

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

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649030415

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

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Cover @ 2017

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**ROBERT GREENE & ALEXANDER B. GROSART**

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





THE TEMPLE DRAMATISTS

*Green's* SELIMUS





*Norwich Cathedral.*



THE TRAGICAL  
REIGN OF SELIMUS

Sometime Emperor of the Turks

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*A Play reclaimed for*

ROBERT GREENE, M.A.  
OF BOTH UNIVERSITIES

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*Edited with a Preface, Notes  
and Glossary by*

ALEXANDER B. GROSART  
D.D., LL.D.

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J. M. DENT AND CO.  
ALDINE HOUSE : LONDON  
1898

£22.8  
5465  
1898  
cop.3

'Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,  
And burn'd is Apollo's laurel bough  
That sometime grew within this learned man.'  
*MARLOWE'S Faustus.*



Stacks  
Brit.  
copy Joshua W. C. C. C.  
9-15-64  
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 Tragi-  
cal raigne of Selimus, sometime Empe-  
rour of the Turkes, and grandfather to him  
that now raigneth.*

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

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

As it was playd by the Queenes Maiesties  
Players.

*Viresit vulnera veritas.*

[Creede's woodcut device.]

LONDON

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

1594.

PREFACE

The First Part of the

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.'<sup>1</sup> 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 malevolent 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*. Langbaine 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 *Selincus* was published, still in the first of the seven famous stages.<sup>2</sup> 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>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 s.n.

<sup>2</sup> The plays of Goffe were posthumous, 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 (*ut 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 (*Kemble 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 vexatious accidents to which the best copyists are liable, my copyist turned over the wrong page, and so left out ll. 100-171, and ll. 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.