From Rhetoric to Memory:

Islam, Ottomans, and Austrian Historians in the Renaissance

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Analyzing Austrian accounts from before the fall of Constantinople through the failed siege of Vienna in 1529 as contributions to historical memory, the essay not only registers the images of the Islamic opponents, in particular the Ottoman Turks, but also considers the type of experience behind these accounts. In a number of cases interpretations and appeals to mobilization against the Turks relied on second hand information, received rhetoric about the Turks, and religious questioning of God's hand in the events, yet in some texts this rhetoric goes together with closer experience of Ottoman raids in Austrian lands and in the 1529 siege.

Historians today generally agree that Habsburg rulers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, together with the Church of Rome, developed a template of negative Muslim stereotypes that informed European notions of Islam for centuries to come. Individual popes had been working on the project since the early Middle Ages. Impeccably Catholic though almost all of them were, the Habsburgs came far later to the task. As German kings and even crowned Holy Roman Emperors, the dynasty occasionally tried to rally Christendom against the expansion of Muslim rule into Europe. The most notable example was King Albrecht II who died in 1439 on the way to a campaign against the Ottoman Turks. It was, however, only in the reigns of Emperors Frederick III (1415–1493) and his son, Maximilian I (1459–1519) that defense against the sultan's forces became a centerpiece of Habsburg policy. In 1467–1468 Frederick founded the Order of St. George to spearhead a crusade to the east and southeast; his son and heir wholeheartedly endorsed the mission, even had himself or his surrogates portrayed in the knightly and religious paraphernalia conventionally associated with the saint. Neither man, however, could put together a major offensive. The dynasty was perpetually underfunded; Germany's territorial rulers balked at subsidizing what they saw as the territorial interests of the house of Austria; and the general public in the Habsburg lands was notably reluctant to sacrifice its treasure, lives, or both, in defense of Christendom. Not enough men joined the Order of St. George

to mount the great crusade against the Turks that father and son repeatedly promised.[1]

The tepid reaction to calls to arms against the Muslim Ottoman in 15th century Germany generally and the Habsburg Austrian lands particularly, contrasts sharply with the lasting effectiveness of the pro-Christian and anti-Muslim propaganda emitted from Vienna after 1500. In fact, Austrian commentators and scholars in the Renaissance had far more diverse opinions about Turks and their religion than the repetitious vehemence of later counterparts. Some were surprisingly moderate. How did this shift in thought, tone, and popular willingness to counter the forces of Islam come about? The spread of printing technologies in 16th and 17th centuries certainly helped by making written accounts and illustrations of the Turk-as-brutal enemy more widely accessible to both the literate and illiterate. Continued exposure to horrific visuals of Muslims slaughtering innocent European Christians would have discouraged all but the most tolerant of humankind from seeing something positive in Ottoman rule and the faith it espoused.[2] But media contrivance alone does not explain fully the learning curve traversed by Austrians as they created, publicized, and internalized views of Turks and Muslims that lingered in central Europe long after the Ottoman Empire had ceased to threaten the region militarily.

Gaining access to minds whose thoughts went undocumented, is a tricky undertaking. For this reason, this essay explores the commentaries on Islam and Muslims in the written texts of five fifteenth century Austrian historians or chroniclers, one of them anonymous. The others are Nicholas Lackmann of Falkenstein, who was close to the court of Frederick III; Abbot Martin of the *Schottenkloster*, a Benedictine foundation in Vienna; Thomas Ebendorfer; and Jakob Unrest along with Wolfgang Lazius, a scholar patronized by the sixteenth-century Emperor Ferdinand I. All Christian Habsburg subjects, they were contemporary to various phases of the Ottoman military surge into Europe in the early modern era. As historians, they also shared a purpose – constructing memories of events, among which were many that were inspired by Muslim behavior, as they experienced and/or reflected on it. That these men produced written records of what they thought, heard and saw set them apart from the spottily educated society in which they lived. Their formal learning, however, did not wholly divorce them from their socio-cultural environment. Historians though they were, they arguably represent a small but meaningful subset of participants in the various stages through which

[1] Wiesflecker-Friedhuber 1997, 88–89.

[2] Roper 2010, 355. The most comprehensive account of imaging of the Turk in early modern Austria is the dissertation of Maximilian Grothaus (1986).

Austrians developed a collective memory of their encounters with Muslim-organized armies and the faith for which they allegedly fought.[3]

"Saracens": Nicholas Lackmann's account of his journey to the Iberian Peninsula

Imagery and tone of language greatly intensify memory, even more so when unpleasant associations come with it.[4] From this perspective, Nicholas Lackmann tells us more about the relative calm with which at least one Austrian approached the Turks and the Ottoman threat than the onset of negative imaging. Indeed, his rhetoric was free of the open hostility toward Islam and its followers found among almost all of his other colleagues. Unlike them, he refrained from the epithet "unbeliever" when discussing Muslims, or as he called them "Saracens." Sent with a clergyman in 1451 to Portugal to formalize the betrothal of the Portuguese princess Eleanore to Frederick III, Lackmann chronicled the journey and the Muslims he encountered along the way with anthropological detachment. For him, the "Saracens" on the Iberian Peninsula were a demographic and behavioral fact. Nor, at least for him, were they abnormally dangerous. The leg of his trip that took him to Lisbon crossed parts of Spain, where he and his companion often encountered Muslim communities without incident. Arriving in Aragon, the two Austrians passed safely through areas with several "Saracen" country estates and guest houses. In Saragoza, the capital of the region, the public facilities impressed Lackmann as did the harmonious relations of the religious communities he found there. Local Muslims had three Saracen "churches" to meet their devotional needs. All three of the Abrahamic "sects" carried out their liturgical formalities according to their respective beliefs. Each had their chosen day of worship: the Saracens on Friday, Jews on Saturday, and Christians on Sunday.[5]

In Lisbon for the betrothal and its festivities, Lackmann again noted reportorially that several faiths took part in public rituals and events. A deputation of "Saracens" joined with the Christian nobility, high clergy, and the military, in a ceremony before the king, Alfonso V. All three religious communities held open air celebrations of the coming marriage. On 17 October, Christians gathered near dawn in one part of Lisbon, Muslims in another, with woodsmen (*hominess sylvestres*) and Jews also in places they chose. Once gathered together, they sang, danced, and shouted in whatever language they pleased.[6]

[3] Wertsch 2009, 120–121; Boyer 2009, 5.
[4] Boyer 2009, 5.
[5] Lackmann von Falkenstein 1503, cols. 573–574, 589; Unrest 1957, 72.
[6] Lackmann 1503, cols. 576, 581.

Lackmann's awareness of Islam and its character on the Iberian Peninsula did not leave him much better informed about the faith and some of its doctrinal features than more learned Austrian historians. Both he and Thomas Ebendorfer described Muslims as worshiping Muhammad himself: for Lackmann the prophet was the deity, for Ebendorfer a kind of Christ figure. The current Muslim ruler in Granada was to Lackmann a "pagan". Just what form of belief conferred that status on the official, Lackmann did not make clear. Perhaps he had exhausted his knowledge of comparative religion, perhaps he associated Granada, which had close but murky links to North African dynasties, with troubles he encountered on his return trip. Sailing through the Mediterranean to Italy, he worried mightily about "barbarians" and "pagans" who might attack his party on the high seas. Nevertheless, he did feel safe when his party stopped in Ceuta, where he once more commented on a large Saracen presence.[7]

Lackmann himself had a strong sense of Christian identity. At least when traveling, he used his faith as a protective cover. Blown off course in the Mediterranean on that return trip, his party was hailed by allies of the king of France. Asked to identify themselves, the spokesman for the group replied that they were Christians. Thus, when Lackmann wrote about Islamic communities co-existing with substantial Christian populations – he noted wherever he traveled on the size of Christian religious edifices – he may have believed that his co-religionists would come to his aid should Muslims threaten him. But the dramatic change of Christian-Islamic relations soon after his return to Austria from the west, apparently did not affect his normally dispassionate views about the Muslims whom he encountered on the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Ending his chronicle with the death of Empress Eleanore in 1467, Lackmann almost certainly knew about Mehmet II's triumph over Byzantine Constantinople in 1453. If the widely acknowledged Christian disaster had made him more hostile to Muslims, he left such feelings out of his manuscript.[8]

Jerusalem, Constantinople, and the Turkish threat: Thomas Ebendorfer's *Historia Jerusalemitana* and his *Cronichon austriae*, Abbot Martin's *Dialogus Historicus* and the anonymous *Short Chronicle of Melk*

Thomas Ebendorfer, however, direct contemporary with Lackmann though he was, took a far more sensationalist, and what would become more conventional, tack when recounting the behavior of the Muslims. His *Historia Jerusalemitana* lamented at length the fall of eastern Christendom's capital

[7] Lackmann 1503, cols. 588–589; Ebendorfer 2006, 70. On the political turmoil in mid-fifteenth century Granada see Molina López 2000, 244, and Harvey 1990, 243–260.

[8] Lackmann 1503, cols. 589, 593, 605.

in the 11th century. Drawing heavily on Robert of Reims' 12th century history of the same subject, he wrote as a Christian virtually at war with Islam in a Middle East once invaded by an earlier Turkic people, the Seljuks. His mission was to alert the members of his faith to the perils that a determined confessional enemy had in store for them. Unlike Lackmann, he availed himself of a negative vocabulary and behavioral images of Turks/Muslims that would become cultural commonplaces among the Habsburg peoples in the sixteenth century. The Muslims whom Ebendorfer described embodied verbal and physical aggression, brutality, and volcanic outbursts of rage. Arriving in the Holy Land at the end of the 11th century on the First Crusade, the European Franks present their case to Corban, Atabeg of Mosul. No model of tact, at least in Ebendorfer's telling, the Christian spokesman accuses the "Turks" of invading Christian lands out of boundless greed (*inmoderata cupiditate*). The "Franks" then explain their purpose – the restoration of the Holy Places and Jerusalem to Christendom. If they had to, they were willing to negotiate the issue in which they believe they have a legitimate claim. When they also threaten to go to war unless the Turks cease further military action, Corban erupts in a fury. The discussion ends with both sides defending their faiths, making it abundantly clear that religious territorialism would be a daunting obstacle to negotiated settlements.[9]

Ebendorfer's *Cronichon austriae* also introduces readers to Mehmet II as the sultan "of impious name, the persecutor of Christians, the most ferocious tyrant of the Turks, puffed up by his conquest of Constantinople." Bent on domination over the "empire of the west" (*occidentis imperium*), he intends to wipe Christendom from the face of the earth, helped along by Tatars, Saracens, and *Teuchorum*, possibly a reference to people from Illyrian regions or even Turks themselves. Indeed, for Ebendorfer war against Christianity was an Ottoman behavioral norm. "As it was their custom (*suo more*)" he says about an alleged Ottoman raid into Hungary in 1460, the Muslim enemy stood aside as thieves took off numbers of Christian sacral artifacts.[10]

The actions of Ottoman forces and Muslims are only part of a multi-faceted story that Ebendorfer was writing primarily for student audiences. But other historical handbooks could be discussed as coolly as Lackmann. The *Dialogus Historicus* of Abbot Martin of the Vienna *Schottenkloster*, also done around the middle of the 15th century, covered Mehmet's historic victory in 1453 too. The conceit of the piece is a familiar pedagogical tactic of the time: a wide-ranging dialogue between a young man, Juvenis, and an elder mentor, Senex. Ottoman behavior was among the topics. At one point in their

[9] Ebendorfer 2006, 47; Sutter Fichtner 2008, 38–40.
[10] Ebendorfer 1725, cols. 878–879, 918– 920; Bisaha 2004, 56, 96.

exchange, Juvenis asks Senex to mention events that took place during the reign of Frederick in 1440's and 1450's. "*Proch dolor*", the elder man replies, the Turks captured and occupied Constantinople in 1453.

Nevertheless, Juvenis' reply to the event – "and all of Greece was troubled and wasted" – was that of the dutiful interlocutor and not the imminently endangered European imagined by Ebendorfer.[11] In fact, other historians in the Austria of the time also skipped the heavy-handed sensationalism found in many fifteenth century western portrayals of Mehmet seizing Byzantium's capital. An anonymous *Short Chronicle of Melk* spoke of Constantinople's fall, but without any reference to grisly marauding by Mehmet's forces. The same narrative mentions the Ottoman capture of the ancient Ionian city of Miletus, but again with little sensationalism or Christian hand-wringing.[12]

Dry formulaic commentary on the Ottoman occupation of Constantinople may have been one manifestation of Austrian popular indifference to calls for joining or supporting crusades. It may also have reflected the minimal understanding that the terse Melk Anonymous, Abbott Martin, and even Ebendorfer had of the real, as opposed to the mental, topography of the city. None of them had personally observed Constantinople's complex demography, its customs, its economic organization, its government, or its built environment. Absent this material understanding of the Byzantine metropolis, they could only describe what went on there in 1453 through verbal clichés, too well-known for Juvenis to reiterate them one by one. The sole feature of one among the world's great urban settlements that all three historians had internalized was its status as a key Christian *lieu.* For this reason alone, Ottoman territorial ambition dismayed them.[13] But Mehmet was not the only culprit. They did not hesitate to criticize fellow Christians who had failed to defend their faith wherever the Turks threatened it. Melk Anonymous indignantly describes a conference called by Pope Pius II in 1459 to organize European defenses against the Turks that collapsed because so few Christian princes attended it. Christian corruption had led to the opening of the gates through the fortifications of Achaja in Morea, which the Ottomans had conquered by 1460 after a bloody struggle. Ebendorfer's impassioned description of efforts to retake the Holy Lands was not always reliable, drawn as it was from a source that had no first-hand contact with the events it recounts. He had no trouble, however, identifying the audience he was addressing. Christians collectively, from heretic Bohemian Hussites, to clergymen were more preoccupied with the intricacies of conciliarism than

[11] Martin (Abbot of the Cloister of the Irish Monks (*Schottenkloster*) 1725), cols. 659–660.

[12] *Anonymi mellicensis* 1725, cols. 461–467.

[13] Pomian 2008, 32–33.

the welfare of their faith, to the princes of Europe generally – all of whom he was summoning to service against a dangerous opponent of their common creed.[14]

Reinforcing the convictions of each of these men were unmistakable signs that God had revealed his will positively and negatively in Christian struggles against the forces of Islam. Indeed, some of these historians most fervent commentary turns on this point. Abbot Martin's Juvenis speculates that the fall of Constantinople may very well have been divine punishment for the schism between eastern and western Christianity. "Very subtle," says Senex, who then reminds his young interlocutor that God had already intervened to give Christians a miraculous victory over a much stronger Turkish force. In 1456, a small European contingent under John Hunyadi, a Hungarian commander, had repelled an Ottoman attack on Belgrade, a major redoubt on the Danube.[15] Melk Anonymous added an additional layer of piety to the same story, recounting the role in the conflict of a devout believer, John of Capistrano. "Neither a duke or a regular clergyman," but only a simple monk, he had stood before the Ottoman invaders bearing a cross that, through God's favor, drove the enemy back.[16] The tale would become one of Catholic Europe's most exemplary and long-lived accounts of Christian triumph over Islam.

Ebendorfer respected Hunyadi's contributions to the defense of Belgrade, but he too believed that God's beneficence was crucial. Such graciousness from the Almighty, however, did not absolve his co-religionists from their failure to assist their brethren in southeastern Europe. Where was the Roman Empire, which formerly tamed all barbarian nations? Where were those most exalted electors, those fearful princes? Where was the king of France, who wants to be called most Christian? Where were the kings of the English, the Danes, the Norwegians, the Swedes, the Poles, the Bohemians? Where were all the potentates of the Germans and the Scots? Without serious co-operation and forceful action from leaders, common people were unlikely to rally to the cause. The imperial Habsburgs came in for quite specific criticism. As emperor, said Ebendorfer, Frederick III was an under-performer, far more focused on accumulating titles than relieving some of his people's basic problems, such as unstable currency. Indeed, he concluded, the house of Austria generally had not distinguished itself in countering the Ottoman challenge.[17]

[14] *Anonymi mellicensis* 1725, cols. 464–465; Lhotsky 1957, 106–107.
[15] Martin 1725, cols. 659–660.
[16] *Anonymi mellicensis*, col. 463.
[17] Ebendorfer 1725, 879–880; Lhotsky, 1957, 51–52.

Ebendorfer clearly thought that substantial popular input would help save Christendom from the Turks. He was also convinced that solidarity among Christian rulers would go far to overcome the apathy of their subjects when called upon to defend their faith. In fact, regardless of the behavior of their rulers, the people of the Austrian lands had no serious reason to worry themselves unduly about the Ottoman threat to Christendom. At the time of Ebendorfer's death in 1464, Christianity in the Habsburg patrimony and its promise of salvation to believers there was not immediately threatened. The local religious apparatus of central Europe was intact, ready to prepare souls for their final reward or punishment: baptisms were carried out, masses were said, confessions were heard, and rites of death and burial were performed. In the construction of actionable collective memory, individuals must identify historical events with features of their own lives. What had happened in Constantinople, not to mention the Holy Places, was of little relevance to most residents of heavily rural Austria, with the exception of a handful of clerics and intellectuals.[18] The time lapse between Ottoman-Christian encounters in southeastern Europe and the Middle East and first reports of these events to distant audiences put immediate threat at even further remove.

Defense against the Turks: Jacob Unrest's *Österreichische Chronik*

None of the above is to say that Austrians responded casually to foreign invasion. This was especially true when the targets were local sites with acknowledged topological features that gave them firm historical and spacial identities.[19] Vienna had been directly challenged several times, even occupied by foreign forces. The capture in 1480 of the city by King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, ironically the son of John Hunyadi, brought forth a powerful lament from Jakob Unrest, a village pastor in southwestern Carinthia. "Vienna, the princely city, has endured for many years and through many wars of princes with honor and persistence." Unrest listed its distinctions. Its burghers had risen up against the rule of King Otakar of Bohemia in the 13th century, then pledged their loyalty to Rudolf I of Habsburg once he acknowledged their municipal freedoms. Vienna was the most populous of 62 cities on the Danube. Known for sheltering the house of Austria and their predecessors for centuries, it was also an intellectual and cultural center. The seven liberal arts were taught there to explain Christian scripture and strengthen the faith. Nobles and commoners alike had served it. Now, however Vienna had fallen in a "pathetic (*schnod*) war." Many years ago, there was a prophecy heeded by no one: "Woe to you Austria, you will be

[18] Boyer 2009, 5.
[19] Pomian 2008, 32.

torn apart and fall into an angry hand." Even earlier, a warning that Jerusalem would be destroyed had gone unheard. Yet, said Unrest, both forecasts had come to pass, all expectations to the contrary notwithstanding.[20]

Unrest called himself the "lowliest pastor in Carinthia."[21] A touch of humility always befit a clergyman, but his sketchy biographical data supports his description. Probably born in Bavaria, he appears to have died around 1500. In 1466, he took up a pastorate in St. Martin by Techelsberg about 20 kilometers north of the *Wörthersee.* He was a deeply committed Christian; his brand of faith had more enemies than Islam. He deplored the brief invasion of the Austrian lands by George of Podiebrady, the king of Bohemia, in 1462. Not only was it destructive, said Unrest, but the Hussite ruler was a liar and a heretic too. Loyal though he was to Frederick III and his son Maximilian I, Unrest did not always approve of their acceptance of religious minorities among Habsburg Austrian subjects. He chided Frederick for forgiving Jews who allegedly violated Christian sacramental materials. But it was Ottoman expansion to the north and west in Europe that troubled him most deeply and toward which he urged his territorial rulers to direct their energies and their funds. He deplored, for example, the marriage in 1477 of Maximilian I to Duchess Mary of Burgundy. Though the union swiftly made the house of Austria a major participant in European territorial affairs, the price of defending Habsburg acquisition of the Netherlands steered money and attention away from defense against the Turks.[22]

When writing from secondary sources, Unrest often made use of Ebendorfer's shibboleths to describe Christian encounters with militarized Islam. The loss of Constantinople comes off as a deep humiliation of God and his saints and an offense to Christian belief. The Carinthian pastor's *Österreichische Chronik* briefly lists the horrors that Mehmet II's forces inflicted on the Christian population. Violence and vicious behavior abound. The sultan's troops respect neither age, sex, nor vocation. They rape women, be they brides of the Lord, Unrest's epithet for nuns, or simple virgins; they capture and enslave men and women; they vandalize liturgical paraphernalia and churches. People who hoped to escape by ship, he reports, were taken as prisoners and sold. But other than the presumption of a harbor for such vessels, and a possibly indirect mention of Hagia Sophia, now a "robber cave," the topography of the now-vanquished Byzantine capital is no more than an abstract drawn from an accumulation of familiar, but remote, Christian referents. Like Ebendorfer and the abbot of the *Schottenkloster*,

[20] Unrest 1957, 154–155.
[21] "... Jakob Unrest, der minst pharrer in Kerndten…," Unrest 1957, 219.
[22] Grossmann, in Unrest 1957, VIII-IX. See also 14–16, 75, 85; Odložilik 1965, 143–144.

Unrest wrote these passages from an imagined construction of an exotic space.[23]

Unrest's historical mission was not especially original:

> Having wasted much time, I once again took up the old chronicle of the noble name and line of the princes of Austria to duke Ernst, king Maximilian's grandfather, and wrote from there up to the time when I have learned about and remember many things and resolved to carry on, to honor good people, as long as God grants me life.[24]

Maximilian I himself had resorted to the bell-tolling cliché found in Unrest's text to explain the vast program of self-memorializing that drove him throughout his adult life.[25] Unlike his emperor and Styrian territorial ruler, however, Unrest was not narrowly committed to personalizing recollections of himself. Nor would his task be finished once he recorded what he had seen, read, and heard. Rather he explicitly took upon himself the task of making events and the people who shaped them memorable over an extended period of time. Indeed, his goals were not unlike those of today's contemporary historians, who hope that what they find significant in their own age will be a starting point for the generations that choose to look back on it.

As far as we know, Unrest's *Österreichische Chronik*, actually an editorial bundling of three closely related manuscripts, did not circulate widely, if at all, in his lifetime. Along with Ebendorfer, however, he clearly expected to be read. At one part in his text, he alerts readers to a break in his chronological order of events where he identifies a figure he will discuss somewhat later.[26] But unlike Ebendorfer, for whom the common man was a faceless element in a collectivity to be organized by princes, Unrest was genuinely sensitive to more modest folk and their experiences in his exhortations to defend the

[23] Unrest 1957, 7.

[24] English version based on part of this passage in Unrest's text: "So aber die zeit verfluest alls das wasser und des menschen gedechtnus vergeen mit der glocken donn, hab ich Jacob Vnrest, der minst pharrer in Kerndten als ain inwoner seiner der königlichen maiestat erblannden, in meiner einfallt gedacht, was in schrifft kumbt, bleibt lennger, dann des mennschen gedachtnus wert, und hab bedacht die raittung von der muessigen zeit und hab nach der allten croniken des loblichen namens und stammes der fursten von Osterreich an hertzog Ernsten vater, kunig Maximilians uranherren, widerumb angehebt und furan geschriben auf die zeit, alls vil ich der geschehener ding underricht pin gewesen und meiner vernunfft muglich; vertraw, das auch hinfur zu thun, so lanng mirt Got mein leben vorgan, gueten lewtten zu ern. Ob aber yemanntz ain misvallen daran hett und mir zu torheit meß, der gedenck, das die kunst kainen veindt hat, dan der ir nicht kan. Wer aber loblichs lang / herkomen gern hort und list, der ist gleich dem adll, wann er ist langs herkomens." Unrest 1957, 219.

[25] Cf. note 24. On Maximilian and historical memory generally see Müller 1982, and Füssel 2003.

[26] Unrest 1957, 112,115.

Austrian lands against the Ottomans. He actively sympathized with the sufferings of ordinary people when they were the result of Christian, even Habsburg, military failings. A poor performance in 1494 of Maximilian's troops against the enemy from Constantinople in Carniola thoroughly disgusted him; the only thing that they accomplished, he said, was harm the Christians who lived there. Unrest occasionally gave figures for the number of peasants and commoners killed or captured by the Turks as well as the names of more well-to-do victims.[27]

Unrest's humble origins and status, along with his Austrian roots, were very much on display in his mission. If he had any connections at all to the humanistic artifices that had infiltrated Austrian high culture in the fifteenth century, they never made their way into the *Österreichische Chronik.* Composed in a homely regional German, it has none of the contorted syntactics found in Ebendorfer's scholarly Latin. The mannerisms of the village preacher resurfaced in Unrest's written prose. He fell back on widely-understood homiletic formulas to get the attention of his audience as he urged them to resist Ottoman aggression. "Now listen and note" he instructed his readers, as he listed the Christian lands that the Turks had conquered between 1450 and 1474. "Now listen," he said again, this time denouncing a Carinthian peasant rebellion in 1478 because it had undermined the province's defenses.[28]

Unrest also turned Christian heroes into Austrian ones. John of Capistrano, in Unrest's telling, embodied not only Christian virtue at the Battle of Belgrade, but had healed the crippled and the blind in Carinthia, Styria, and eastern Austria during a mission there.[29] He seems as well to have shared the widespread Austrian indifference to the negative imagery conventionally associated in Christendom with Muslim conquests. Following Ottoman incursions in Carinthia in 1475, however, he tersely recommended that "Every man should give some thought to the damage done by the marauding and fire and murder during the period," but left out the details of death and destruction usually present in such accounts.[30]

Constructing effective memory of the Ottomans in Carinthia, which their raiding parties had repeatedly visited after 1469, required evocative force more than total recall of cliché. As a Catholic clergyman, Unrest was vocationally apart from the larger order of humankind. But all of these rhetorical artifices, as well as the attitude that lay beneath them, indicate that

[27] Unrest 1957, 52–53, 230.
[28] Unrest 1957, 42–43, 96, 99.
[29] Unrest 1957, 7–9.
[30] Unrest 1957, 53. Cf. 84.

he knew how to make events unforgettable to hearers and possibly readers whose idioms, experiences and feelings he knew very well.

Unrest's account of Turkish raiding in Carinthia between 1469 and 1475 had a place in the larger narrative of Christian-Muslim conflict being told in early modern Europe. Like Ebendorfer, he poured into his *Chronicle* the fierce Christianity appropriate to his clerical office along with the normal dedication of the contemporary historian to creating a usable past. To these qualities, however, Unrest added a full commitment to drawing upon all reaches of Austrian society in defense of the Habsburg patrimony against Ottoman aggression, and most important of all, his powerful territorial sensibilities.

Local experience and Austrian-Ottoman fifteenth century clashes

For Unrest, Austrian-Ottoman clashes between 1469 and 1475 had discernable topographical reality, the quality largely missing from abstractive Christian polemics about the fall of Jerusalem and Constantinople to Muslim rule. The Turks, who become synonymous with Muslims in Unrest's telling, are a Carinthian and Styrian phenomenon. Where he does discuss the behavior of the Ottoman raiders as conventionally represented – vandalizing of churches, ecclesiastical artifacts, captivity, conflagrations, and kidnapping, his referents are recognizably local. The Christianity under attack in his presentation is a faith practiced in named settlements and associated with topographical landmarks in parts of Carinthia and Styria, along with Carniola, which is today in modern Slovenia. He frequently comments on Ottoman disruptions of Christian ceremony and desecration of local Christian artifacts and edifices. A typical incident took place in Carniola during the Whitsuntide period in 1469. In the process, Unrest reported, one of the Muslim marauders damaged an image of the Virgin that began to bleed. Taken much aback, the baffled skirmisher asked someone to explain what he had done.[31]

But it is place names themselves, the "where" of these events, more than the "when" or even the "what" that gives the *Österreichische Chronik* its compelling, at times incantatory force, even on the written page. The towns and villages that the Turks struck in Unrest's region of Carinthia in 1473 read like a road map of Austria's summer resort country of today. Incursions took place in Amelstorff, probably Eierstorf, east of Klagenfurt; Leybstorff, i.e. Leibsdorf bei Kärnten; Waffeldorff, i.e. Wabelsdorf bei Kärnten. From an area around Klagenfurt the Ottoman raiders went to the *Wörthersee* (*Werdsee*). There they spread around and out to Pörtschach, Leonstein bei Pörtschach, and Techelsberg bei Klagenfurt. Another party moved on to

[31] Unrest 1957, 41.

Mössburg bei Klagenfurt and as far as Feldkirchen. A third group pushed northward to St. Veit, another to St. Georgen, on the *Längsee*, where they captured a beautiful nun, *die Pschalin*. Another band went on to Osterwitz, and finally to *Zoll* (*Zollfeld*). Unrest also mentioned one by one the targets of brief Ottoman raids in detours that some troops took from their line of march back to Klagenfurt.[32]

In 1476, over 26 towns were under Ottoman assault. Unrest devoted a little over one page of his *Chronicle* to listing the settlements, along with other well-known features of their natural topographical setting, the *Wörthersee,* for example. He did not think that the Turks were invincible; he had reported at some length the story of the largely successful resistance to Ottoman raiding mounted by Voivode Stephen of Wallachia a year earlier. With the enemy actually in his own parish, St. Martin bei Techelsberg, Unrest briefly stepped out of his role as historian and urged the lay Christian population of the region to take up arms against the sword of the invader. In fact, his, and for that matter Ebendorfer's, hopes for something akin to a popular resistance, was beginning to come together. Unrest ends, however, on the downcast note that onerous taxation had so angered peasants that they had turned against Christian landlords who imposed these burdens rather than the Turks.[33]

The scrupulous recording of place names distinguished Unrest's *Chronik* from other efforts to alert Austrian Christians in the fifteenth century to the Ottoman threat. It did not, however, wholly exhaust the rhetorical tactics that Unrest added to local referents to make his descriptions of the Ottomans in southern Austria memorable. He made skillful use of the psychological multiplier effect provided by accidental but concurring regional disasters. Hungarian invasions, local plagues, pestilence, and problematic weather that rotted grain in the fields: all intensified the context of suffering that Unrest developed for Austrians-as-victims of Ottoman expansion.[34] Moreover, he was historian enough to sense that his audience required more than eye-witness testimony to make an event believable and therefore worth remembering. Citation of sources helped: even for his obviously second-hand account of the fall of Constantinople and its aftermath, he says he has drawn upon a report to Pope Nicholas V of Cardinal "Isidorus", probably Isidore of Saloniki, who, having seen the erstwhile imperial Byzantine residence, could not believe that Christians ever lived there. The precision that came from numbers strengthened his claims to authority even more. Even in passages where Unrest fell back upon anti-Ottoman clichés to remind readers that Constantinople had been lost to the forces of Islam, he gave what he said was

[32] Unrest 1957, 26–53.
[33] Unrest 1957, 44–46, 64–67.
[34] Grossmann in Unrest 1957, VIII-IX. See also 111.

the hour when the final struggle for the city began. He continued the practice throughout his C*hronik* in numerous reports of armed encounters with the Turks in Carinthia.[35]

Unrest was not the only historian in fifteenth century Austria who added force to his commentary on Muslim-Christian encounters through quantification. Thomas Ebendorfer did it when underscoring Turkish numerical advantages over Christian crusaders. His implication was that the Turks had far greater resources to draw upon for keeping the armies of Islam at maximum effectiveness.[36] He was, however discussing events in the remote 11th century.

All these figures were probably unreliable. Unrest's numbers were probably somewhat shaky too. But they did refer to events that went on in generally familiar places. The Turks, he said, remained in Carniola "for a whole month" in 1475.[37] Combatants and non-combatants alike whom Ottoman invaders killed and captured were significant to him and, presumably, to their survivors. When the sultan's troops appeared in Carniola in 1469, they stayed for 14 days, killing 20,000 people. An Ottoman incursion in the summer of 1471 left 30,000 dead in the Santtal and its surrounding villages; in the mountainous Karst regions they captured 500 more. In 1474, 14,000 people were killed by Turkish marauding around today's Austrian border with Slovenia. In 1480, 500 priests were captured in Carinthia. Where possible, Unrest took account of all classes of society in his calculations: in the summer of 1473 in Carinthia, he reported, 90 people, mostly peasants were killed by Turks in the vicinity of Klagenfurt. He also gave victims' names where he had them; in 1475, again in Carinthia, he lists the local notables who lost their lives to Ottoman forces, as well as all commoners whom he could identify. Unrest's account of Ottoman incursions into Carinthia extended to 1494, a year for which he gave not only an extensive list of places affected, but rosters of people from the region, noble and commoner, who died, were badly injured, or kidnapped and taken away. In this case, he followed the subsequent fate of the prisoners as best he could.[38]

The population of the Austrian lands around 1500 probably stood between 800,000 and 1,000,000.[39] It is very doubtful that the Ottomans killed off or captured 6% of the total population of the Habsburg Austrian patrimony in a single, thinly inhabited region. Nevertheless, Unrest seems to have realized that he could not toss numbers into his text for effect alone if his account was

[35] Unrest 1957, 7, 9.
[36] Ebendorfer 2006, 19–20, 22, 29, 58, 62–63.
[37] Unrest 1957, 84.
[38] Unrest 1957, 27, 37–38, 42, 52–53, 111, 229–230.
[39] Brückmüller 2001, 88–89.

to be worth remembering. His admission that he could not trace down the names of all the commoners who may have died at the battle of the Königsberg in 1475 in Carinthia is a form of testimony that he valued truth in reporting. More significant is a question that he left open in measuring the demographic impact of Ottoman campaigning between Tarvis and Thörl in Carinthia. One source reported around 200 men burned and smothered in a fire set by the enemy in the area; another, he said, put the figure at 147. If he made further inquiry, he said nothing about it. Nor, however, did he make up a number.[40]

Unrest's mnemonic rhetoric is clearly at its most compelling when he is focuses it on local demographics, religious institutions, and most characteristically, on specific sites of Ottoman invasion. It is a language charged with the immediacy of lived experience for recollection to endure.[41] When he turns to reports of Christian-Ottoman conflict elsewhere in Europe between 1453 and his death, his tone is markedly different. Absent spacial referents and social arrangements associated with them, his writing is cooler and more mechanical. A detailed listing of Ottoman local targets in southern Styria in 1474, for example contrasts sharply with his terse report of a failed Ottoman expedition against Venice that same year. When Turks come to Hungary in 1480, he observes only that they were very destructive, forcing King Matthias to make peace with Frederick III as emperor.[42] Unrest was not the only man of his time to make space and its divisions into place the crucial referent of discourse. The context in which early modern diplomats worked was expressed in four dichotomous categories: Overlordship-Property; Right-Force; Unity-Multiplicity; and Own-Foreign, three of which had strong spacial connotations.[43] Nor did he foresee the troubles that spacial "turns" bring with them when they underscore claims to territorial exclusivity. Historians today are still troubled when they make use of an analytic approach that takes serious account of notions that have inspired many of humankind's bloodiest conflicts. If Unrest did anything at all, it was to turn the Austrian conflict with the forces of Islam into contests over familiar sites that Austrians would identify negatively with Turks and Muslims long after. His highly localized reading of Ottoman aggression, combined with his epitomizing of the Turk-as-Muslim, became ideal material for simplistic propaganda developed by both church and state with strong interests in keeping these memories alive in all reaches of society. Further raiding by the Turks,

[40] Unrest 1957, 64–65 and note 1, 65.
[41] Boyer 2009, 5.
[42] Unrest 1957, 34–36, 42, 106.
[43] Bachmann-Medick 2006, 284–286; Strohmeyer 2007, 11–12, 33.

episodic though it was, eased that task considerably particularly when these experiences were shared by many settlements in a region.[44]

The siege of Vienna 1529: Sigismund von Herberstein's autobiography, Hans Sachs' poems, and Wolfgang Lazius' history of Vienna

It took Süleyman the Magnificent's failed siege of Vienna in 1529 to move the site of Austrian encounter with the Turk-as-enemy from rural Carinthia and Styria to a place with a historical and topographical profile that resonated throughout Europe as a whole. Illustrations, some of which carefully depicted authentic landmarks of the city under Ottoman siege underscored the reality of Vienna as a place.[45] Spatial associations with the beleaguered city became in short time part of the drama not only in historical narratives, but in memoires, contemporary journalism, and popular poetry. One of the most vivid passages in the autobiography of Sigismund von Herberstein, who faithfully served both Maximilian I and his grandson Ferdinand as a roving ambassador and a councilor, describes his impressions of the city and its outskirts upon his return from Cracow after the Ottomans had retreated:

> Arrived in Vienna on the first of December. It bore little resemblance to the place I once knew. All of the outlying districts, which were not that much smaller than the city proper, were razed and burned out in order to keep the enemy from taking his comforts within them, and most of all, to allow wares to be brought in through one narrow passage. The enemy had done the same thing throughout the entire region for the same reason; everywhere, from Vienna down to Wiener Neustadt, one could not look as far as a crossbow's range without spotting a human corpse, a dead horse, pig, or cow lying about. The sight was pathetic.[46]

At least 37 broadsides on the subject appeared between 1529 and the end of 1530, most of them in German but also in Latin, Italian, and French. To make sure that his audience knew the precise location of the siege, the author of one account rendered the city's name in three languages in his title: German, Latin and several ways it sounded to him in Hungarian: Betz, Betsch, and Wetsch.[47]

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[44] Strohmeyer 2007, 30, 33.

[45] See Göllner 1961–1978, 1:180, 199 and plates 334, 342.

[46] "Am Ersten Decembris geen Wienn khomen, das mir gegen der vorigen gestallt frembd anzusehen was. Alle vorstet, die nit vill minder gewest sein dann die Recht Stat, warn all geschlaipfft unnd ausgeprenndt, damit der Veindt sein bequemblichait darInn nit haben möcht, unnd aller maist, damit die Wörn in ein Ennge eingezogen worden. Darzue das Lanndt derselben Ennden alles durch den veindt verprenndt unnd selten uber aines Armbrust schuss weit, das nit ain Todt mennsch, Phärdt, Schwein oder Khue gefunden gelegen. Von Wienn hintzt der Newstat unnd neben umb allenthalben. Es war Erbärmlich zusehen." Herberstein 1855, 290.

[47] Göllner 1961–1978, 1:184. The modern name is Bécs.

Some were allegedly eyewitness accounts and in relatively straightforward prose. Some milked every last drop of sensationalism they could from the encounter: *Torments Used by the Turks Against Christians, and also the Beastly Arrogance toward Domestic Animals and Inanimate Things: Mines, Strategies, Furious Assaults and Description of their Most Powerful Army...* for example.[48] Others were confessedly from hearsay and sometimes rhymed. The threat of repeated sieges of the city would make it a rallying cry in pastoral calls for further resistance to the Turks. As the Ottomans advanced into central Europe in 1532, Johannes Faber, the bishop of Vienna, published a homily pointing out that the sultan could be attacking the city one more time.[49]

Even in Germany, where skepticism about Habsburg commitment to specifically German concerns still ran high, the breaking of the Ottoman siege of the dynasty's capital was jubilantly acclaimed. The image of Vienna as a topography under Ottoman fire engaged the imagination of Hans Sachs, the most notable German rhymester of his age. The city's built environment was central to "The Turkish Siege of Vienna", which he first published in 1529.[50] Its towers and gates, its churches, its suburbs, even the Danube itself set the coordinates within which Ottoman and Christian forces maneuver against one another.

Sachs deeply admired the defenders who finally turned the Turks away, though God had been an enormous help too. The poet also noted that with Süleyman prepared to continue his conquest of Europe, divine intervention was the continent's only hope.

Like Germany's princes, he still did not expect much in the way of military leadership from the house of Habsburg. In a second and shorter set of verses, "Ein tyrannische that der Türken vor Wien Begangen," he has the Ottoman sultan threatening to hunt down Archduke Ferdinand, who, Sachs pointedly discloses, had holed himself up in Linz throughout much of the siege. A contemporary though anonymous poem is equally unflattering: "Wie der Türke vor Wien lag" has the Habsburg telling a delegation from the city that wants him to fight that he is ready to yield Vienna to the enemy.[51]

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[48] Vincenzo Pimpinella, *Del Gran Turco la Obsidion sopra Vienna d'Austria. Le horre<n>de crudelta et inauditi torme<n>ti usati da Turchi contra Christiani , et ancho la bestial fierezza co<n>tra animali domestici et cose i<n>animate. Mine, Strategemi, furibondi assalti de Turchi, et descrittione del potentissimo esercito loro...* in Göllner 1961–1978, 1:202–203.

[49] Göllner 1961–1978, 1:219.

[50] Hans Sachs, "Der türkischen belägerung der stat Wien mit handlung beider teil auf das kürzest ordentlich begriffen,"(1529) in Liliencron 1865–1869 3, 587–594.

[51] In Liliencron 1865–1869 3, 593, 607.

Nevertheless, Vienna was a site associated with the governments of Austria's territorial princes even before the Habsburgs first appeared there in the latter decades of the thirteenth century. However ineffectual Ferdinand I appeared in Hans Sachs's verses, others were prepared to credit the house of Habsburg with some contribution to the Ottoman defeat in 1529 and to couple dynastic self-defense with the defense of Vienna itself. In 1530, at least one grateful though anonymous pamphleteer used the title of his work to assert that Ferdinand and his brother, Emperor Charles V, contributed to the city's survival a year earlier.[52]

The first siege of Vienna had thus linked the defense of local landscape and defense of the house of Habsburg, an association that Frederick III and Maximilian I had failed to develop, for all of their planned anti-Ottoman crusades.[53] Süleyman the Magnificent's near-capture of the city cemented the multi-territorial house of Austria to the historical and topographical particularity of Vienna with enough plausibility to make the relationship the durable core of the anti-Ottoman propaganda of the Habsburg empire and the papacy for centuries to come. Looking back on the events of 1529 around 20 years after the fact, Wolfgang Lazius, a serious and versatile scholar-historian with close ties to Ferdinand I's court, turned Unrest's conviction that anti-Turkish defense was local defense into a specifically Habsburg mission. Compiling his history of Vienna, he passed quite cursorily over the accession of Ferdinand, his patron and employer, to kingship in Bohemia and Hungary in 1526. The house of Austria had sought both crowns since the fourteenth century, and one would have expected Lazius to have treated the event more expansively. But it is in his discussion of the Ottoman failure to take Vienna three years later that he became truly eloquent about both the event and the city's Habsburg ruler. Vienna survived attack from Turkish tyranny, he said, in good part because of sturdy walls and lookout towers. But the victory, he added, made Ferdinand, and by implication his house, defenders both of their territorial patrimony and their faith against "Christendom's most perfidious enemy," whose advances had been lamented for centuries. Moreover, Süleyman the Magnificent had also become part of Vienna's larger history. Lazius incorporated the Ottoman ruler into a list of aggressors and natural calamities that the seat of Habsburg government had overcome throughout its history.[54]

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[52] *Viennae Austriae Urbis Nobilissime a Sultano Saleymano immanissimo Turca <rum>Tyranno immenso cum exercitu obsesse Historia. Cum potentissimi Caesaris Caroli & inclyti Hungarie ac Bohemie Regis Ferdinandi fratrum inuictissimorum gratia.* In Göllner 1961–1978, 1:206.

[53] Hollegger 2005, 18; Silver 2008, 118; Schauerte 2001, 216 and note 17.

[54] Lazius 1546, 7, 117, 132.

The house of Austria now sat in an uncomfortably vulnerable capital, but one with great recognition value. As defenders of the city, the Habsburgs would now be protecting both their interests and a site known widely enough in Germany and elsewhere in Europe to make it an emblem of Christendom-at-risk. Ferdinand I and his successors quickly took upon themselves such opportunely compatible missions. Reinforced by repeated encounters with the Ottomans, the anti-Turk and anti-Islam imagery of the propaganda that justified the dynasty's role in these efforts would be boiled down to stereotypes that would linger in the political and cultural memory of Europeans for centuries to come.[55]

[55] Among the most widely circulated publications of the pre-1848 era in the Habsburg lands were calendars. These not only gave the days and months of the year, but also historical vignettes, designed, or so the government hoped, to quicken love of both the Habsburg regime and the political commonality they ruled. One of them was Austria, which appeared annually between 1840 and 1848 under the editorship of Johann-Paul Kaltenbaeck and Professor Michael Josef Salomon. Both men were impeccably Catholic and conservative, qualities much prized by the imperial government. Kaltenbaeck was also a poet and a member of the Vienna City Council. The issue of the 1844 calendar carried an anonymous eyewitness account of the 1529 siege of the city that enabled readers to follow it location by location within the city, which was still walled. Though published anonymously here, it was in all likelihood written by Peter Stern von Labach. Chronologically this was the first published account of the siege of the city, which began on 22 September and ended on 25 October. Stern, who was the Latin War Secretary of Ferdinand I, had kept notes on what he saw and heard during the period. It is the most important of the eye-witness accounts of the siege, not only published and republished, but often reworked several times. Göllner 1961–1978, 1:173. For the text see *Ain gründtlicher unndt wahrhaffter Bericht, was sich under der Belagerung der Statt Wien, Newlich im MDXXIX Jar, zwischen denen inn Wienn unnd Türcken, verlauffen*… in Frass 1959, 2:40–44.

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