

Veranstalter	Dr. Thomas Matthew Vozar
Thema	Oriental Encounters: Early Modern Britain and the Islamic World
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-544
Zeit	Mi 14–16
Raum	Ü35 – 01016
Beginn	5.04.23

Under the reign of Elizabeth I, Jerry Brotton has recently written, “Protestant England came closer to Islam than at any other time in its history until today.” Through commerce, diplomacy, travel, and the written word, early modern Britain was much more deeply entwined with the Islamic world than one might expect.

This course explores the impact of encounters with the Islamic world in British culture over the period c. 1580–1820. The Ottoman Empire, as a Mediterranean hegemon and the nearest imperial Muslim power, provides a central focus, though other parts of the Islamic world, ranging from the Muslim kingdoms of North Africa to the Mughal Empire in South Asia, will also play a role. To that end we will read a variety of early modern English texts, as well as some Latin and Ottoman Turkish texts in translation, in both prose and verse, and will examine the ways in which the Islamic world left its imprint on British literature and culture in this period.

Seminar discussions can be expected to focus on such topics as Elizabeth I’s diplomatic correspondence with the Ottoman Sultan Murad III, Saracens (Muslims) in Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, travel and captivity narratives, a treatise on Islam by the Ottoman dragoman (translator-interpreter) Ali Ufki, the Cambridge scholar Isaac Barrow’s poem *On the Turkish Religion*, the Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahâtnâme (Book of Travels)*, translations of the Quran and the *Arabian Nights*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters*, and the pseudo-oriental fiction of William Beckford and Lord Byron.

We will attend closely to the individual texts and their respective contexts while also exploring a set of larger questions over the course. How did early modern Britons, and Europeans more generally, come to understand the Islamic world? How did they write about it, and what informed and motivated these cultural representations? To what extent does the paradigm of orientalism articulated by Edward Said hold (if at all) for the early modern period? And how is this history relevant to our twenty-first-century present?

Required Texts: All texts will be provided online via Agora.

Studienleistung: preparation of weekly reading, regular attendance, active participation in discussions and activities, seminar presentation.

Prüfungsleistung: term paper.