# THE TRAGICAL REIGN OF SELIMUS, SOMETIME EMPEROR OF THE TURKS

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The Tragical Reign of Selimus, Sometime Emperor of the Turks by Robert Greene  $\& \$  Alexander B. Grosart

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## ROBERT GREENE & ALEXANDER B. GROSART

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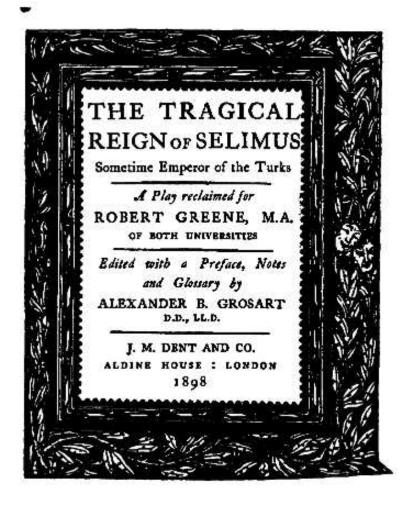


# Grand: SELIMUS





Norwich Cathodral.



EZZ.8 5465 1898 Cop.3

> \*Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight, And burned is Apollo's laurel bough That sometime grew within this learned man.\*
> MARLOWR'S Faustur.

Jack - Confue in Clannen: 9-16-64 add copy.

### PREFACE

Editions of the Play. Until Selimus was reclaimed by me for Robert Greene and included in his collected Works (in 'Huth Library,' vol. xiv. pp. 189-291), it had never been reprinted. The following is the original title-page:—

### THE

First part of the Tragical raigne of Schimus, sometime Emperour of the Turkes, and grandfather to him that now raignoth.

Wherein is showne how hee most unnaturally raised warres against his owne father Baiaset, and preuailing therein, in the end caused him to be poysoned.

Also with the murthering of his two brethren, Corcut and Acomat.

As it was playd by the Queenes Malesties Players.

Viressit vulnera veritas.

[Creede's woodcut device.]

LONDON

Printed by Thomas Creede, dwelling in Thames Streete at the signe of the Kathren wheele, neare the olde Swanne.

1594

4

It is a small quarto of thirty-eight leaves (A-K in fours), first and last pages blank.

The unsold copies of the play were disposed of to certain stationers, who re-issued it with a fresh title-page: \* London: Printed for John Crooke and Richard Serger 1638." Had the new issuers of the play done no more than this, they should have gone without much blame; but, unfortunately, they put on the abridged title-page 'written [by] T. G.,' with most probably the maleficent design of palming it off as by Thomas Goffe; whose two plays, of very much the same type, had been recently collected by Meighen, his not over-wise friend. The plays of Goffe are, The Raging Turk, or Bajazet the Second, and The Courageous Turks, or Amurath the First. Langhaine fell into the snare, and filled in T[homas] G[offe] s.n.; and, like a flock of sheep, editors and critics from whom something better might have been expected, have followed suit. Of course, Goffe's was an impossible authorship; as, having only been born in 1591, he was in 1594, when Selimus was published, still in the first of the seven famous stages. It has struck me that perhaps Langbaine rather than John Crooke or Richard Serger ought to bear the responsibility of the misappropriation of the initials. More than that, one of many similar blunderings on old as well as on recent title-pages, makes me ask whether, after all, T. G. were not an unlucky misprint for R. G.? If so.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This was first discovered by the Rev. H. O. Coxe, M.A., and recorded by him in the Bodleian Catalogue—appropriated by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt a.n.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The plays of Goffe were posthamous, and Meighen, in verses, gives us this bit of information: 'To the author [of The Courageous Turks (1633)], in that translating his book without his knowledge, I was bound by promise to stand to his pleasure to keep or to burn it.' 'Translating' suggests that it was originally a Latin play.

### Tragedy and Reign of Selimus

PREFACE

the re-issuers may really have known that R[obert G[reene] was the author, and intended R. G. not T. G.

The original and (at supra) only edition of 1594 bears no name or initials, and there is no entry of it in the Stationers' Register (Arber 1592-94); nor does it come up in either Henslowe's Diary or the Alleyn Papers.

I was the first to reclaim it for Robert Greene. Our text was necessarily the original of 1594, from a fine exemplar lent me by the late Duke of Devonshire (Kembie Plays, vol. i. 306). Only other three copies appear to be known—two of them in the Dyce Library, South Kensington, and the third in the Bodleian. By the kindness of the present Duke of Devonshire—though the collection has been removed to Chatsworth—I have been enabled carefully to collate my former reproduction—not without advantage, as must be noted in two places. The quarto of 1594 has too many misprints, but on the whole has the neatness and general accuracy of the books of the original publisher, Thomas Creede.

On Selimus the man, i.e. Selim I. Curiously enough, an early English book exists that sheds some light on this extraordinary personality. This rare, if not absolutely unique, book is recorded by Dr. Robert Watt in his Bibliotheca Britannica (1824) s.n.; but as the late Mr. J. Payne Collier was the first to describe it from a personal examination, I gladly avail myself of his quotations in his Bibliographical Account of

<sup>1</sup> By one of those vexations accidents to which the best copyists are liable, my copyist turned over the wrong page, and so left out il. 100-171, and il. 644-5. Both are important restorations, and I suggest, with sincere apology, their being written-in in the play in vol. xiv. of the Works.