Richard Knolles’ *Generall Historie*, while relying on eastern histories and acknowledging the Turks’ accomplishments, remained deeply critical of what he understood to be the Ottoman political and social system. Early seventeenth-century English travelers, such as Fynes Moryson and George Sandys, likewise revealed a deep ambivalence about the east, spending time and treasure to visit Ottoman lands but also alleging that the empire was declining from the virtues (and vices) which westerners had attributed to it. As travel to the east became more common for English people and as English scholars learned Turkish and Arabic, it was only a matter of time until readers might hold in their hands a direct translation of a Turkish historical text. As an epilogue to this study, I will glance briefly at the first such work to be published in London, William Seaman’s *The Reign of Sultan Orchan* (London, 1652). In this extract from the Sadeddin’s *Tac üt Tevarih*, Seaman’s translation and apparatus use both dialogue and commentary to enhance the image of the Ottoman Sultanate.

A graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, Seaman was appointed to a rectorship in 1628 but went to Turkey shortly thereafter with the English ambassador, Sir Peter Wyche. In addition to translating Sadeddin, he published a Turkish grammar (*Grammaticae linguae Turcicae*, 1670) and worked many years on a Turkish-Latin dictionary that was unfinished at his death. Thomas Vaughan later found fault with Seaman’s grammatical treatise, but he acknowledged that his own work followed Seaman’s in “its form, and well-nigh all the substance, too.” Competent in Arabic as well as Turkish, Seaman
translated the index of a codex on Islam. At the instigation of Samuel Hartlib, Robert Boyle, and others he undertook the translation of John Ball’s Protestant catechism (published 1660) and of the New Testament (1666) to facilitate the conversion of Muslims expected by his millenarian patrons. The DNB asserts that Seaman, too, was “profoundly committed” to evangelizing the Levant. However, if he wanted the Protestant scriptures to speak to the Turks in their own tongue, he also enabled Sadeddin to speak to the English in theirs. For him, dialogue with the Turks was a two-way exchange.

In *The Reign of Sultan Orchan*, Seaman worked from the Turkish and refers to Sadeddin by his Turkish title, “Hojah Effendi.”² In his dedication to Lady Jane Merick (Sir Peter’s widow), he laments his own limitations and praises the elegance of Sadeddin:

> The gift [of this book] is not only small, but that which also taketh from the worth of it is that from the distance between the languages, the inimitable elegancy of the author, and the rudeness of an unpolished pen, it could not but be much unclothed of its native ornaments. (sig. *3r)

Although he distinguishes his source (presumably the five-volume *Tācīt Tēvarīh*) from the brief annals that he claims Knolles used, a comparison of his translation with Knolles’ *Life of Orchanes*, which is explicitly based on the *Annales*,³ suggests that they derive from the same source for incidents common to both.⁴ However, whereas Knolles often cited the Turks against themselves and de Mézeray’s 1662 translation of Lewenklaw departs from the objectivity of the Latin text, Seaman makes no attempt to use Sadeddin’s history to criticize the Turks. On the contrary, he transmits without apology or reservation its portrait of a hero-king: “The imperially-minded and victorious Sultan Orchan, whose ultimate intentions in his enlargement of dominions and exaltation of his throne and dignity was the propagation of religion and the faith and the establishment of good laws for his subjects” (45).

Seaman takes Knolles to task for having claimed that the Turkish histories are “short rude notes,” asserting that the problem lay in Knolles’ knowledge of the Turkish sources, not in the sources themselves:

> [T]he true reason rather was that there had not been then made that diligent inquisition, either into the elegancy of their language or literature, . . . [F]or upon inquiry it will be found that they have not only their short *Annales de rebus gestis* but likewise ample histories of their princes . . . written at large by learned men. (sig. *[4v]–A1r)