it faster now" (2 *SOR* V.vi. 87-90). Roxolana affirms her oath of sparing lanthe and Alphonso's life referring to her influence on international diplomacy as a powerful Eastern empress and an influential woman of the Sultanate. In the light of Davenant's construction of the image of Roxolana in *The Siege of Rhodes*, it should be noted that Roxolana is presented as a powerful Eastern empress whose interests are mostly in the Ottoman court rather than in the harem. Thus, Davenant's dramatization of Roxolana with an inflated sense of authority and an intense craving for power deconstructs Western discourse on the Eastern women as far as the sixteenth century Ottoman harem is concerned. To put it simply, standing as she does at the intersection of state and court politics in the play, the image of Roxolana in *The Siege of Rhodes* deconstructs particular Western images of Eastern women that depicted them as passive, sexually permissive and decadent. Therefore, Davenant's play, dealing with the sixteenth-century reign of Sultan Suleyman, presents Roxolana as an influential Eastern empress whose autonomy and demeanor challenge Orientalist discourse and Western representations of the harem as far as the sixteenth-century Ottoman woman sovereignty is concerned.

The Image of Hurrem Sultan in Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668)

As the Ottoman court and history have appealed to Western imagination since its foundation, Ottoman historical stories widely attracted European attention. In those historical stories, the Europeans tend to demonize Eastern rulers to assure their own superiority. In other words, the Europeans use the Eastern ruler as a "model for admiration and imitation, shaming or schooling the [European] supremacy" (Burton, 2000, p. 129). The story of Sultan Suleyman's eldest son Sehzade Mustapha's death in 1553 became one of the most interesting and appealing stories about the Ottomans for both historians and playwrights. This story infiltrated into Europe through different sources including official reports and records, personal letters of the diplomats and ambassadors, and travel accounts. After two years, in 1555, Nicolas à Moffan's Latin text, entitled *Soltani Solymani Turcorum Imperatoris horrendum facinus, scelerato in proprium filium, natu maximum, Soltanum Mustapham, parricidio, anno domini 1553 patratum*, appeared and set off the echoes of Mustapha's death in Europe. When Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq's *The Turkish Letters* were published in 1581, the story of Mustapha had long been circulating in Europe in Latin. Both Moffan's and Busbecq's accounts of Suleyman and Mustapha served stereotypical representations of so-called cruel Ottoman practices

that attracted much more attention in Europe (Erkoç, 2008, p. 2). In his *Turkish Letters*, Busbecq remarks that "the calumnies of Roostem [Rustem Pasha] and the spells of Roxolana [Hurrem Sultan], who was in ill repute as a practiser of witchcraft" caused Suleyman's estrangement from Mustapha and his decision to get rid of him (1881, p. 114). In other words, the story of the execution of a son by a tyrant Turkish sultan appealed to the European audience's taste. Yermolenko further contends that,

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. 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. (2010, p. 27)

According to Yermolenko, the execution of Mustapha attracted European attention and deepened Western fear of the Ottoman imperial practices. As a result of this intense interest in Mustapha's story, after Moffan and Busbecq's publications, that the Ottoman story was revised, translated, and edited many times to be published in various collections about the Turks (Gülter, 2019, p.107). In his *Generalle Historie*, Knolles provides an account of the year 1553 in which Mustapha was executed. He begins his account of the year by stating that,

The same yeare Solyman seduced by Roxolana (sometime his faire concubine, but then his imperious wife) and Rustan Bassa his sonne in law, most unnaturally murdered his eldest sonne Mustapha, the mirrour of the Othoman familie: Which tragicall fact, the like whereof both for the treacherous contriving and inhuman execution hath seldome times beene heard of, I have thought good here in due time to set downe, in such sort as it is by most credible writers of that time reported. (1603, p. 757)

Knolles's depiction of Suleyman-Mustapha story, influenced by anonymous Cambridge play *Solymannidae* (1581) and Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1594), provides an account for Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha, the Son of Solyman the Magnificent* (1668). Boyle's *Mustapha* apparently drew on Knolles's *Generalle Historie of the Turkes*

and Madeleine de Scudéry's *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa* (Clark, 1937, p. 226; Hayden, 2010, p. 75). However, Boyle's incorporation of an elaborate subplot involving the beautiful widowed Christian Queen of Buda and Roxolana's journey with the Sultan setting up her own pavilion in the camp markedly departs from Knolles's interpretation of the Suleyman-Mustapha story (Hayden, 2010, p. 81). In his account, Knolles depicts Roxolana as a "wicked woman laboured cunningly by little and little to breed in Solymans head no small suspicion of Mustapha" (1603, p. 760). According to Knolles, manipulative Roxolana first persuaded the Sultan to break with custom in marrying her and then schemed with Vizier Rustem Pasha to displace popular Mustapha from the throne (Orr, 2001, p. 73). Thus, it can be inferred that, as recorded by Moffan, Busbecq, and Knolles then dramatized by many English playwrights, the Suleyman-Mustafa story was popular in Western literature. The death of Sehzade Mustapha was also recorded by the contemporary Ottoman chroniclers and numerous mourning poems were dedicated to Mustapha's death on the Ottoman side. According to the contemporary Ottomans, Mustapha was well-educated, moral, brave, generous and a highly skilled soldier, thus the beloved son of Sultan Suleyman was respected and admired by other statesmen and the janissaries (Peçevi, 1999, p. 300). As Mustafa and the other sehzades got older, Hürrem Sultan's plot against Mustapha in favor of her son Mehmed started to be felt gradually, since the custom was that "the eldest prince was unquestionably put in an advantageous position" in Ottoman dynasty (İnalçık, 1993, p. 54). Hürrem Sultan plotted against Mustapha to eliminate him from succession to the throne in favor of her own beloved son Bayazid (Hasircioğlu, 1956, p. 18). In order to achieve her aim, she conspired with Vizier Rustem Pasha who intended to win Hürrem Sultan's approval (Gökbilgin, 1966, p. 20). They spread rumors of Mustapha's attempts to succeed to the throne with the help of Anatolian sipahis, Turkomans, and bandits. In doing so, they succeeded in convincing the Sultan to murder his son Mustapha (Shaw, 1994, pp. 160-161). However, it is important to note that, Turkish historians agree that Suleyman's father Yavuz Sultan Selim's revolt against his father Sultan Bayazid II in order to succeed to the throne played a vital role in his decision to murder Mustapha in addition to Hürrem Sultan and Rustem Pasha's conspiracy. In the aftermath of Mustapha's death, Mustapha's mother Mahidevran Sultan was exiled to Bursa (Tektaş, 2004, p. 121). Thus, it may be concluded that Hürrem Sultan eliminated all potential dangers with her systematic intrigues.

Nevertheless, it is Roxolana herself who is of interest in this analysis that explores Boyle's dramatization of her as a powerful woman of Ottoman Sultanate similar to Davenant's dramatization of her in *The Siege of Rhodes*. Dealing with the state and court

politics in Boyle's *Mustapha*, Roxolana offers an opportunity to explore the image of powerful Eastern empress in the context of Ottoman woman sovereignty in the sixteenth century. In other words, Hurrem Sultan whose role and participation in the matters of government and sovereignty played a significant role in Suleyman's execution decision, was condemned for Mustapha's death and defined as "seductress and schemer" both in European and Ottoman sources. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that Roxolana who wielded a very high degree of influence over state politics, appears as a very significant figure in *Mustapha*. Accordingly, the play opens with a display of Ottoman military might in Buda and the Christian mourn for the death of Hungarian King. Queen Isabella laments the situation of her infant boy who is intended to be put to death by Sultan Suleyman. However, the Queen decides to send the infant king to Roxolana, having been advised by her Cardinal: "Send the Crown-Jewels, and the Infant King/ To Roxolana as an Offering;/ ... In gaining her you make the Sultan sure" (*Tragedy of Mustapha* I.117-123). It can be inferred that Boyle's depiction reinforces Roxolana's image as a powerful Eastern empress who exerts influence on international affairs of primary significance and even on the Sultan. Roxolana's control over the Sultan is related to her "boundless passion, whether in her ambition for political or sexual absolute power" (Ballaster, 2005, p. 64) and mostly associated with "witchcraft" (Busbecq, 1881, p. 114). In other words, as a strong-willed Sultana, she maintains her influence over the Sultan owing to her ability to continually inflame his ardor (Hayden, 2010, p. 75). However, the point that needs to be reinforced is that Roxolana's influence exceeds the confines of the harem and extends to international politics. Aware of her influence over the Sultan, the Queen decides to send her son to Roxolana so as to save his life:

Bring me, Cleaora, my unhappy Son,
And with him all the Jewels of the Crown,
You ... Embassy shall go
To Roxolana's Tent, and let her know
How much the common voice of Fame I trust,
Which renders her compassionate and just. (*TOM* I.153-8)

Roxolana welcomes the Embassy who brings the infant king and jewels stating that "What I resolve, I change not through mistake,/ Leave your King, but bear your Presents back" (*TOM* I.260-1). In the following lines, as conceived, although Ottoman divan concedes "the Royal Infant's Doom" as announced by Rustan (*TOM* I.276), Roxolana reacts to divan's decision introducing herself to the audience as "the Partner of supreme Authority":

I'll not dissemble as you Viziers do.
 A Vizier's power is but subordinate,
 He's but the chief Dissembler of the State,
 And oft for publick Interest lies, but I,
 The Partner of supreme Authority,
 Do ever mean the utmost that I say. (*TOM* I.347-352)

It can be inferred that Roxolana regards herself as powerful as the Sultan asserting her control over internal dynastic politics of primary significance and international diplomacy. To put it differently, Roxolana reigned supreme not only in Suleyman's heart, but also in his court. Thus, she asserts that her autonomy and demeanor cannot be questioned even by the divan or the Viziers. In this context, Boyle's dramatization of Roxolana in the midst of managing state affairs, ordering the viziers, and boasting of herself as "the Partner of supreme Authority" may be related to her inflated sense of authority and intense craving for power. In other words, Boyle's dramatization of Roxolana as a powerful woman of Sultanate whose interests are mostly in the court rather than in the harem may be indexed to her desire of power and authority. Roxolana, as argued by Hayden, is deeply involved in Ottoman politics and she designates herself as the Sultan's complementary, claiming to have the power to invoke the death sentence for the Sultan's Viziers (Hayden, 2010, p. 77). When Vizier Rustan announces the infant king's death order, Roxolana does not turn the child over to Rustan addressing the Sultan that: "I thought in gaining you, I gain'd the Field,/ And therefore would not to your Subjects yield" (*TOM* I.393-4). Thus, it should be noted that Roxolana represents victory over the Sultan and the Viziers. To put it differently, she has the ultimate word of authority, not only above all the subjects including the Viziers but above the Sultan himself which is also confirmed by the Sultan himself: "You, Roxolana, are the conqueror" (*TOM* I.465). As far as Boyle's subplot is concerned in which Roxolana is victorious and has the ultimate word of authority, it should be acknowledged that the image of Roxolana is far away from being a passive, sexually permissive and decadent Eastern woman whose essence is located in sultan's harem. Rather, she is a powerful Eastern empress who asserts her identity through her autonomy, boasting language, and prideful attitude.

The main plot of the play revolves around Roxolana and Vizier Rustan's plot that aims to remove Mustapha from the succession and to guarantee Hurrem's son Zanger's rule after the reign of Suleyman. Having observed Roxolana's power and authority,

Vizier Rustan aims to win the approval of Roxolana by collaborating with her in the plot against Mustapha. In this part, Roxolana maintains to assert her authority stating that "The Sultan's love gives me a power so high/ That I to this could give a remedy" (TOM IV.125-126). Roxolana warns the Viziers, Rustan and Pyrrhus, about their vow: "You vow'd (Striving my Favour to regain)/ That Zanger after Solyman should reign,/ And, that I might no mark of horror bear,/ You said I still against it should appear" (TOM IV.580-3). She also threatens the Viziers assuring the men of her power: "You with your Blood must for your Mischiefs pay;/ But a few Tears will wash my Guilt away" (TOM IV.614-15). Roxolana's prideful attitude and boastful utterances prove her influence on the state affairs of primary significance including succession to the throne. Roxolana, sure of her power and authority over the statesmen, conspires with the Viziers and convinces the Sultan in that Mustapha would attempt to dethrone his father to succeed him. Having been convinced of Mustapha's disloyalty, the Sultan decrees Mustapha's death at the beginning of the fifth act: "I Will not stay to see him in my Throne:/ I yet can reach him and will take him down, / Rustan has now my orders: he shall die" (TOM V.1-3). As a result of the conspiracy against him, Mustapha is executed by the Sultan's order. However, after his son's execution, Suleyman learns from Zanger of the plot that raged against his son. Although Zanger does not implicate Roxolana, the Sultan is aware of her conspiracy with the Viziers as he states "For they, without her int'rest in the deed, / [Rustan and Pyrrhus] Durst not at last have urg'd me to proceed" (TOM V. 417-8). The Sultan alone sits in judgment and demands Roxolana to "Make haste! Write full your ambition down/ In changing the succession of my Crown" (TOM V.697-8). Although Roxolana never acknowledges her involvement in the plot and accuses the Viziers who have already been executed, the Sultan proclaims her banishment and sends her forth out of his sight forever at the end of the play. To conclude this part, standing as she does at the center of the state and court politics in the play, the image of Roxolana in Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* offers an opportunity to explore the image of powerful Eastern empress who manages the politics of central government and international diplomacy. Moreover, Boyle's construction of Roxolana deconstructs particular Western images of Eastern woman which depicted her as passive, incapable of asserting her identity and always waiting to be represented. In other words, as identified in Western and Ottoman sources, Roxolana may be manipulative, arrogant, and even greedy for power; however, the point that needs to be underlined is that the image of Roxolana in Boyle's play is far away from being passive or incapable of asserting her autonomy. Rather, here, the image of Roxolana is a powerful Eastern empress who asserts her autonomy and demeanor challenging the Eastern woman image in Western

discourse and advancing our understanding of Ottoman women sovereignty in the sixteenth century. Thus, as this analysis attempts to show, Boyle's dramatization of strong-willed Roxolana deconstructs the particular image of the harem and its connotations widely held in the Western imagination as far as Ottoman women sovereignty is concerned for the period under study.

The Image of Roxolana in Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa* (1676)

In 1676, *Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa* was presented in which Settle had made use of a French romance. About the same time he was working on the English translation of the Italian work by Guarini into a pastoral called *Pastor Fido* which was acted in 1676 soon after *Ibrahim* at the Duke's Theatre. In taking this poem as the basis of his play, Settle sought a work that was popular with the public and also with his patron (Brown, 1910, p. 19). Settle's use of Turkish theme in the second half of the seventeenth century may be related to the Ottoman campaigns to Europe in the 1670s "for which the resumption of military campaigning is compensation" (Orr, 2001, p. 77). Similar to *The Siege of Rhodes* and *Mustapha*, *Ibrahim* derives its historical setting from the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent supplanting Rhodes and Buda with Persia to highlight Sultan's unrestrained expansionist policy and Ottoman military power in the first half of the sixteenth century. As in *The Siege of Rhodes* and *Mustapha*, it is Roxolana herself who is of interest in this analysis that explores Settle's construction of Roxolana as a powerful Sultanate woman. In the play, Settle depicts Roxolana whose interests are mostly in the Ottoman court rather than in the harem as a strong-willed Sultana. In other words, the image of Roxolana in *Ibrahim* throws light on the image of strong-willed Ottoman Sultana offering an opportunity to explore Ottoman women sovereignty in the sixteenth century. In his construction of the plot, Settle refers indirectly to the historical rivalry between Hurrem Sultan and Ibrahim Pasha, two prominent figures who rose from captivity to the status of *haseki* and *grand vizier* during the reign of Sultan Suleyman. According to Tektaş, the reason that triggered this rivalry was to exert influence over the Sultan and the common point they hold was the Sultan's absolute authority (2004, pp. 96-97). Ibrahim Pasha favored Mustapha instead of Bayazid and his tendency was regarded as a menace by Hürrem Sultan who started her intrigues against Ibrahim Pasha (Emecen, 2000, p. 334). In this sense, it may be noted that Ibrahim Pasha guaranteed the Sultan's favor and affection through his intelligence and the skills; however, his authority was threatened by Hurrem Sultan. According to Ottoman

historians, Ibrahim's ambition for the Sultanate, imitative sultanic power, and disapproved behaviors following Iraq campaign brought about his downfall (Şehsuvaroğlu, 1950, p. 177; Emecen, 2000, p. 334). However, it is important to note that Hurrem Sultan's discontent for Ibrahim Pasha also played a vital role in his downfall (Danişmend, 1971, p. 187). As in the story of Mustapha, Hurrem Sultan eliminated Ibrahim Pasha through her systematic intrigues and her extraordinary influence on the Sultan.

In the play, Settle's plot aligns with the historical chronicles regarding Hurrem Sultan and Ibrahim Pasha. However, his subplot, in which Ibrahim falls in love with Isabella and Suleyman disregards Ibrahim due to his infatuation with Isabella, digresses from the historical skeleton. *Ibrahim* opens with a scene from the *harem* in which Roxolana proudly glories in unique honor granted to her through marriage to Sultan Suleyman while the Sultan is leading a campaign against Persia. She asserts her glory as follows:

By Sacred Rites, I have bound my Royal Slave.
It has been mine, and only my Renown,
T'have joyn'd a Nuptial Wreath t'a Turkish Crown.
He saw me, and he look'd his pow'r away;
Nor can years raize the Structures of that Day:
The Siege I laid, an Age cannot remove;
His Constancy's as great as is His Love. (*Ibrahim* I.i. 21-27)

It is clear that Roxolana reassures her power and authority through her marriage to the Sultan. She is so confident of her influence on Suleyman that she asserts the Sultan's love would never change and last forever. In historical context, Sultan Suleyman practically broke every article of the imperial harem protocol for Roxolana's favor. While there were no legal barriers against the marriage, the weight of custom (known for law, *kanun*) militated against the Sultan's marriage to a slave concubine. After the death of Suleyman's mother, valide sultan Hafsa, in 1533 the Sultan contracted a legal marriage with Roxolana (Gülter, 2019, pp. 142-143). In his *Turkish Letters*, Busbecq writes that "In taking her as his wife, he broke through the custom of his later predecessors on the throne, none of whom, since the days of Bajazeth the elder, had a lawful wife" (1881, p. 112). That is, with a contract of legal marriage Roxolana guaranteed her unique status and attachment of Suleyman to one woman that was regarded as a radical break with the past tradition. Settle underpins Suleyman's devotion to Roxolana drawing attention to the old tradition of Ottoman *harem*:

Love, which in Turkish Kings no limits knew,
 But wide and spreading like their Ensigns flew;
 By the new Miracle your Beauty wrought,
 Its first and only constancy was taught. (*Ibrahim* II.i. 461-64)

It can be inferred that Settle refers to the Western obsession with the Muslim sensuality. However, it is significant to note here that harem cannot be regarded as a source of pure pleasure, for it also had a significant political meaning. To put it more accurately, the sexual relation between the Sultan and chosen women had a significant impact on the line of succession to the throne and the survival of the dynasty. In that sense, this fact belies the simplistic notion that harem women acquired power through their seductiveness; however, their power stretched far beyond so-called harem pleasures (Peirce, 1993, p. 3). As the above quotation indicates, Roxolana was able to make the Sultan break with the earlier tradition by contracting a legal marriage. The Ottoman harem system operated on the principle of “one concubine mother-one son, and the presence of a prince’s mother at her son’s provincial post”, which was designed to prevent the mothers’ influence over the sultans and dynastic affairs (pp. 58-59). In other words, this system aims to prevent female participation in state affairs since “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” (Hayden, 2010, p. 72). Roxolana represents “boundless passion, whether in her ambition for political or sexual absolute power” (Ballaster, 2005, p. 64), thus, she remained in the harem even after her sons – Mehmed, Selim, Bayazid- left Istanbul to govern their provinces. That is, Roxolana was the first mother of a prince since at least the mid-fifteenth century who remained behind the capital. Thus, Roxolana maintained her influence over both the Sultan and dynastic affairs as Settle also dramatized in the course of the play (Gülder, 2019, p. 143). Triumphant of having confined the Sultan’s heart to herself, Roxolana welcomes Suleyman’s return from Ottoman campaign against the Persians referring to the Sultan’s worldwide fame:

Welcome the Worlds great Conqueror and mine;
 Enough before did your bright Luster shine.
 You needed not new Victories, new Charms,
 To welcome you to Roxolana’s Arms. (*Ibrahim* I.i. 81-84)

It is obvious that Roxolana is sure of her influence over Suleyman that she guaranteed by "a Nuptial Wreath t'a Turkish Crown" (*Ibrahim* I.i. 23). On his part, Suleyman returns her warm reception with a warmer one telling her that he needs all his "glories" when he is by her to be able to pay what is due to her. Then he declares his surrender to her power and submits himself to her eyes:

Yes I need all my glories, when you're near,
I bring my Trophies as a Tribute here.
Great, though I am, your pow'r is greater yet;
The World to me, I, to your eyes submit. (*Ibrahim* I.i. 85-88)

It is clear from the above quotation that Settle displays Roxolana's broadcast of her unique status and the Sultan's persistent attachment to her. In historical context, Suleyman's attachment to one woman breaking with the principal features of earlier tradition was considered unnatural among the contemporary Ottomans. As mentioned earlier, unable to comprehend those radical changes, the public blamed Roxolana for bewitching the Sultan (Peirce, 1993, p. 63). As the chroniclers note Roxolana's control over the Sultan created discontentment among the public and her charms had been associated with witchcraft. Thus, they called her "Ziadi," which means witch and defined her "as a practiser of witchcraft" referring to her ill reputation among the public (Busbecq, 1881, p. 114). In the play, Settle also depicts Roxolana as a figure whose inflated sense of authority and intense craving for power are discontented. Especially Isabella's appearance at the Sultan's court disturbs Roxolana and leads her to think whether "Roxolana's power [is] Disputed" (*Ibrahim* II.i. 467-8). Ulama reassures her stating that: "No, Madam, there, where Empire's absolute, / Your pow'r all should obey, and none dispute" (*Ibrahim* II.i. 469-470); however, he foreshadows the "Storm in Roxolana's Sphere" (*Ibrahim* II.i. 477) referring to Isabella's appearance at the Sultan's court and Sultan's being overwhelmed by the Christian virgin. Ulama's announcement of the Sultan's captivity to Isabella's beauty reminds the audience of the previous practices of the Sultan's harem pleasures to which Roxolana reacts severely. Roxolana states her anger as follows:

Yes Sir; you rais'd me to a Crown, forsook
The rude delights your wilde Fore-fathers took.
When from the feeble Charms of multitude,
And change, your heart with one pure flame endu'd,

Was all entire to Roxolana giv'n:
As Converts quit Idolatry for Heav'n. (*Ibrahim* III.ii.135-140)

It can be inferred that Roxolana upbraids the Sultan for his disloyalty and his conversion to uncivil pleasures of *harem*. As stated above Suleyman practically broke with the old traditions of imperial harem granting privileges to Roxolana through "A Nuptial Tye" that made her "sharer in a Throne" (*Ibrahim* III. 473). However, Suleyman's infatuation with Isabella endangers Roxolana's power. In the course of the play, Roxolana hopes for her husband's change of heart and thus her own maintenance in power (Hayden, 2010, p. 86). Having announced herself as "the Empress of the World", Roxolana ultimately displays her prideful attitude through a boastful language:

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 glorys sparkling from my Crown
Life waited on my Smiles, Death on my Frown. (*Ibrahim* IV. 649-55)

Obviously, Settle's Roxolana has an inflated sense of power and hopes for her beloved's change of heart to maintain her power which is now endangered by the Sultan's infatuation with Isabella. When Suleyman forgets his "Nuptial Vows" (*Ibrahim* IV. 134), despite his oath of eternal faith to Roxolana, he intends to remove the crown from Roxolana's head and give it to Isabella. Questioning his decision, Roxolana addresses a question to Suleyman: "But could you make two Suns together shine,/ And her new greatness, not diminish mine" (*Ibrahim* V. 438-9). So proud of her position, Roxolana asserts at the end of the play: "I've so much Pride for that which I have been,/ No common hands shall touch the Worlds once Sacred Queen" (*Ibrahim* IV. 561-2). Settle elaborates his plot on the Sultan-Ibrahim-Isabella plot; however, Roxolana appears as a rather noble and loyal character in the play. Thus, Settle tends to portray Roxolana as an active subject, exercising virtue, exploring her passions, and acting upon the Sultan. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the image of Roxolana in *Ibrahim* is far away from being a passive, sexually permissive, and decadent Eastern woman whose essence is located in sultan's harem; rather she is a sharer in Ottoman throne who can question the Sultan's acts and decisions. As historically Hurrem Sultan is prefigured the powerful

woman of the late sixteenth century, she appears as a powerful Sultana who exercises virtue and explores her passions challenging the particular image of Eastern women in the play.

Conclusion

From the encounter between the East and the West onwards, the West has mostly defined the East with preconceived notions disregarding the specificities inherent in the East within an essentializing and homogenizing move. In the Western definition of the East, the sexualized image of Eastern women whose essence was located in the sultan's *harem* found a proper space. In Western literary representations, the imagery of Eastern woman was highly confined to a monolithic discourse in which she was always associated with a mysterious, decadent, and sexually permissive harem. Especially Ottoman harem provided a fertile ground for the Westerners who employed such imageries to construct the image of the East in contrast to the West as a counter identity. In that sense, the Ottoman harem instigated Western playwrights' imagination who repeatedly dramatized Eastern women on the stage. As mentioned above, the interest in Ottoman court, history, and harem was on the rise in the aftermath of English Restoration; thus, English playwrights specifically dramatized Ottoman harem and Ottoman women in their plays. In this context, the present study has attempted to account for the image of strong-willed Ottoman Sultana, Hurrem Sultan, in non-canonical and still male-authored seventeenth-century English plays. Notwithstanding the implications regarding the image of Roxolana in Western and Ottoman writings, there is one point that is hard to deny. As argued above, Roxolana who is presented as a powerful Eastern empress in those selected plays deconstructs the particular image of passive, sexually permissive, and decadent Eastern woman image. Roxolana asserts her autonomy and identity in contrast to the preconceived notions of Orientalism. It is possible, in this regard, to note that Roxolana challenges the way in which Oriental constructions defy Eastern women's presence. As also the recent scholarly reevaluation of the Eastern women representations in Western discourse interrogates it would be misleading to apply Orientalist point of view to those plays since these representations of Eastern women need to be more complex than Orientalism characteristically assumes. In this regard, this study sheds light on Ottoman women's sovereignty in the sixteenth century in terms of a special reference to the image of Hurrem Sultan as represented in selected English plays. This study has indicated that standing at the center of the state and court politics in those plays, Roxolana offers not only an opportunity to

explore the image of the powerful Ottoman women but also to deconstruct particular Western images of Eastern women. Therefore, by dramatizing Roxolana amid managing state affairs, welcoming ambassadors, assigning presents, controlling tribute payments, and ordering the statesmen in absence of the Sultan; Davenant, Boyle and Settle respectively construct a strong-willed Sultana. To conclude, in those plays, the playwrights give the Sultana an inflated sense of her own authority and an intense craving for power as it may be observed in her boasting language and prideful attitudes.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar çıkar çatışması bildirmemiştir.

Finansal Destek: Yazar bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

References

- Akgündüz, A. (2002). Bir aile ve hizmet müessesesi olarak Osmanlı'da harem. *Türkler Ansiklopedisi*, C. X, 315–347.
- Andrea, B. (2008). *Women and Islam in early modern English literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ballaster, R. (2005). *Fabulous orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baran, M. (2012). Osmanlı klasik dönem saray kültüründe mahremiyet ve harem. *Milli Folklor*, 24(93), 169–183.
- Barton, E. & Pears, E. (1893). The Spanish armada and the Ottoman porte. *The English Historical Review*, 8(31), 439–466.
- Boyle, R. (1668). *The tragedy of Mustapha, the son of Solyman the Magnificent*. Gale Eighteenth Century Collections Online Print Editions.
- Brown, F. C. (1910). *Elkanah Settle: His life and works*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Busbecq, O. G. (1881). *The life and letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, vol. 1. London: C. Kegan Paul&Co.
- Campbell, K. (1898). The sources of Davenant's *the siege of Rhodes*. *Modern Language Notes*, 13(6), 177–182.
- Clark, W. S. (1937). *The dramatic works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Crotier, A. A. (2009). *Harem gizemli dünya*. (Trans. Leyla Özcengiz). İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Danişmend, İsmail Hami. (1971). *Osmanlı tarihi kronolojisi*. C. II – III. İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi.
- Davenant, W. (1663). *The siege of Rhodes* [Epub Version]. Retrived, from http://www.operalib.eu/zpdf/siegerhodes_bn.pdf
- Emecen, F. (2000). İbrahim Paşa, makbul. *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*. C. XXI, 333–335.
- Erkoç, S. (2008). *Repercussions of a murder: The death of Sehzade Mustafa on early modern English stage*. [Unpublished M.A Thesis]. Central European University, Budapest.

- Gökbilgin, M. T. (1966). Rüstem Paşa hakkındaki ithamlar. *İÜEFDT*, 11–12, 11–50.
- Gülter, I. Ş. (2019). *The Ottoman Turks in English heroic plays*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Hayden, J. A. (2010). The tragedy of Roxolana in the court of Charles II. In Galina I. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture* (pp. 71-88). England: Ashgate.
- Hasircioğlu, T. (1956). Osmanlı sarayında saltanat süren kadınlardan Hürrem Sultan. *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, 1(73), 15–19.
- İnalçık, H. (Ed.) (1993). The Ottoman succession and its relation to the Turkish concept of sovereignty. In *The Middle East and the Balkans Under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (pp. 37-69). Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies.
- İnbaşı, M. (2004). *Ukrayna'da Osmanlılar: Kamanıçe seferi ve organizasyonu (1672)*. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.
- Kabbani, R. (1986). *Europe's myth of orient*. London: Macmillan.
- Kahf, Mohja. (1999). *Western representations of the Muslim woman: From termagant to odalisque*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Knolles, R. (1603). *The generall historie of the Turkes*. London: Islip.
- Latka, S. J. (1991). *Lehistan'dan gelen sefirler: Türkiye – Polonya ilişkilerinin altı yüzyılı*. (Trans. A. Sarkady – Nalân Sarkady). Ankara: Polonya – Türkiye Dostlar Derneği.
- Lewis, R. (2004). *Rethinking orientalism: Women, travel and the Ottoman harem*. I.B. Tauris: London.
- Macfie, A. L. (2002). *Orientalism*. Great Britain: Longman.
- Madar, H. (2011). Before the odalisque: Renaissance representations of elite Ottoman women. *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 6, 1–41.
- Matar, N. (1996). The representation of Muslim women in Renaissance England. *The Muslim World*, LXXXVI (1), 50–61.
- Melman, B. (1992). *Women's orients: English women and the Middle East, 1718 –1918: Sexuality, religion, and work*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Orr, B. (2001). *Empire on the English stage 1660-1714*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Öktem, Ö. (2013). *The representation of the Muslim woman in early modern English drama*. [Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis] Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- Öztuna, Y. (1970). Kanuni'nin Türk ve dünya tarihindeki yeri. *Kanuni Armağanı*. Ankara: TTK Basımevi.
- Peçevi, İ. (1999). *Peçevi tarihi*. C. I. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları.
- Peirce, L. (1993). *The imperial harem: Woman and sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Sakaoğlu, N. (2008). Tek Osmanlı kraliçesi. *NTV Tarih Dergisi*, 31–33.
- Settle, E. (1976). *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa a Tragedy Acted by Their Majesties Servants*. ProQuest Early English Books Online Publishings.
- Shaw, S. (1994). *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve modern Türkiye*. (Trans., Mehmet Harmancı). İstanbul: E. Yayınları.

- Tektaş, N. (2004). *Harem'den taşanlar (Padişahların bütün kadınları)*. İstanbul: Çatı kitapları.
- Şehsuvaroğlu, Y. H. (1950). Hürrem Sultan ve Sultan Süleyman. *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, 5, 176–179.
- Thaler, A. (1924). Thomas Heywood, D'Avenant, and *the siege of Rhodes*. *PMLA* 39, 624–641.
- Uçtum, R. N. (1980). Hürrem ve Mihrimah Sultanların Polonya Kralı II. Zigmund'a yazdıkları mektuplar. *Belleten*, 175, 697–715.
- Wiseman, S. (1998). *Drama and politics in the English civil war*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yermolenko, G. I. (1995). Roxolana: "The Greatest Empresse of the East". *The Muslim World*, 95(2), 231–248.
- Yermolenko, G. I. (2010). *Roxolana in European literature, history and culture*. England: Ashgate.

