



# The Sultan and the Queen: The Untold Story of Elizabeth and Islam

*Jerry Brotton*

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The gripping story of Queen Elizabeth's bold alliance with the Ottoman sultan by *The New York Times* bestselling author of *A History of the World in Twelve Maps*

**Published in the UK as *This Orient Isle***

When Queen Elizabeth was excommunicated by the pope in 1570, she found herself in an awkward predicament. England had always depended on trade. Now its key markets would be closed to her Protestant merchants. To complicate matters the staunchly Catholic king of Spain was determined to destroy her, bolstered by the gold pouring in from the New World.

In a bold decision with far-reaching consequences, Elizabeth set her sights on the East. She sent an emissary to the shah of Iran (by way of Ivan the Terrible in Moscow), wooed the king of Morocco, trading gunpowder for sugar, and entered into an unprecedented alliance with the powerful Ottoman Sultan Murad III.

This marked the beginning of an extraordinary alignment with Muslim powers and of economic and political exchanges with the Islamic world of a depth not again experienced until the modern age. By the late 1580s, thousands of Elizabethan merchants, diplomats, sailors, and privateers were plying their trade from Morocco to Persia. To finance these expeditions, English merchants created the first ever joint stock company, a model they turned to again for the colonization of America.

Londoners were gripped with a passion for the Orient. Elizabeth became hooked on sugar and new words, like *candy*, *turquoise*, and *tulip*, entered the English language. A revolution in theater ensued: Marlowe offered up *Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare wrote *Othello* six months after the first Moroccan ambassador electrified London with his visit. In this groundbreaking book Jerry Brotton reveals that Elizabethan England's relationship with the Muslim world was far more amicable—and far more extensive—than we have ever appreciated as he tells the riveting story of the businessmen and adventurers who first went east to make their fortunes.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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