



# **Knights in Arms: Prose Romance, Masculinity, and Eastern Mediterranean Trade in Early Modern England, 1565-1655**

*Goran Stanivukovic*

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Drawing from medieval chivalric culture, the prose romance was a popular early modern genre featuring stories of courtship, combat, and travel. Flourishing at the same moment as the growing English trade with the Eastern Mediterranean, prose romances adopted both Eastern settings and new conceptions of masculinity – commercial rather than chivalric, erotic rather than militant.

*Knights in Arms* moves beyond the best-known examples of the genre, such as Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, to consider the broad range of texts which featured the Eastern Mediterranean in this era. Goran Stanivukovic highlights how eroticism within prose romances, particularly homoerotic desire, facilitated commercial, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural interactions, shaping European knowledge and conceptions of the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire. Through his careful examination of these lesser known works, Stanivukovic sheds important light on early modern trade, Mediterranean politics, and the changing meaning of masculinity in an age of commercial expansion.

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