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T. E. LAWRENCE, THE TURKS, AND THE ARAB REVOLT IN THE CINEMA: ANGLO-AMERICAN AND TURKISH REPRESENTATIONS

Plate 1

The Arab Revolt against Ottoman occupation began on 5 June 1916, as the ruler of the Holy Cities, Hussein, proclaimed himself "King of the Arab Countries," a title he later modified into "King of the Hejaz," following protests from the British and French.[1] The Ottoman army in Arabia was stationed in the Yemen, and along the new Hejaz Railroad in Syria connecting Medina with Damascus. Hussein organized the Bedouin chiefs under his control into a guerilla army commanded by his son Feisal with the help of several British officers including T. E. Lawrence. The immediate effect of this revolt was to cut the Hejaz Railroad and overrun the Ottoman garrisons at Mecca, Cidda, and Damascus. All other towns in the Hejaz were soon under rebel control with the exception of the Media, which remained under siege, and the Yemen was entirely cut off.

The Arab Revolt paved the way for the Syrian campaign, where a combined British and Arab force began an offensive that would result in the Ottomans quitting the country within a year, and surrendering to the Allies on 13 November 1918. The Allied forces invaded the Ottoman Empire with the firm conviction that since the Ottoman Turks had arbitrarily slaughtered millions of their subjects, they had forfeited the right to rule themselves. Admiral Calthorpe, the Allied High Commissioner, remarked in a 1919 letter, "it has been our consistent attitude to show no kind of favour whatsoever to any Turk" and "all interchange of hospitality and comity has been rigorously forbidden" (qtd. in Shaw and Shaw 329). By contrast the British supported the Arab claims for full national rights and self-government: at the Paris Peace Conference of January 1919, Lawrence was called upon to represent the Bedouins.

This article focuses on two cinematic representations of these events from the Anglo-American and the Turkish points of view, in David Lean's biopic *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and Lütfi Ö. Akad's *Ingiliz Kemal Lavrens'e Karsi* (*Ingiliz Kemal Against Lawrence* [1952]). The orientalism of Lean's film has been extensively analyzed by Steven C. Caton (1999) and Martin Stollery (2000), focusing in particular on how the director's representation of Arab culture seeks to challenge familiar stereotypes of the "sophisticated" West compared with the "uncivilized" East. Caton in particular argues that the film is critical of the colonialist project within the constraints of the historical (post-Suez) and cultural contexts from which it emerged (Caton 199). However, there has been scant critical attention paid to the portrayal of the Ottomans in the film, who are represented as inefficient, ruthless, or perverted.[2] There are two explanations for this—first, that Michael Wilson's treatment and Robert Bolt's eventual screenplay largely follow Lawrence's account of the Arab Revolt in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, wherein the Arabs are shown to be fighting

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for liberation from the colonialist yoke of Ottoman rule (Wilson 30).[3] In their efforts to challenge orientalist representations of the Arabs, the screenwriters—like Lawrence himself—orientalized the Ottomans. *Lawrence of Arabia* stresses the contrast between the two races by drawing upon a tradition of homosexual orientalism, applied specifically to the Ottomans (and the Turks) that dates back to the work of nineteenth-century travelers such as Sir Richard Burton, and that persists in more recent films such as *Midnight Express* (1979). Lean was not particularly anti-Ottoman; rather he chose to demonize them as a means of explaining the behavior of his Arabic and British central characters.

Plate 2

On the face of it, Lütfi Ö. Akad's *Ingiliz Kemal Lavrens'e Karsi* simply reverses this opposition by foregrounding the Turkish struggle against British colonizers (particularly Lawrence), while reducing the Arabs to marginal figures in the background of many shots. However, I suggest that the director sought both to celebrate the achievements of the Turkish nation in general and in particular the achievements of an adventurer who played an important role in its creation. "Ingiliz Kemal" (real name Ahmet Esat Tomruk) was a British-educated spy who passed vital information about Allied plans on to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—which proved vital in the subsequent campaign to expel all occupying forces from Turkish territory. Tomruk's exploits rapidly passed into legend, following the publication of his bestselling autobiography in 1946. By the late '50s he had been transformed into a popular cultural icon—a Turkish version of James Bond who appeared in a series of five adventure novels (bearing an increasingly tenuous relationship to historical fact) and three feature films. *Ingiliz Kemal Lavrens'e Karsi* is the first of these films.

In an "Apologia" for *Lawrence of Arabia*, Robert Bolt sought to answer those critics (for example, Lawrence's youngest brother Professor A. W. Lawrence), who objected to the film's portrayal of the central character and his involvement in the Arab Revolt, particularly in the scene where he appears to enjoy participating in the massacre of a column of retreating Ottoman soldiers outside the village of Tafas (Bolt 33). Bolt argued that the principal source for this scene was *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, in which Lawrence recounts how his reaction was prompted by the sight of what the Ottomans had done to the villagers:

> I looked close and saw the body of a woman [...] bottom upwards, nailed there by a saw bayonet whose haft stuck hideously into the air from between her naked legs. She had been pregnant, and about her lay others, perhaps twenty in all, variously killed, but set out in accord with an obscene taste. [...] I said, "The best of you brings the most Turkish dead," and we turned after the fading enemy, on our way shooting down those who had fallen out by the wayside and came imploring our pity. [...] By my order we took no prisoners, for the only time in our war. (Lawrence 631-32)

Righteous indignation might seem a natural response; but by Lawrence's own admission, he continued slaughtering for a day and a night: "In a madness born of the horror of Tafas we killed and killed, even blowing in the heads of the fallen and of the animals; as though their dead and running blood could slake our agony" (Lawrence 633).[4] The Ottoman atrocities provoked him to commit another terrible crime in a mood of dreadful excitement; as a result "others' lives [especially Turkish lives] became toys to break and throw away" (Lawrence 634). Lowell Thomas, whose 1925 book *With Lawrence in Arabia* helped create the Lawrence legend, quotes from Lawrence's diary in which he describes the "agony of cruelty and revenge which was burning in our bodies and twisting our hands about so that we could hardly shoot" (Thomas 184).

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Lean emphasizes the carnage in Tafas by means of a slow panning shot, showing a disemboweled man, several blood-drenched women, and a three-legged dog.[5] It is this sight that prompts Lawrence to wreak revenge on the Ottomans. The ensuing battle begins with an Arab soldier galloping alone toward the Ottomans, only to be cut down by machine-gun fire just before he reaches them. The action cuts to a close-up of a trickle of blood on the ground next to him. This image recalls the close-up earlier on of blood seeping through the back of Lawrence's (Peter O'Toole's) uniform, as he returns to the British garrison following his ordeal at the hands of the Ottomans in Deraa (of which more later). The sight of the body in the sand provokes an extreme reaction from Lawrence, as he is subsequently shown in close-up, his face contorted with emotion as he shoots any Ottoman soldier unfortunate enough to stand in his way (Plate 1).[6] Having completed the massacre, Lawrence and the Arab soldiers are shown marching on either side of a burnt-out Ottoman cart, its tattered flag fluttering in the breeze. Lean's version of events resembles that expressed by Anthony Nutting (who served as an adviser to the film) in his 1961 biography *Lawrence of Arabia: The Man and The Motive*: "Almost every one of the two thousand Turks [...] had been slaughtered—at the express orders of the gentle archaeologist who despised the soldier's profession [...] Such was the depths of the nightmare in which he [Lawrence] was now engulfed" (Nutting 162-63).[7]

While accepting the view that the second half of the film depicts Lawrence's descent from heroic supporter of Arab liberation into a cynical, ruthless killer (Caton 140), I would nonetheless argue that Lean maintains a basically anti-Ottoman stance throughout: even if some of the colonizers are victims of Lawrence's irrational fury, they still get what they deserve. They are no match for the marauding Arabs; in the attack on Aqaba, for instance, three Ottoman soldiers try to set up a machine-gun post, but find themselves overrun by the Arab cavalry. Lean cuts to a long shot of the Arabs entering the city and moving inexorably toward the seashore. In the background the strains of Maurice Jarré's theme music can be heard as the camera tracks left to right, surveying the scene. A burnt-out Ottoman gun emplacement can be seen on the right of the frame; on the left, the jubilant Arab forces are seen in the distance celebrating their victory. Despite their lack of military equipment, their superior fighting skills prove decisive. Lawrence emphasizes this point in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: "What we had taken here was a rich prize [...] [although] We had no supports, no regulars, no guns [...] no communications, no money even, for our gold was exhausted, and we were issuing our own notes, promises to pay 'when Akaba is taken,' for daily expenses" (Lawrence 306).

The justness of the Arab cause is further emphasized later on in the film, as Lean adopts Lawrence's view of the Ottomans in *Seven Pillars* as "so many godless transgressors of their creed and their human duty—traitors to the spirit of the time, and to the higher interests of Islam" (Lawrence 52). Once Lawrence has been captured at Deraa, he is put into a line-up inspected by the Turkish Bey (Jose Ferrer).[8] There follows a close-up of the Bey's shiny leather boots—a clear allusion to his sado-masochistic desires—before he rips open Lawrence's shirt and observes:

> Yes, you are a deserter [...] but from which army? Not that it matters at all. A man cannot be always in uniform.
>
> [*He removes his right glove and taking Lawrence's pectoral muscle between thumb and forefinger begins to kneed [sic] it*] (qtd. in Stollery 53)

The Bey admiringly kneads Lawrence's muscles between his fingers, remarking, "Your skin is very fair." Lean cuts to a close-up of the Bey's moist lips, followed by a close-up of Lawrence's frightened eyes. Lawrence strikes out in homophobic mania, which prompts the Bey to issue an order to strip him to the waist and beat him. The Ottoman soldiers respond by shouting something incomprehensible (neither in Turkish nor in Ottoman) and strapping Lawrence face downward on a wooden bench, taking care to ensure that his legs are well spread.[9] The punishment is not shown directly; but Lean conveys the emotion behind the scene through a series of reaction-shots of the soldiers grinning lasciviously, contrasted with Lawrence's agonized look as he sees the whip being raised to strike him. On the soundtrack the cough of the Bey can be heard; despite the fact that he was supposed to have left the room, it is clear

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that—in common with his troops—the punishment offers him sexual excitement.[10] This is underlined at the end of the scene by means of a quick cut to the half-open door, with the Bey peeping round it from the safety of the adjoining room. Lean contrasts Ottoman brutality with Arab humanity, as he subsequently cuts to a sequence where Ali (Omar Sharif) stands behind a column outside the prison listening to what is going on inside. The camera captures his horrified reaction in medium shot, and then zooms slowly toward him; in the background, the sound of drum-beats can be heard.

The orientalist identification of the Ottomans as predominantly homosexual originates with nineteenth-century travelers such as Sir Richard Burton, who observed in Section D of his "Terminal Essay" to the translation of the *Arabian Nights* (1885) that the whole of the so-called "Sotadic Zone" covering the whole of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia had been colonized by the "'unspeakable Turk,' a race of born pederasts." Evidently in the towns and cities of Anatolia "Le Vice [homosexuality] prevails more [...] than in the villages, yet even these are infected, while the nomad Turcomans contrast badly in this point with the Gypsies, those—Badawin of India" (Burton 15). This stereotype persists in travel accounts of Turkey written nearly a century later: in *Journey to Kars* (1984) Philip Glazebrook observes, "I've no idea how possible it was for a [nineteenth-century] traveler to have affairs with Eastern women, but it must always have been more dangerous to pick the rose from the encircling thorns—far more dangerous than to have homosexual relations" (Glazebrook 188).

Other western writers have represented the Ottoman Empire as synonymous with brutality: Eric Ambler's thriller *The Light of The Day* (1962) recounts how a sultan "had all his younger brothers killed off to prevent arguments about the succession" (Ambler 117), while Joan Fleming's *When I Grow Rich* (also 1962) has a Turkish character observing, "we Turks have made a habit throughout history of throwing everything which is of embarrassment either in to the Golden Horn or the Bosphorus." One character kicks his ex-lover "down the water steps and now she lay, a distance of not more than two feet from the bottom step, but a long way down; food for the Bosphorus" (Fleming 212). The traits of homosexuality and violence are combined in Ambler's novel as the hero recounts how a Turkish prison officer "took a rubber glove and a jar of petroleum jelly from the wall cabinet and searched my rectum" (Ambler 50). The fact that both works appeared in the same year that *Lawrence of Arabia* was released suggests that negative Ottoman/Turkish images still held sway in the popular imagination.

Giovanni Scognamillo's comprehensive survey *Bati Sinemasinda Türkiye ve Türkler* (*Turkey and the Turks in Western Cinema*) shows that such images appeared equally frequently on the big screen. The silent era produced works such as *The Captive* (De Mille, 1915), *Auction of Souls* (Apfel, 1919), and *Turkish Delight* (Sloane, 1920); two decades later a succession of talkies appeared including *Journey into Fear* (Foster, 1942), *Background to Danger* (Walsh, 1943), *Anything Can Happen* (Seaton, 1952), *Five Fingers* (directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz with a screenplay by Michael Wilson, 1953) and *Istanbul* (Pevney, 1956). All of these films represent Ottoman/Turkish territory as a site of intrigue, where the white male protagonist struggles against the enemy, who may be Turkish or non-Turkish. *Background to Danger* transposes the *Casablanca* (Curtiz, 1942) scenario to Istanbul, with Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre as Nazi collaborators and George Raft as their heroic adversary.[11] *Five Fingers* tells the story of Cicero, an Albanian valet employed by the British Ambassador to Ankara (James Mason), who passes on secrets to the Nazis, including the plan for "Operation Overlord"—the Allied plan for the invasion of Europe. *Lawrence of Arabia* continues this tradition by giving Jose Ferrer a memorable cameo as the Turkish Bey—a role that Ferrer himself relished. He recalled later, "If I had to be judged by only one performance, it would be my five minutes in *Lawrence*. They are my best work" (qtd. in Morris and Raskin 107).

Whereas the Arabs' behavior in *Lawrence of Arabia* might seem equally cruel and unreasonable to western filmgoers, Lean seeks to justify it in terms of local traditions of male honor and leadership. This is clearly evident, for instance, in the following exchange between Ali and Auda (Anthony Quinn):

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ALI. (*stiffening slightly at the insult*). Does Auda take me for one of his bastards?

AUDA. (*regarding his adversary with a sardonic smile*). No, there is no resemblance. (*He turns*). Alas, you resemble your father. I knew your father well.

ALI. (*steadily fixing the challenger with a grim and determined look*). Did you know your own?

(*AUDA swings round as if to rush his opponent. LAWRENCE, dressed in his brilliantly white robes, immediately intervenes.*)

LAWRENCE. Auda! We are fifty; you are two. How if we shot you down?

AUDA. Why then you have a blood feud with the Howeitat. Do you desire it? (qtd. in Caton 190)

Bearing in mind that the ritual of challenge and counter-challenge is characteristic of tribal societies of the Middle East, we are invited to judge Ali's and Auda's characters "in terms of the cultural system" they represent (Caton 190).

It would seem that Lütfi Akad's *Ingiliz Kemal* simply reverses this opposition; the Arabs are portrayed as violent, while the Turks participate in a legitimate struggle for freedom. In one scene two Arabs appear in the background while Lawrence (Muzaffer Tema) receives a letter ordering him to leave Arabia as soon as possible for Constantinople. They sit with their backs to the camera clothed in robes; as soon as a messenger enters, they exit carrying guns in their left hands. The implication is clear—they are a war-like people who prefer guns rather than words to express their point of view. The film's pro-Turkish stance is emphasized at the outset through a montage of contemporary newsreels depicting the major figures of the First World War—George V, Kaiser Wilhelm, Lloyd George. A voice-over informs us that during this period the majority of the Turkish people were so tyrannized by the Ottoman government that they were provoked into fighting for their independence. The sequence ends with a shot of their leader Mustafa Kemal (later known as Kemal Atatürk), who is described on the soundtrack as "the supreme believer in the nation."[12]

However, the real enemy in Akad's film is neither the Arabs nor the Ottomans but the Allies—specifically the British. The historian Geoffrey Lewis observes that many Turks in the post-1918 period:

> [...] had been ready to face with equanimity the loss of the Arab provinces. A favorite theme of Turkish novelists has been the sorrows of Anatolia, with the flower of its young manhood sent to die in the service of an empire from whose survival they had nothing to gain, wasting the best years of their lives amidst Arabs whose theoretical reverence for the Caliph of Islam did not inspire them with love for his tax-collectors and garrisons. (Lewis 64)

By contrast the potential threat posed by the Allies to the country's independence engendered a "Turkish nationalist spirit [amongst the people], distinct from Pan-Turkism. [...] In every part of Turkey patriotic societies sprang up. [...] despised by their former subjects, betrayed by their [Ottoman] leaders, the Turks had suddenly begun to find themselves" (65).

The principal representative of Allied colonial interests in *Ingiliz Kemal* is undoubtedly Lawrence himself. As portrayed by Muzaffer Tema, he is a black-haired, smooth-talking villain with an unshakeable conviction (expressed at the end of the film) that he remains "the uncrowned emperor of Anatolia and the best spy of the Empire!" (Plate 2). Akad and his screenwriter Osman F. Seden invent a fictitious scenario in which Lawrence comes to Constantinople to consolidate British interests after the Paris Conference of 1919 and frustrate French plans to appropriate more Turkish territory for themselves.[13] He disguises himself as Major Ward, the commander of the British garrison, who takes pleasure in seeing other people suffer. When condemning Ahmet Esat's friend Resit to death, he slaps his drill-stick on his

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thigh and smiles before issuing his judgment in a matter-of-fact tone. In another scene he recounts how he shot a soldier in cold blood; when asked by Ahmet Esat whether he has any respect for death, Lawrence replies that he cares so little for it that he will have no qualms about executing the Turkish prisoners the next day.

Unlike *Lawrence of Arabia*, where Lean suggests that Lawrence's cruelty only emerges as a spontaneous reaction to the Tafas massacre, Akad characterizes him as a cold, calculating sadist who will stop at nothing in his quest to dominate the Turks and at the same time line his own pocket. If that means employing two Arabs as bodyguards (both of whom have willingly subjugated themselves to his authority), then so be it. In a novelization of *Ingiliz Kemal* based on Osman F. Seden's screenplay, which appeared in 1958 as a first-person narrative written from Ahmet Esat's point of view, Lawrence forms a close-knit band of (mostly Arab) acquaintances to spy on the Turks and outwit the French. He accepts bribes from everyone—from the Arabs, from British officers, and from dispossessed Ottomans eager to recover their financial position (Fehim 99-100).

By contrast Ahmet Esat Tomruk (Ayhan Isik) sacrifices everything for his nation. At the end of the film he embraces his girlfriend Leman (Gülistan Güzey) who has ably assisted him in outwitting Lawrence; but subsequently announces that he must continue serving his country until the War of Independence has ended. Akad intercuts close-ups of Ahmet Esat and Leman, as together they repeat the phrase "after the war has ended."

The real Ahmet Esat Tomruk (1892-1966) was educated in Istanbul, and subsequently spent some considerable time in England being educated at the Royal Naval College, where he became a boxing champion. In 1914 he returned to Turkey, and spent much of the First World War on active service. By 1918 he had become a spy, making full use of his language skills to infiltrate the Allied garrisons and pass on secrets back to the Turks. During that period he acquired the soubriquet "Ingiliz Kemal." There is no record of him actually encountering Lawrence, but there is little doubt that from the Turkish point of view he was perceived as morally superior, on the grounds that he put the interests of his country above personal gain (Türkmen 1-10). Akad repeatedly emphasizes this point throughout *Ingiliz Kemal*. In one long sequence Ahmet Esat challenges—and defeats—a much bigger (and far stronger) opponent in the boxing ring. However, the chief focus of interest centers not on the fight itself—which intercuts close-ups of the actors with unconvincing stock footage—but on the spectators' reactions to it. Lawrence (disguised as Major Ward) and his junior officer view the action with studied indifference. Two American sailors watch intently—one chewing gum, the other (an African American) staring open-mouthed in admiration. Only the Turks seem really involved in the action, shaking their fists and cheering every punch Ahmet Esat lands on his opponent. For them this is not just a sporting contest, but a struggle to preserve the integrity of the nation. On another occasion Ahmet Esat (while ostensibly employed by the British) plans a daring raid to save his compatriot Resit (Turhan Göker) from execution. Akad cuts to a shot of an imam removing a gun from under his robes, followed by a sequence of brief close-ups of a British soldier, the imam, Resit, and the imam once again. Suddenly another British soldier emerges from the firing squad and begins to shoot his own men; only after a few moments do we realize that it is Ahmet Esat in disguise. He holds the rest of the British forces at gunpoint while the prisoners walk out of the compound into the Istanbul streets. In cinematic terms, the entire scene recalls Harold Young's *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934); but whereas Sir Percy Blakeney (Leslie Howard) enjoys the thrill of outwitting his rival Chauvelin (Raymond Massey), Ahmet Esat considers it his duty as a Turk to liberate his people from would-be colonizers.

Ingiliz Kemal seeks to reinforce this nationalist spirit through a series of dramatic set pieces that contribute little to the plot but celebrate different aspects of Turkish popular culture. One of these takes place in a *meyhane*, or tavern, where long shots of the waiters bringing food to the customers are intercut with close-ups of a belly dancer gyrating in front of the customers to the sound of alaturka music. The sequence ends with a long medium shot (using a static camera) of the dancer's routine that culminates with her throwing herself to the ground in an erotic pose. Another scene depicts the Turks as doughty fighters, as they throw a party of British soldiers out of the *meyhane*. Akad intercuts lengthy shots of the brawl with close-ups

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of individual Turks exclaiming "this is a Turkish fist for you!" Such sequences provided the inspiration for the film's publicity: one article quoted Seden as saying that *Ingiliz Kemal* would appeal to everyone—not only lovers of adventures, spy thrillers, love stories, and crime dramas, but those who liked to see Turks fighting and winning ("Kemal Film ..." 10).

The audience's support for the Turkish cause is greatly increased by the casting of Ayhan Isik as Ahmet Esat. After having won a search for a star contest organized by the fanzine Yildiz (*Star*), he made his debut in 1951. Within a year he was well on the way to becoming Turkey's first major box-office superstar, with his dashing figure and pencil mustache directly modeled on Clark Gable.

On the other hand, it might be claimed that, in spite of its anti-colonial stance, *Ingiliz Kemal* has been colonized by Hollywood conventions—not only in its casting, but in its construction that largely derives from the western. In the *meyhane* scene for instance, the patrons express their appreciation for the belly-dancer's routine by firing their pistols into the air. The fight scenes incorporate familiar moments such as a bottle being smashed over one man's head, while the bartender cowers behind the bar, clutching the cash box to his chest. Once Ahmet Esat has taken his leave of his girlfriend Leman at the end of the film, he climbs on his horse and rides off into the desert as the credits roll. However, it is important to remember that, unlike Hollywood, the Turkish film industry was still in its infancy in the early '50s. Although filmmakers had been operating since the end of the First World War (most of them with a theatrical background), no one had either the resources or the talent available to produce work on a regular basis. However, in the post-1945 period the climate changed; the economy expanded rapidly, while the government introduced a tax of 25 percent on all cinema ticket sales, in an attempt to generate money for new films (Shaw and Shaw 400-13). The benefits of this policy were rapidly felt; film production increased annually between 1950 and 1958, and new production companies came into being. Directors now had the freedom—and the financial resources—to discover a new cinematic language of their own dealing with topics of specific interest to Turkish filmgoers. In 1951, for instance, thirteen historical films were made, eight of which were concerned with the War of Independence. A year later *Ingiliz Kemal* appeared, together with films such as *Kanun Namina* (*In The Name Of The Law*)—set in an Anatolian village and also directed by Lütfi Akad—and *Aşik Veysel'in Hayati* (*The Life-Story of Aşik Veysel*) about a local bard.[14] With this in mind, I would argue that, while Seden's screenplay for *Ingiliz Kemal* certainly draws on Hollywood conventions, it simultaneously celebrates the achievements of the nation in the past (through the exploits of its central character) and in the present (i.e., the early '50s) as the local film industry begins to produce new, original, and challenging work that seeks to challenge the dominance of American films in the Turkish cinema.

The subject of T. E. Lawrence and his contribution to the Arab Revolt has clearly proven fruitful for filmmakers. In the mid-1930s Alexander Korda commissioned a screenplay based on *Revolt in the Desert*, the abridged popular version of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* that first appeared in 1924. The first draft was written by the actor Miles Malleson and subsequently revised by the director Brian Desmond Hurst and the writer Duncan Guthrie; but the film was never made, on account of the fact that the Foreign Office was concerned about the possibility of offending the Turks, who at the time were one of Britain's allies. Such fears were justified: having read one draft of the script in October 1937, Mr. Ors, counselor at the Turkish Embassy in London, protested to the Foreign Office that the script showed the Turks "as tyrants and oppressors of Arabs, and he felt it was most undesirably that a film which cast such aspersions on Turkish history and national character should be exhibited" (qtd. in Kelly et. al 8). A glance at the script proves the truth of this assertion: while Lawrence is portrayed as the dashing hero, whose experiences in Arabia cure him of "crude ambition" but leave him "with a craving for good repute among men" (Kelly et. al 129), his Turkish adversaries are sadistic brutes. One scene has their leader Jemal Pasha hanging three Arab soldiers in front of King Feisal, remarking as he does so that to achieve victory over the British, "we must have the loyal support of your people." As Feisal exits, Jemal turns to his fellow Turkish officer

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and observes, "the only way to get *obedience* from an Arab is to treat him like the slave and dog he is" (Kelly et. al 38-39).

Robert Bolt's script for *Lawrence of Arabia* views Lawrence more critically, depicting him as a flawed hero, a megalomaniac and a sadist. This is perhaps typical for its time (the early '60s), when Lawrence's character was subject to revaluation in a series of biographies (including Nutting's *Lawrence of Arabia: The Man and the Motive*), and Britain's contribution to the Arab Revolt was subject to a similar process of scrutiny. As Steven C. Caton argues, both Bolt and Lean characterize the British army as self-interested—witness Feisal's (Alec Guinness's) observation that "protecting the Suez Canal [during the Revolt] [....] is an essential British interest. It is of little consequence to us [the Arabs]" (qtd. in Caton 176-77). While *Lawrence of Arabia* tries to understand the Arab state of mind (particularly its preoccupation with male honor and blood feuds) it simultaneously orientalizes the Ottomans, who are treated as violent, destructive, and perverted. When the film was released in Britain in 1962, the Turkish government issued an official protest against the depiction of their soldiers (Caton 61); it was subsequently banned in Turkey.

Ingiliz Kemal sums up Turkish attitudes of the immediate post-1945 period toward the Arab Revolt and its aftermath, with its depiction of the British as rapacious colonialists, epitomized by Lawrence, and its simultaneous suggestion that the Arabs have already become their subjects. This provides the pretext for Ahmet Esat adventures as depicted in the film, as he strives to save the Turkish people from a similar fate. In truth, the Turkish army was not interested in the fate of the Arabs—even when they had been sent there by their Ottoman masters. By the end of World War I, it was far more interested in overturning the vindictive settlements that had been imposed on them by the Allies (Shaw and Shaw 340). However, Seden's rewriting of history is deliberately designed to celebrate the Turkish nation that was born out of the ashes of the old Ottoman Empire, despite the best efforts of the Allies to prevent them. Until the founding of the Republic in 1923 "the Turk" had been scorned by Ottomans and foreigners alike (Shaw and Shaw 375); *Ingiliz Kemal* tries to redress the balance by celebrating the achievements of one of its heroes.

Since *Ingiliz Kemal* and *Lawrence of Arabia* appeared, there has been a gradual revision of attitudes toward the films and their representations of the Arab Revolt. The restored version of *Lawrence of Arabia* was shown in Turkish cinemas in 1991 (two years after its US premiere); it is now freely available on DVD in local retailers. *Ingiliz Kemal* is regularly shown on Turkish television on national holidays; its chief focus of interest for many cineastes now lies in the fact that it contains one of Ayhan Isik's early performances (in a career lasting over a quarter of a century he became as big a star in the Turkish cinema as Clark Gable was in Hollywood). So far as I know the film remains unseen outside Turkey, although there are plans to include it in a forthcoming exhibition at London's Imperial War Museum. In Europe and the United States postcolonial critics of *Lawrence of Arabia* have condemned the film for its unspoken association of the westerner with "productive, creative pioneering" compared to the Arab or the Turk, who are associated with "underdevelopment" (Shohat and Stam 148). Meanwhile several filmmakers have recognized Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's achievements in World War I—as, for example, in Carl Byker and Lyn Goldfarb's miniseries *The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* (1996)—where Atatürk was voiced by René Auberjonois. Perhaps in the future there will be another cinematic retelling of the events of 1916 and its aftermath which may take these changes into account.

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Notes

[1] These names have been spelled in different ways—Hejaz can also be known as Hedjaz or Hijaz; Hussein as Hüseyin (in Ottoman/Turkish writings) and Feisal as Faysal (again in Ottoman/Turkish texts). For convenience I have used the common English versions.

[2] It is important to draw a distinction, for historical purposes, between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, which came into being in 1923, particularly when applied to films such as *Ingiliz Kemal*. For this reason, I shall refer to the Turkish forces in Arabia as "Ottomans" rather than "Turks."

[3] The screenplay was originally credited to Bolt alone, as Wilson was in exile from America, owing to his refusal to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee. It was not until 1995 that he was given joint credit. For an analysis of the contributions made to the film by Wilson and Bolt, see Caton 100-29.

[4] In a letter to Bolt dated 27 Nov. 1962, another one of Lawrence's close friends, Captain Basil Liddell Hart, argued that this passage did not imply that Lawrence had been involved in the killing; on the contrary, it was the Arabs alone who indulged in "a one-day orgy of killing. [...] The Arabs were completely out of hand" (qtd. in Morris and Raskin 151). Bolt rejected this interpretation. Two days later Professor A. W. Lawrence told Liddell Hart that Bolt's script was "a brilliant misrepresentation of events and personalities" (153).

[5] This shot first appeared in the restored version of *Lawrence of Arabia*, which received its premiere in Feb. 1989.

[6] This shot likewise only appeared in the restored version of the film.

[7] Nutting had in fact been hired as an adviser in Mar. 1960, a year before his book was published. Thus it comes as no surprise to see that his book and the film should be similar in interpretation.

[8] Significantly the Turkish Bey is not given a name—"Bey" in Turkish simply means "Mr." It seems clear that Lean intends to dehumanize him as much as possible.

[9] In the Turkish dubbed version of *Lawrence of Arabia*, the soldiers are given the chance to speak coherently as they give their orders in Turkish.

[10] Omar Sharif recalled Lean's suggestion that Ferrer "do a sort of sexual cough" which, according to one reviewer "voluptuously punctuates one of the most daring homosexual scenes of indecent assault ever to be filmed decently" (qtd. in Morris and Raskin 107).

[11] Raft was originally asked to play the role of Rick in *Casablanca* but turned it down. Warners offered *Background to Danger* as a consolation prize.

[12] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Turkish dialogue in *Ingiliz Kemal* are my own.

[13] Lawrence recalls in *Seven Pillars* that before the outbreak of the First World War he spent "many years going up and down the Semitic East [...] learning the manners of the villagers and tribesmen and conditions of Syria and Mesopotamia." Although he claims to know the Anatolian character, he does not appear to base his judgments on any experience of visiting Turkey (Lawrence 55).

[14] A useful guide to the history of Turkish films at this time can be found in Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk Sinema Tarihi Birinci Cilt (1896-1959)* (*The History of Turkish Cinema* I), Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 1987. A brief summary in English can be found on the website: http://ww2.mezunusa.com/turkey/1_4_6_1.cfm.

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