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Framing 'Turks':

Representations of Ottomans and Moors in Continental European Literature 1453-1683

ed. Peter Madsen

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Preface

The focus of this issue of *Nordic Journal of Renaissance Studies* is on Continental Europe, i.e., areas bordering or situated near the Ottoman Empire or otherwise involved in close encounters. It has thus been important to include often neglected, yet most important nations like The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Hungary (following the lead of the excellent volume edited by Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, Tübingen 2000). It has also been important to consider literature beyond well-known classics, thus including works that attracted more attention in their own times than they do today. Finally, it should be underscored how the literary (and intellectual) field beyond the vernaculars included publications in Latin.

The introduction is an attempt to situate the subject matter of the individual contributions within a broader historical, intellectual and literary field, thus including further documentation and additional literary examples.

'Turks' was the current denomination of contemporary Muslims, whether North African or Spanish 'Moors', or inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire or its spheres of various sorts of influence. It should be stressed, though, that although the Ottomans in terms of power and political establishment were Turkish, the inhabitants of the Empire were multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Furthermore, the military forces included not only important groups of non-Turkish origins, but also mercenaries of various origins.

Peter Madsen, editor of *Nordic Journal of Renaissance Studies* 16

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INTRODUCTION:

Framing 'Turks'

By Peter Madsen

The Fall of Constantinople

On May 29th 1453, Constantinople was captured by Mehmed II after 53 days of siege. The prominent humanist Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, who would later become Pope Pius II, was at that point assisting the Holy Roman Emperor Friedrick III in Austria. In a letter from the Emperor's summer residence in Graz, Piccolomini a couple of months after the capture reacted to information about what happened to Constantinople. Recently, he wrote, information that Constantinople had been captured had prompted him to write a letter (July 12th) to the Pope (Nicholas V), yet new information seemed to confirm that help had arrived and the city been defended. After no less than two months he did not have precise information, despite his situation at one of the centers of power. Knowledge about the distant events depended on letters or informants and would often be indirect, e.g., by way of Venice.

When more elaborate accounts began to circulate many would depend on other accounts, and even eyewitness experience would be filtered through established patterns of interpretation. From Leonardo Guisiniani of Chios, who was bishop at Mytilini in the Aegean archipelagos, the pope received a description of the capture and the ensuing pillage. Leonardo's account was dated August 16th, i.e., about two and a half months after the capture. It seems that this text became a model for several later accounts and thus provided a kind of standard description and to some extent also interpretation. [1] The Old Testament idea of the wrath of God castigating sinners is a frequently applied topos in interpretations of defeats to Muslims, whether 'Saracens', 'Moors' or 'Turks', and Old Testament texts on Babylonian captures of Jerusalem may also very well have been on the mind of authors of descriptions of the Fall of Constantinople.[2] With a view of the importance of Leonardo's text, an extended quotation can demonstrate representations circulating in Europe at the time and for many years after. At the rise of the sun, "the whole city was in the hands of the pagans, for them to sack":

[1] Philippides 1998 provides an analysis of relations between Leonardo's and other accounts of the fall of Constantinople. Schiel 2011 has an analysis of Leonardo's account.

[2] Cf. 2 Chronicles 36:11–21, 2 Kings 2:24–25, and Lamentations – in particular 2:20–21 and 5:11–13.

> Their soldiers ran eagerly through it, putting to the sword all who resisted, slaughtering the aged and the feeble-minded, the lepers and the infirm, while they spared those of the rest who surrendered to them. The heathen infidels entered Sancta Sophia, the wonderful shrine of the Holy Wisdom, which not even the temple of Solomon could equal, and showed no respect for the sacred alters or holy images, but destroyed them, and gouged the eyes from the saints. They broke and scattered their holy relics too, and then their sacrilegious hands reached out for the sacred vessels of God, and they stuffed their pouches with gold and silver taken from the holy images and from the sacred vessels. Screams and cries rose to the heavens, and everyone of both sexes, and all the precious metal and property of all kinds in the city, were subject to their pillage. […] After raging through the city for three days, the Turks left it to their Sultan. All the valuables and other booty were taken to their camp, and as many as sixty thousand Christians who had been captured. The crosses which had been placed on the roofs or the walls of churches were torn down and trampled. Women were raped, virgins deflowered and youths forced to take part in shameful obscenities.[3]

At the end of his long epic *Constantinopoleos* (c. 1455–64), Ubertino Puscolo gave a similar description, allegedly also in his case from personal experience: "Every building echoes with the screams of women, the Trojans [*Teucri*, i.e., the Turks] sack the homes and holy churches and carry off the ancient treasures; boys and girls, wives and beautiful young women are dragged off to the enemy camps."[4]

Gradually the fall of Constantinople resonated all over Europe. The news was received within a variety of frames, yet it was in general taken as an epochal watershed, even though all the surrounding areas were, in fact, conquered by the Ottomans before the capture of Constantinople proper, in Anatolia as well as in the southern parts of the Balkans.

Apocalyptic Interpretations

On September 10th Nicholas V decided to prepare for crusade against the Ottomans, and after secret negotiations he published a papal bull on September 30th announcing indulgence for participation, describing various financial aspects, and ordering peace or at least truce during the crusade. In the introduction to the bull he underscored Mehmet II's role as a repetition of Muhammad's attacks on Christendom, and he inserted the events in an

[3] Leonardo Guisiani et al. 1972, 38–39.

[4] Gwynn 2017, 209; Gwynn's entry on Neo-Latin Epic includes a section on 'Neo-Latin Epic and the Fall of Constantinople', 209–212. Extracts from Puscolo's poem in Pertusi 2006, 198-213.

apocalyptic view of history, interpreting Muhammad and Mehmed as 'sons' of Satan:

> There once lived a merciless and gruesome pursuer of the Christian church: Muhammad, son of Satan […], who wished – together with his Devilish father – to devour soul and body of the Christians, thirsting for Christian blood, an extraordinarily ferocious and bloodthirsty enemy of the salvation of the soul by Christ. He was the expected Dragon, seen by John in the Apocalypse: the great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads […]. This dragon had already occupied nearly the entire Orient, Egypt, and Africa. […] Now in recent times a second Muhammad has raised, imitating the ruthlessness of the first one, shedding Christian blood and destroying Christians with ferocious fire. […] He is verily the premonition of Anti-Christ […], he who without reason and spirit wants to bring the entire West under his dominion and eradicate the Christian name from the whole earth, as if he could lay claim to surpass God's might.[5]

Similar interpretations of the Ottoman conquests and the 'Turkish Threat' in general proliferated.[6] John's Apocalypse was read in light of the interpretation of the early Arabic-Muslim conquests in the 7th century spelled out in the very influential treatise known as *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and in reference to the prophesies in Book of Daniel. *Pseudo-Methodius* was authored towards the end of the 7th century, i.e., after Arabic-Muslim conquests since Muhamad's time, yet the treatise was presented as authored by the Church Father Methodius of Olympus in the 4th century, thus – as it were – prophesizing events in the 7th century. In the tradition that follows Pseudo-Methodius, ideas of Anti-Christ are of crucial importance, despite only sporadic references to the term in the Bible (in John's First and Second letter), yet associated with Jesus' warning against false prophets claiming to be Christ (Matthew 24 and Mark 13). Anti-Christs may be false and deceiving helpers or incarnations of the Devil; in apocalyptic interpretations the appearance of Anti-Christ may be a sign that End Time is near, that Christ's Second Coming and Doomsday are imminent. Similar visions may combine such views of history with interpretations of prophecies in Book of Daniel of a sequence of kingdoms and with the theme of *translatio*

[5] Translated from Höfert 2003, 179. The bull is published in *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Friedrich III. Fünfte Abteilung, Erstes Hälfte 1453–1454*, herausgegeben von H. Weigel & H. Grüneisen, Göttingen, 1969, 56–64.

[6] Cf. Lelleouch & Yerasimos 1999.

imperii. Within this thematic field there are numerous variations, it is impossible to pin down a common, single coherent pattern.[7]

Sebastian Brant's writings, among them his *Ship of Fools*, prominently represent a historical perspective of this kind, as I point out in my contribution on Brant. Of particular importance in this tradition is the influential *Treatise on the habits, way of life, and deceitfulness of the Turks*.[8] The author was presumably a Dominican referred to as George of Hungary. According to the text, he was born in Transylvania and at the age of 15–16 captured during a Turkish attack in 1438 on his town of residence. He spent 20 years among the Turks as a slave, before he was able to leave and travel to Italy joining the Dominicans in Rome, where the book apparently was published in 1481. He relates how he as a slave is desperate, feels abandoned by God, and ponders if this means that it would then please God, if he joined the Muslims. Yet he returns to a steadfast Christian belief. He tells his story, because it to him is exemplary in the sense that *he* remained a Christian even after having been tempted by the religion of the Turks, whereas many a Christian soul has been and may be seduced into conversion by the apparent qualities of the Turks. His book has, as the title indicates, two sides, on one hand description of the ways and manners of the Turks, on the other hand a critique of their religion. The descriptive aspect soon became the best known, not least because the descriptions were not only very detailed but also at first sight very positive. He writes about the "moral purity" of the Turks as well as about their cleanliness and decency. Order and discipline he finds everywhere. His rejection of Islam and the ferocity of his critique seem to contradict these descriptions.

The solution to the apparent contradiction has two sides, a general religious and a historical. The account of his religious crisis is followed by this formulation of the effect of the return to a firm belief in Christianity: "I interpreted everything I heard or saw thereafter as just the Devil's delusions". This is the crucial point: what appears as positive, as clean and beautiful in the life and religion of the Turks, are Devilish illusions, his work in his attempts to seduce Christians away from their belief. Historically speaking,

[7] Eschatology, i.e., what concerns the end (*eschaton*), is in general implied in similar apocalyptic visions of history; rather than the general term 'eschatology' focusing specifically on matters concerning the end, I use the term 'apocalyptic' here in order to underscore the role of experiences of actual or looming catastrophe of historical magnitude handled in terms of theologically conceived patterns of history pointing towards some sort of end. Aune 2005 provides a useful overview.

[8] Georgius de Hungaria 1994, on the reception of the treatise 11. French translation: Georges de Hongrie 2007. In his edition Klochow provides all relevant information, including on later editions and translations. Further, on George's book in Juliane Schiel's elaborate analysis 2011, 251–287.

this is to George the second wave of attacks on the Christians. The first wave was the acts of the Saracens, violent attacks on the bodies, whereas the souls were left alone. The second wave – that of the Turks – to the contrary consisted in attacks on the souls of the Christians, whereas the bodies were left alone in as far as Christians were allowed to live among the Turks and were not forced into conversions. "In fact, this persecution does not kill in the human but in the devilish manner, since the usual way of killing consists in separating the body from the soul, yet it is inhuman and even devilish to kill the soul and bury it in the still living body as a rotting corpse in order to infect the others by its stench." Under these historical circumstances the story of the author is so much more exemplary, a veritable *exemplum*.

Yet the Turks not only attacked the Christian souls, they were advancing in military terms too. According to George of Hungary's historical vision, these advances will continue and increase, soon the Christians will be reduced to a tiny group, only a few will resist the combination of violence and seduction. It is in this perspective the full significance of the exemplary character of George's autobiographical account comes to the fore: as an incentive to resist the Turkish temptations and thereby, despite the Turkish military advances, at least keep up a tiny community of true believers. The members of this community can look forward to the imminent turn-around at the end of time, since with the Turks the Devil is set free and appears as the false, but seductive Anti-Christ.

The apocalyptic interpretation of the historical situation was influential not only in the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, but also widely in the following century as a consequence of the impact of the experience of Ottoman campaigns in Central Europe and the Balkans. Martin Luther's view of history is probably the most influential version. In 1530, the year after the unsuccessful first Ottoman siege of Vienna, Luther published George of Hungary's text with a preface, arguing that it provided reliable and thus useful knowledge about the enemy. In the preface he concluded: "Indeed, I hope that our gospel, radiant with such great light, will make an assault now before the day of judgement on that abominable prophet Muhammad. May our Lord Jesus Christ do so quickly."[9] In Luther's view, prophesies in Book of Daniel provided, as he explains in his *Military Sermon* (*Heerpredigt*, also from 1530), the proper tools for an understanding of the historical role of the 'Turks'.[10] "Since Daniel says that right after the Turk follows Judgement and Hell, Dan 7,10" (I.17), "the Turk [is] surely the last and most severe wrath of the Devil against Christ", "right after the Turkish Reign and its rage, the last

[9] Luther 1996, here 257–258, 262.
[10] Luther 1529, in two parts, references are to the first part.

day and the reign of the Holy [shall] follow" (I.56). In Book of Daniel Luther furthermore finds a confirmation that the endeavors of the Turks will fail: the Turk "cannot be an Emperor, nor can he establish a new Empire or an Empire of his own kind, even if he wants to. It is sure to fail, or else Daniel is lying, and that is impossible." (I.30)[11]

Humanist Reactions

When Piccolomini in July 21st wrote a long letter to the prominent cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, the fall of Constantinople had been confirmed – "unhappy, unfortunate, hard, horrid news".[12] A number of themes are elaborated on in this letter. The conclusion is an exhortation to crusade: Nicholas should urge fellow cardinals and the pope to work with a view of a "crusade […] launched with the common consent of all Christians", overcoming internal European enmity. The project is seen in a geopolitical perspective:

> "Christian faith [is] undermined and driven into a corner. For what once occupied the whole world is driven from Asia and Lybia; nor is it permitted to be undisturbed in Europe. […] The Turks hold part of Albania […]. Who will guard Brindisi, the nearby port of Italy? Will they close the Adriatic Sea? […] We see the slaughter of the Greeks; next we expect the ruin of the Latins. […] Who now lies between us and the Turks? A little earth and a little water separate us. Now the sword of the Turks hangs over our necks; and meanwhile we wage internal wars."

In terms of geo-politics, defense of Europe was the main task. Confrontations with the Turks on primarily European ground implied a stronger identification between Christendom and the geographically limited space, thus a significant focus on Europe emerged at a time of weakened Empire and papacy. Piccolomini even wrote a book entitled *Europe* (1458), providing a historical, geographical, cultural, and, first and foremost, contemporary account of countries and regions from the Iberian Peninsula to Central, Eastern, and Northern Europe.[13]

As a renaissance-humanist Piccolomini is not only concerned about the fate of Christianity and of Europe in geopolitical terms, but also about the loss

[11] For a recent broader historical account providing numerous examples and references cf. Gregory Miller's excellent book 2017, particularly Chapter 6, "Holy Terror. Depictions of the Islamic Threat and its Causes", 99–121.

[12] Piccolomini 2006, 306–318, quotes are from 309, 313, 315, 312, 313. On Piccolomini: Helmrath 2000, Cotta-Schønberg 2016.

[13] Nancy Bisaha provides an analysis of the book in her introduction to Piccolomini 2013. Piccolomini's most important oration on the Turkish question is *Constantinopolitana clades*, *The Fall of Constantinople* (October 1454; *clades* means calamity, defeat, ruin, loss, catastrophe…): Piccolomini 1454.

of Constantinople as a link to ancient culture: now access to all the books was blocked, if the books had, indeed, not been destroyed as it appeared from descriptions of the looting of Constantinople: "The river of all doctrines is cut off; the fount of the Muses is dried up. Where now is poetry to be sought? Where now philosophy? […] I cannot but mourn [...] when I see such a downfall of letters." The Turks are "enemies of Greek and Latin letters". "Now that Constantinople has been captured, who can doubt that every remembrance of these writers is given to the flames. Now, therefore, there will be a second death for Homer, Pindar, Menander, and all the more illustrious poets. Now the final destruction of the Greek philosophers will be suffered."

The accent here is quite different from interpretations in apocalyptic terms, yet the idea of crusade was guiding Piccolomini's activity, culminating during his time as Pope, when attention to theological questions also became more prominent. On his initiative, leading theologians wrote critical accounts of Islam; in preparation of his attempt at a meeting in Mantua in 1459 to gather support for a crusade, the important dominical cardinal Juan de Torquemada (Turrecremata, 1388–1468) provided an elaborate treatise: *Tractatus contra principales errores perfidi Machometi et Turcorum* (*Treatise against the main errors of the false Muhamad and the Turks*), consisting mainly of polemics against Muhammad and the Qur'an.[14] Torquemada follows the tradition of rejecting the ideas of Muhammad as a prophet and the Qur'an as a revelation, yet the bulk of the treatise consists of a critical examination of 40 false aspects of the Qur'an as against the true Christian belief on the matters in question. The critique of the Qur'an is developed systematically at the background of Riccoldo da Monte Croce's treatise *Confutatio Alcorani* (*Refutation of the Qur'an*) from around 1300, for a long time the most influential intellectual attack on the Qur'an (Luther published a – rather free – translation in 1542). Riccoldo did read the Qur'an in Arabic, yet a good part of critical accounts of Islam since then recycled his findings in various versions. [15]

[14] Pius II's opening oration (September 26th) at the meeting in Mantua, *Cum bellum hodie*: Piccolomini 1459. The first words of the oration are: "Venerable brothers in Christ and beloved sons, today We shall propose a war against the impious people of the Turks, for the honour of God and the salvation of the Christian Commonwealth."

[15] Cf. Schiel 2011, 222–251, the main source of what follows. Further, Glei & Finiello 2019. Cf. also Adeva 2007, his article presents a meticulous survey of the individual chapters and a more elaborate account of the sources than Schiel's. Adeva argues that Torqemada's analysis is heavily dependent on another treatise: "Directamente a plagiado a Pedro de Pennis […] que con lo que tomó de Rocoldo compuso el 88% de su obra titulada *Tractatus contra Alchoranum legem mendatissimam Saracenorum*". (205) Luther's version (Riccoldo da Montecroce & Martin Luther 2002) sets off from a Latin version published 1507 in Basle

One exception is Nicholas of Cusa.[16] As an immediate reaction to the fall of Constantinople he wrote the remarkable short dialogue *De pace fidei* (On peace of beliefs) in September 1453. There have been attempts to present the dialogue as an early version of religious tolerance in the Christian context, yet the aim is to demonstrate how what he calls "pious interpretation" of the Qur'an can bring crucial aspects of Muslim belief in accordance with Christian doctrines, or at least bring pious Muslims on their way to accept Christianity.[17] In other words, Christian doctrine remains the truth, yet Nicholas' approach represents an attempt to avoid received ideas of an unbridgeable distance between the two religions, furthermore his approach includes serious attempts to analyze Muslim beliefs with a view of finding agreements rather than chasing confrontations. His more extended treatment of Islam, *Cribratio Alkorani* (*Sifting of the Qur'an*, 1460–61), is doctrinally speaking more traditional, yet philologically more advanced, since he in the meantime had studied not only the Qur'an once more but also other relevant texts included in the important collection of Arabic documents and polemical texts established by Peter the Venerable in mid-12th century, *Collectio Toletana*.[18] The collection, in Latin, was available in various versions, and Nicholas relates in the book how he had managed to get hold of a copy. As sources he also refers to Riccoldo's critique of the Qur'an as "more satisfying than the others", as well as to other texts, among them Torquemada's treatise.[19] Nicolas wrote *Cribratio Alkorani* at the request of Pius II, and he points out in the introduction, that the aim is that the pope, when he wants to show that "the Muhammedan sect […] is in error and is to be repudiated, […] may readily have at hand certain basic points needful to know."

Among the prominent Christian intellectuals Juan de Segovia (ca. 1395–1458, cardinal and later bishop) stands out as perhaps the most advanced in his approach to Islam.[20] In a letter to Nicholas (2.12.54), he develops ideas of

based on a Greek translation from 1385. A Latin version following Riccoldo's text was published in Seville in 1500.

[16] Cf. Euler & Kerger 2010, Nicholas of Cusa 1453, 1460–61a and 1460–61b.

[17] On pious interpretation Hopkins 1998, in particular 266–68.

[18] James Kritzeck's fundamental contribution on *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (1964), was reviewed extensively by Allan Curler (1966). An important more recent contribution: Burman 2007. On Nicholas' sources for *Cribratio* cf. Costigliolo 2011.

[19] An additional reference is Dionysius' (Denis the Carthusian, 1402/3–1471) polemical *Contra perfidiam Mahometi* (ca. 1452), an extensive treatise Nicholas had encouraged him to write. Dionysius first and foremost used Peter the Venerable's collection, perhaps indirectly via extracts in *Speculum historiale*, Vincent de Beauvais' (ca. 1190–1264) extensive, encyclopedic œuvre. According to Dionysius, Muhammad "intellectualmente, era un completo ignorante; moralmente, un pervertido; espiritualmente, un impostor" (cf. Sandoval Martínez 2006).

[20] On Segovia: Wolf 2014.

interreligious dialogue. He wants a delegation of persons, that are "impressive in their number and dignity", to go to 'the saracens' "on behalf of the Christian religion", in order to overcome religious misunderstandings and thereby avoid religious arguments for Muslim warfare against Christians. At an earlier stage he realized through religious conversations with Muslims how misunderstandings of Christian doctrine proliferate among Muslims: "I was, he wrote to Nicholas, utterly amazed and even stunned when I learned all the infamies imputed to Christ, all Christians, and also their priests, in that law." In order to prepare for interreligious dialogue, he thought, it is necessary to study their law, and thus a translation of the Qur'an was needed. He managed to persuade a learned Muslim to translate the text from Arabic in Spanish. During four months this Muslim worked on the translation in a cloister in France, where Juan had settled. Translating the Spanish version to Latin, Juan thus established a trilingual version of the Qur'an. Unfortunately, only his preface is extant. This preface demonstrates how Juan in several respects, in fact, follows earlier traditions for critique of Islam and Muhammad; nevertheless, he stands out in so far as, first, he wanted to work for peace, not for crusade, second, he wanted rational dialogue on the foundation of insight in the actual thoughts of the opponent, rather than polemics aiming at consolidation of Christian beliefs, third, he did personally take part in similar discussions with representatives the opposite frame of mind, and fourth, he initiated translation of the Qur'an with a view of providing access to the main reference of the opposing religion in lieu of just reproducing traditional polemic.[21]

Nicholas V, Piccolomini/Pius II, Nicholas of Cusa, Torquemada, and Juan de Segovia were prominent members of the leading Christian intellectual circles, yet their reactions to the Ottoman threat were not uniform. Situated in proximity to and in various ways interacting with the Iberian Muslim community, Juan de Segovia demonstrates the potential outcome of specific circumstances and thus the problematic character of generalizing images of Christian attitudes towards the Ottomans and their religion. Analyzing relations between personal experiences and the formation of images of the opponent, Paula Sutter Fichtner's contribution on a number of Austrian authors provides a detailed demonstration of the role of specific circumstances.

[21] "Though scholars as accomplished as Cabanelas, Izbicki, and Biechler have emphasized the ways in which Segovia stepped outside the tradition, it is indisputable that he was beholden to that tradition in significant ways." Wolf 2014, 192; cf. Burman 2007, 181–183.

Compensatory Fiction

While the ubiquitous exhortations to warfare and all the papal arguments for and endeavors to realize a crusade were not successful (Piccolomini/Pius II died just before his planned crusade should set off), a huge Catalan novel realized, as it were, a defense of Constantinople and enormous conquests of Muslim lands in fictitious form. *Tirant lo Blanc* was published in 1490, yet according to the author initiated in 1460, i.e., a few years after the Fall of Constantinople. The main author (another individual finished the novel) was a Catalan nobleman, Jeanott Martorell, who died in 1485 and thus did not experience the enormous success of the book that may have had Tirant's fictitious, for the readers perhaps compensatory, success in Constantinople and numerous conquests of Muslim lands as one of its reasons, but probably also had to do with the fact that Tirant is preoccupied with a similarly successful, although long awaited, conquering of the princess in Constantinople.[22] He manages to defend the Christian king in Constantinople against Muslim attacks, as he earlier on has contributed to the defense of Rhodes, and he manages to convert numerous Muslims to Christianity along with military feats in North Africa, the Near Orient, and Central Europe. There are no restraints on the vilification of Muslims, at one point they are, e.g., urged to "abjure filth and dishonor […]! Such is the creed of that vile pig Mohammed, yet lust and gluttony befit only ignorant beasts, whereas true felicity derives from acts suitable to men of reason […]". The novel also incorporates the standard depiction of Muslim cruelty that was part of the accounts of the behavior of the Turks after the conquering of Constantinople, as well as the corresponding fear, particularly among women. The historical setting is unclear, events from a variety of periods are brought together, yet the central vision is that of Constantinople's situation as seriously reduced, reined in and threatened, before Tirant's glorious feats, including slaughtering of Muslims. In the end, the author of the last part lets Tirant die on top of his success, though, as if admitting the novel's fantastic character.

Faith or Commerce

Nicholas V's bull mentioned above includes warnings of excommunication of false Christians that cultivate trade relations with the Ottomans.[23] This conflict between Christian unity and commercial interests in trade was at that point centuries old, already in the 9th century the Pope intervened in similar activities.[24] The Papacy's defense of Christendom frequently was in conflict

[22] Martorell & Galba 1996, here xxix; and Martorell 2003. Rosenthal's translation is somewhat condensed, Barberà's is complete.

[23] Cf. Hohmann 1998.

[24] Cf. Menache 2012.

with the interests of various states and in particular cities and city-states (like Venice), that were heavily involved in commercial relations across religious and geopolitical confrontations. Consequently, the experience and outlook of people involved in commercial activities might turn out to be quite different from that of the men of the Church. Here again the importance of specific situations and related horizons of experience stand out. Like Venice a number of German cities were centers of trade; two literary works are marked by this horizon. From about the same time as Brant's *Ship of Fools*, the equally popular, anonymous novel *Fortunatus* (published in 1509) represents an entirely different point of view: religious questions are next to absent, the dominant viewpoint is that of a merchant, thus exemplifying the horizon of the lively Mediterranean – and broader European – world of trade with Alexandria as one major hub, and London as another.[25] As it turns out, London is a dangerous place, because ethnic conflicts between locals and foreign traders can be deadly, whereas Alexandria is represented as an institutionally well ordered, friendly place. Similarly, although in a carnivalesque context, Rosenplüt's short *Turks-play* (*Des Turken Fastnachtspil*) from a few years after the fall of Constantinople lets the Turkish Sultan appear as representing peaceful social and judicial order, whereas it lets the Turks present a scathing critique of the conditions in the Holy Roman Empire.[26] Clearly, in both these texts the Ottoman Empire is represented as welcoming for merchants. The contrast to the papal and theological concerns could not be more striking.[27]

Ottoman Warfare and Perceptions of Threats

In 1522 a long letter to the Pope Adrian VII was published in Rome. The author was the Dalmatian humanist Marco Marulic, as a philosopher a prominent intellectual at the European level and also a prolific literary author.[28] He urged the Pope to establish European unity with a view of liberation of Jerusalem and defense against the Ottomans. Since the capture of Constantinople, Ottoman expansion had included conquering of further significant parts of the Balkans (Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina). Marulic details the Ottoman conquests, including of Beograd the preceding year, and

[25] Anon. 1509.
[26] Rosenplüt 1853.
[27] Including numerous references, I have elaborated on these matters in Madsen 2017.
[28] "The Epistle of Master Marko Marulic of Split to Pope Adrian VI about Present Misfortunes and a Call to Union and Peace of all Christians", 91–109 in Marulic 2007. The introduction to this reader provides background and a survey of Marulic' œuvre, a broader introduction is provided by Winfried Baumann's introductory chapter (5–46) in Baumann 1984.

he provides a detailed description of the Turkish threat as he experienced it from Split, close to areas occupied by Ottoman forces:

> the infidel Turks daily inflict suffering on us with their raids – they torment us incessantly; some are slain, others carried off into slavery; our farms are devastated, our cattle driven off; villages and hamlets left in flames and the fields, which we cultivated to gain our livelihood, are either ravaged or deprived of their laborers and overgrown, yielding thorns instead of wheat. We have naught but our ramparts to ensure our survival and we are glad that the towns of our Dalmatia are not as yet besieged and exposed to assaults, because of an agreement on an ostensible peace is in force.

No one should feel safe irrespective of the distance to the borders of the 'infidels'. Marulic underscores the importance of defense of Hungary: if Hungary falls all hope is gone. In 1526 the Ottoman forces under Suleiman the Magnificent did, in fact, defeat the Hungarian forces at the battle of Mohács, where the Hungarian king Louis died. In a narrative poem from 1581 the reaction is summarized retrospectively:

> The battle at the field of Mohacs, / Caused confusion all over the land, // Everything nice dissolved into naught, / Because of the death of King Louis, / What remained were only the cries of the country, / And the ruins of the beautiful town of Buda.[29]

The defeat initiated a process that led to the partition of Hungary in areas under Ottoman and Habsburg domination respectively. Three years later Vienna was under – unsuccessful, yet no less frightening – siege. These Ottoman campaigns during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (Sultan 1520–1566) represented a turning point, since they – contrary to the conquest of Constantinople – directly or potentially seemed to threaten major parts of Central Europe. They were widely perceived as parts of an Ottoman plan to conquer Europe, yet it seems that Suleiman's initial aim was defensive, i.e. that he wanted to secure that Hungary would function as a buffer between Habsburg forces and the Ottoman areas south of Donau and the River Sava.[30] This view is based on the premise, that rather than the Ottoman actions were "marked by lust for plunder and reflected a drive to unlimited territorial expansion", they were the outcome of "planning that reasonably took into account the objectives and the means available".[31] In 1519 Charles V (king of Spain from 1516) inherited Austria and became Holy Roman Emperor – a

[29] Quoted from Drosztmér 2017, 22.

[30] This interpretation is presented by Géza Perjés in his article 1981 and in his book 1989. A more recent presentation along the same lines is Murphy 2001.

[31] Perjés 1981, 156.

"turn of events [that] had completely upset Europe's political equilibrium".[32] From the point of view of the Ottoman government, dynastic relations implied a risk that also Hungary could come under Habsburg dominion, and that the power position of Charles V could lead to European alliances with a view of a crusade. "In other words, to remove Hungary from the Habsburg sphere of interest had become an outright existential question."[33] The implication is, as it appears from some documents, that Suleiman presumably wanted Hungarian foreign policy in the Ottoman interest, free passage for the Ottoman army across Hungary, and some sort of tax, 'Suleiman's proposal', as it has been called.[34] The Ottoman siege and capture of the fortress of Budapest (at the confluence of Donau and Sava, the key to Hungarian border defenses) in 1521 can then be understood as pressure on Hungary after the rejection of a renewal of a peace treaty with the Ottomans along the lines just laid out: "Since the Hungarian government was not prepared to accept even scaled down conditions, the Turks set their military machine in motion – but simply in order to seize Belgrad, i.e., for the sake of a limited aim" (159) – and not as a first step in a plan to conquer Hungary.[35] New negotiations in 1524 – and here the Ottoman demand for free passage and tax are clearly documented – were broken up by the Hungarians. The attack that lead to the Hungarian defeat at Mohács in 1526 can thus be seen as renewed pressure on the Hungarians, but since the Hungarian king Louis died, there was no Hungarian negotiator. Ferdinand, the Archduke of Austria and Charles V's brother, who held the throne of Vienna since 1522, claimed the throne of Hungary, yet the prominent Hungarian Janos Zapolyai was elected as king of Hungary. In this situation – two kings of Hungary, simultaneously – the Ottomans negotiated with Janos, and an agreement that promised Ottoman friendship and protection was established in 1528, whereas Ferdinand repeatedly attacked Janos. Janos died in 1540 and Ferdinand managed to win the majority of Janos' supporters over, attacking Buda and promising help from Charles V. Realizing that under these circumstances Hungary could not fulfill the role as buffer, Suleiman decided to take Buda and the central part of Hungary in 1541 (whereas the eastern part, Transylvania, remained semi-autonomous under Ottoman influence).

According to this interpretation of the motives of the Ottoman political and military actions, the development from the capture of Belgrad through the battle at Mohács to the capture of Buda and parts of Hungary does not

[32] Perlès 1981, 158.
[33] Perlès 1981, 158.
[34] Perjés 1989, Chapter IV: "Suleyman's proposal: An Outline of Ottoman and Hungarian Policies between 1520 and 1541", 134–183.
[35] Perjès 1981, 159.

represent stages in a preconceived plan to expand the Ottoman empire, but rather actions with limited aims calculated in each case as defense against or prevention of attacks at the basis of an analysis of the international power-relations and the capacities and priorities of the Ottoman Empire.[36] Even the siege of Vienna in 1529 fits into this pattern of interpretation as pressure on the Habsburgs in relation to the status of Hungary, rather than as an – perhaps overstretched – attempt to capture and hold Vienna.[37] From this point of view, what was broadly understood and represented as parts of an inter-*religious* war turns out to be aspects of strategic defensive or preventive interventions within a specific pattern of power in a broader inter-*imperial* confrontation.

> […] efforts to connect Ottoman expansion and expansionism with the impetus provided by religious militancy remain problematic, Selim I's brief reign was the only period in Ottoman history when such a connection was made explicit, and Selim's policy was formulated not in Muslim-Christian, but rather in Muslim-Muslim (Sunni versus Shiite) context.[38]

Consequently, the propaganda for a crusade as proposed from the Holy See and other ideological centers, i.e., an interpretation in religious terms, did not hit the mark in relation to the actual political and military choices made in Constantinople by Suleiman.

Nevertheless, the widespread impression in the European public sphere was that the rest of Europe was in imminent peril. This perception was reinforced by accounts of what happened at the frontier and during conquests, yet the reliability of similar reports could be questionable as "part of a deliberate campaign of misinformation" with a view of frightening "states that lay behind the active front into thinking an Ottoman invasion of their own territories was imminent".[39] The motive could be to incite foreign, wealthier states to provide "funding and material support for […] resistance against Ottoman encroachment".[40]

Generalizing understanding of relations between on one hand Western and Central European powers and on the other hand the Ottoman Empire in terms

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[36] "Our task must […] be conceived not as the futile one of attempting to identify Süleyman's fixed and unchanging motives and intentions (most particularly in his relations with Christian Europe), but rather to assess the pressures that forced him to adjust to changing circumstances over the course of a reign that spanned nearly half a century." Murphey, 198.

[37] Murphey 2001, 201: "His misguided and impulsive decision, as a young and overconfident commander-in-chief, to launch a late season attack against Vienna in 1529 gave [Suleiman] a bitter but therapeutic lesson in the dangers of over-extension, a lesson he was not soon to forget."

[38] Murphey 2001, 200.

[39] Murphey 2001, 215.

[40] Murphey 2001, ibid.

of religion and/or warfare does not only disregard more detailed patterns of forces (such as, e.g., Spanish-French conflicts and the shifting alliances or agreements with the Ottomans) but also the complicated networks of diplomatic and the very important commercial relations. The field of literature reacts to and take part in this intricate pattern of real events and various sorts of framing of these events in ways that are not always obvious. Reception of literary works furthermore takes part in formation and reproduction of interpretative patterns. Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, one of the most popular literary texts of the period under consideration here, has thus often been considered as playful rather than critical in the treatment of Muslim opponents to Christians, yet in her contribution about the poem, Pia Schwarz Lausten argues that it should be read in the context of the general anti-Muslim humanist 'Crusade-literature' in the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, together with more recent contributions that include "secular, political and military evaluation of the Saracens' vices and virtues," and she underscores that although Ariosto initiated work on the poem as early as 1506 and the first part was published 1516, the final edition was from 1532, i.e., after the defeat at Mohács and the seemingly increased Ottoman threat to Europe, including the siege of Vienna in 1529.

In Search of Knowledge

Among the reactions to Suleiman's military endeavors, two interrelated questions came to the fore, on one hand interpretation within the theological framework of what was happening and whether and on what principled grounds warfare against the Turks would be admissible or mandatory, on the other hand what kind of knowledge about the Ottoman Empire was available beyond the tradition of anti-Islamic polemics. Successful warfare presupposed real knowledge of the enemy, of the organization of the Ottoman military forces, and of more general institutional structures of the Ottoman state. Attention to the 'Turks' also generated curiosity as to the ways and manners in general in their domains. The burgeoning publishing business provided numerous contributions to a fulfillment of these needs.

Most important among the writings that analyzed the Ottoman military strength is probably Paolo Giovio's short treatise *Commentario de le cose de' Turchi* (*Commentary on the matters of the Turks*) from 1532, in the sense that is was translated into several languages and was widely read, yet Giovio returned to questions concerning warfare against the Ottomans in several other writings.[41] The approach in *Commentario* is matter of fact as the title,

[41] Giovio 2005 (with substantial introduction and notes). On Giovio and the Turks: Pujeau 2015.

and since the purpose is to further potential warfare against the Turks, Giovio does not rely on received ideas and critical commonplaces. His focus is on the strength of the Ottoman sultan and his military forces, yet the presentation also includes historical analysis. Giovio states his intention clearly in the introductory letter to Emperor Charles V:

> […] to provide a clear and detailed presentation of the army, the forces and victories of the Turks, laying out for the eyes of Your Majesty in proper brevity the way by which that proud nation arrived to an empire of such magnitude, with such a reputation in military arts, in order to make it easier for the captains and masters of war to find the true remedies against their forces and arts, and for the Christian soldier, by the examples of the past, to arrive at a better and more adequate discipline for defeating them […].

Suleiman the Magnificent is compared to Charles V, the addressee of the treatise. Giovio had studied Ottoman history in details and his knowledge of contemporary matters depended on interviews with European princes, diplomats, and soldiers. He stressed Suleiman's enormous economic resources and pointed out how the military forces were under his direct command: the absence of intermediate aristocracy was one of the main points in comparison with European military structure. According to Giovio, fatalistic worldview and good provisions were factors that contributed to the combative force of the Ottoman army. Giovio was in accordance with the wishes to fight the Ottomans, yet he wanted to further these endeavors by providing serious knowledge rather than fearmongering or sheer consolidation of Christian faith though anti-Muslim propaganda.

Captivity and Direct Experience

Memory, information, exhortation

Important contributions to insight in aspects of the Ottoman Empire were provided by former enslaved captives. The two most important authors of accounts of their experience (since George of Hungary's) were brought together in a publication in Venice in 1548: Giovanni Antonio Menavino and Bartholomaeo Georgius (his name is spelled in numerous ways). Menavino was captured in the Mediterranean on his way from Genova to Venice in 1504; Georgius participated in and was captured at the battle of Mohács in 1526 and subsequently enslaved. From 1604 to 1612 Menavino was a page at the court of Sultan Bayezid II and after his death at Sultan Selim I's; after these years of captivity he managed to escape to Italy. Georgius' experience was quite different, he changed masters and tasks as a slave a number of times before he escaped. Whereas Menavino thus got to know the Ottoman court from the inside, Georgius mainly worked under modest circumstances.

Menavino's *I cinque libri delle legge, religione e vita de' turchi: et della corte, et alcune guerre del Gran Turco*, which was apparently based on an earlier manuscript from his hand, was the main part of the Venetian publication.[42] As the title indicates, the text covers a broad spectrum of relevant aspects of the Ottoman realm, from manners and habits through law and religion to the court and warfare. The predominant attitude is not polemic, Menavino wanted to provide matter of fact information, in this respect he is in line with writers like Giovio. Islam, including pilgrimage to Mecca, and public institutions are described in detail, everyday matters are similarly treated carefully. His situation at the court facilitated detailed accounts of administrative activities and the various groups of functionaries, as well as of the seraglio; in particular, he underscores the many Christian slaves and at this point does express a wish that this unjust and cruel society would be destroyed. The role of the janissaries and various aspects of the armies are also in focus. Despite his critical stance at certain points, he does not reproduce standard clichés about Islam, Muhammad or the Turks.

In general, the predominantly informative, rather than polemical character of Menavino's text made it an important contribution to knowledge about the Ottoman world. Georgius' work was of a different character.[43] The Venetian publication provided Italian versions of a couple of his rather short Latin publications published a few years earlier, among them *De afflictione tam captivorum quam etiam sub Turcae tribute viventium Christianorum* (*On the suffering of both the captives and also the Christians living under the tribute of the Turk*, 1544). As the title indicates, this is a highly critical account that brings his own experience as a slave together with more general descriptions of the sufferings of slaves and Christians: "Neither the Egyptian slavery, the Babylonian exile, the Assyrian captivity, nor the destruction by the Romans' can be compared to such misery."[44] His *De turcarum ritu et caeremoniis* (*On the ritual and ceremonies of the Turks*, also 1544) describes religion, military matters, and everyday life in a largely informative manner, yet including condemnation of "cruelty and most ignominious abuses". In 1553 he brought these and other short texts together in a volume *De Turcarum moribus epitome, Bartholomaeo Georgieviz, peregrini, autore* (*Epitome on the manners of the Turks, by the pilgrim Bartholomaeo Georgieviz*). This volume is organized as a progression from depictions of his own experience,

[42] On Menavino and *Cinque libri*: Schwarz Lausten 2014.

[43] On Georgius Höfert 2015. Reinhard Klockow's article 1997, provides a general overview of his writings. Gregory J. Miller has an interesting, detailed comparative analysis of Georgius and George of Hungary in the chapter "Escaped Slaves of the Turks" in Miller 2017, 151–175.

[44] Cit. Höfert 2015, 323.

presented as an *exemplum* uniting martyrium and steadfastness in Christian belief, through more general depictions of conditions for slaves and Christians to exhortations to warfare and prophecy of Christian victory. In the following years he published various combinations of his texts, dedicated to a variety of actual or hoped for patrons. Navigating between market and patronage, Georgius was a successful operator in the expanding market for *turcica*, providing what was in demand: a combination of information, critique, and exhortation to warfare against the Ottomans. He did not include his early text on his own experience as a slave (*De ritibus et differentijs Graecorum et Armeniorum, tum etiam de captivitate illius, On the rituals and differences among Greeks and Armenians, also on his own captivity*) in the various editions of his writings, probably because the description in this text of the situation as a slave is not as darkly painted as in his other texts.[45] His pamphlets and books were widely read – even more than Luther's, it has been suggested – and numerous translations were published. Texts by Menavino as well as Georgius were furthermore included in various compilations of texts related to Turkish matters, among them the most important was the Venetian Francesco Sansovino's *Dell'historia universale dell'origine et imperio de Turchi* (*On the general history of the origin and empire of the Turks*, 1560 and numerous later editions). Including other important texts on Turkish matters, this compilation was for more than a century a crucial source of information and framing interpretations.

Fictional account of captivity

A remarkable, anonymous Spanish novel, *Viaje de Turquía* (*Turkey-Journey*) from c. 1557, is a fictional account of the experience of a slave in Turkey.[46] It is, in fact, partly based on Menavino and Georgius, partly on the French naturalist Pierre Belon's *Travels in the Levant* (1553), Giovio, and other texts from the period.[47] The novel remained unpublished into the 20th century. It is quite obvious how it would have been a problematic publication in the

[45] Georgievits 2000 (with a short preface by Klokow and the text in the three languages indicated in the title); Klokow provides a detailed analysis of this text compared with Georgius' other writings in his article from 1997.

[46] Two recent editions are available: Anon. *Viaje de Turquía* 1983, Anon. *Viaje de Turquía* 2000. Ortola's edition from 2000 is the authoritative edition, including a long introduction that provides a survey of research on the manuscripts, questions concerning authorship, and relations between autobiography and fiction, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. Copious notes include information about relations to texts by other authors. Two translations in French are available, most relevant is Anon. *Voyage en Turquie* 2013, including introduction and two short essays by the translators. Vian-Herrero 2013 provides a survey and full bibliography; cf. also her extensive study 2015, as well as Ohanna 2011, and Ortola 2016 with further references in her bibliography.

[47] Belon 2012.

repressive Spanish climate, since it represents a tolerant attitude and an openness to information that contradict received opinions about the Turks. It is organized as a conversation between three former fellow students, one who has escaped from his situation as a slave in Turkey, a second who is a religious hypocrite, and a third who is fond of contradicting. The former slave explains how "in the country called Turkey not everybody are Turks: there are more Christians living with their faith than Turks […]." But how come they are tolerated, he is asked, and he explains how religion does not matter, as long as tribute is payed, adding: "In Spain, wasn't there earlier on Jews and Moors?" This remark obviously is meant as a reminder of the Spanish repression and expulsion of Jews, as well as the increasing repression of the *moriscos*, the Muslim (forced) converts to Christianity. The reaction is affirmative: "That's true." The former slave's depiction of Turkish jurisdiction is met with denunciation of Spanish jurisdiction: "Good God, should it be among the infidels and not among us that there is saintliness and justice?" Description of hard time as a slave on a galley is met with an immediate generalization: "Oh, the damned! It's obvious that they are Turks!" Yet here as elsewhere the former slave insists on comparing Spanish and Christian conditions: "So you think that the Christian galleys are better? Not at all: they are worse." This fictionalized version of the higher level of information at the time not only again and again undermines widespread standard prejudices, it does furthermore take depictions of positive aspects of the Turkish conditions as opportunities to articulate or imply critique of Spanish conditions. Sofie Kluge's contribution on Cervantes' Turkish play *La gran sultana Catalina de Oviedo* (1607/8) is not only – once more – about captivity, albeit of a woman, but also precisely about playing with stereotypes, an undermining of current opinions displaying detailed knowledge about Ottoman matters, and in so far, it might be argued, in line with the anonymous *Viaje de Turquía*.

In defense of toleration

The French political philosopher Jean Bodin, who at several occasions articulated positive attitudes to Ottoman policies towards Christians and Jews – as opposed to the religious civil war in France, including the Saint Bartholomew's day's massacre on the Huguenots in 1572, wrote between 1583 and 1593 one of the most important defenses of toleration in the form of a long dialogue between representatives of a variety of religious views: *The Colloquium of the Seven* (*Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium*

arcanis abditis).[48] As the anonymous author of *Viaje de Turquia* and even more extensively, Bodin incorporated information provided by the plethora of publications during the preceding decades on Turkish matters – Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) was, e.g., for him an important source on Islam. The setting of the colloquium is Venice: "A port common to almost all nations or rather the whole world, not only because the Venetians delight in receiving strangers hospitably, but also because one can live there with the greatest freedom." Under these ideal circumstances, within, as it were, a global horizon, the narrator is witness to the conversations and provides his friends around in the Europe written accounts of them. Among the participants is a Muslim, who has converted from Christianity. Repeatedly, Bodin lets him have the upper hand in discussions of Islam with the other participants – among which the Lutheran is the most aggressive. The Muslim provides an account of his conversion after he had been convinced by arguments put forward by a Muslim in conversations: "At last convinced by the arguments, I gave in". This stress on *arguments* is obviously meant as a rebuke of prominent standard critique of Islam as irrational. When the Lutheran formulates critique of Islam, the Muslim points out that it is based on texts that are not regarded as valid by Muslims – Bodin is thus indirectly rejecting important parts of traditional polemical points and sources. Among the participants there is a consensus that "no one can be forced to believe against his will". Here Bodin takes his stand against Christian interpretive traditions that understand Jesus' parable about the servant, who is sent out to compel people to join his master's dinner (*compelle entrare*), as an instruction to use force in order to bring unbelievers into the church. At this point, Bodin is a forerunner to the crucial discussion of this theme in Pierre Bayle's book about the parable a century later (*Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jésus-Christ : « Contrains-les d'entrer »*, 1686).[49] The actual political treatment of religious minorities is openly discussed by the Muslim. "After Ferdinand, king of Aragon, from a certain wicked piety or rather from an insatiable greed for money, had driven out the Jews and despoiled those Jews who had pretended to be Christian and had baptized out of fear of losing their wealth, he forced the Moors of Granada, who were of the Arabic religion, to forswear Mohammed. […] He also ordered 5,000 books which the Ismaelites held sacred to be burned." Bodin's dialogue thus on one hand does away with prejudices about Islam, and on the other hand forwards arguments for toleration as well as critique of repression of minorities. Just as the

[48] Bodin 2008. Rainer Forst situates Bodin's Colloquium in the history of toleration in Forst 2003, § 12. Die Wahrheit im Diskurs: Pluralität und Harmonie ohne Einheit, 190–200.
[49] Rainer Forst on Bayle 312–351, on Bayle and Bodin 322.

anonymous author of *Viaje de Turquia*, Bodin in his dialogue is building on the improved level of information.

Epic framing

The long tradition of epic representations of conflicts with Muslim powers reached a high point with Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem delivered,* published 1581, but finished 1575) and Luís Vaz de Camoes' *Os Lusíadas* (*The Lusiads,* 1572). Tasso's poem not only saw a number of translations but also established an influential norm. At one and the same time it was yet another imitation of Vergil and a retrospective poetic realization of the illusory dreams of crusades.[50] *The Lusiads* from about the same time was also conceived following the Virgilian model, yet this was a poem that thematized the era of imperial expansion and world trade, besides being governed by the anti-Muslim frame of mind – in both respects within a nationalist and a geopolitical horizon.[51] In his contribution, Tue Andersen Nexø underscores conflictual relations between the subject of the respective epics and the framing according to epic norms. Furthermore, he argues that the epic conventions in particular interferes with the depiction of Muslim enemies. In *Lusiads* Muslims (and Hindus) on one hand are clearly infidels and in so far the conflict is religious, yet on the other hand the conflict is engendered by the character of da Gama's expedition as exploration and attempt to open up trade opportunities, which means that rather than a predominantly Christian endeavor the conflict with Islam is "confined largely to the level of secular history […] presented as a political and (modern) historical conflict". In *Jerusalem delivered* the enemy of the Crusaders is – despite the heterogenous composition of the Muslim forces – presented as a unity held together by what resemble ancient Roman norms:

> Against the divine powers and the holy, Christian knights stands a secular patriotism, gaining its strength from the defense of a worldly, political community. […] If the Muslims are portrayed as secular and modelled after classical role models, they come to appear as not particularly Muslim at all.

The Christian Empire's Just Sword

The subject matter of Tasso's epic, the First Crusade, belongs to the distant past, Camoes' subject matter belongs to a not so distant past and prophesies in the poem reaches to his own time. A number of epic poems told about contemporary confrontations, though. The victory of the Holy League at the

[50] On Tasso and the impact of Jerusalem Delivered, cf. Madsen 2011.
[51] Cf. Quint 1993, Zatti 2000.

naval battle in the Gulf of Lepanto in October 1571, at the south-western part of Greece, was at the time hailed as a decisive turning point in power relations between the Ottoman Empire and the West, although the Ottoman navy was soon rebuilt and the defeat did not stop expansion of Ottoman power even in the Western Mediterranean: in 1574 Tunisia was taken back from the Philip II, and Ottoman influence in Morocco increased. The victory and its leader, the young Juan de Austria, Philip II's half-brother, immediately and during the following years became the subject of numerous celebratory poems, among them several epic poems.[52]

At the time, Juan Rufo's *Austríada* (*Austriad*, 1584) was the most popular epic celebration of not only the battle at Lepanto, but also Juan's role as a leader of the suppression of the *morisco*-rebellion in Granada that lasted from December 1568 through March 1571.[53] This 'War of the Alpujarras' started as a reaction to increasing restrictions on the life of the *moriscos*, i.e., Muslims that were forced into conversion, restrictions that were enforced by the politics of the Post-Tridentine crown and church. From Ottoman as well as Spanish point of view the rebellion had a role in the wider confrontation between the two powers. Seeing the Spanish crown confronted with Protestant rebellion in the Netherlands and simultaneously with the *morisco*-rebellion, the Porte wanted to influence on both fronts in various ways, in the Mediterranean field through Algiers, which was in a vassal-relation to the sultan; the Spanish crown feared regular, direct or indirect, Ottoman military support for the rebellion in Granada.[54]

As the hero of the poem, Juan not only brings these historical events together through his leadership in both, he does also as a relative of the king thematically unite national and religious dimensions in combatting as well the

[52] On reactions to the victory at Lepanto in the Spanish literary realm: Maurer 1993, in particular 41–43. Further Schindler 2014; Wright et al. 2014, Dionisotti 1971. On the broader context of the battle: Fernand Braudel's classic *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. II (first published in French 1949), and more recently Abulafia 2012, 428–469. Abulafia points out how Fernand Braudel "sententiously and mysteriously" proclaimed: "There is no doubt that on this occasion Don John was the instrument of destiny"! (449)

[53] Rufo 2011. This exemplary edition provides not only a comprehensive introduction (9–100) and ample notes to the individual songs but also meticulous registration of sources and the administration of these sources. Rufo's epic is among the texts analyzed in Davis 2000, 61–97.

[54] Including Turkish sources Hess 1968 documents in detail Ottoman activities and prospects, his conclusion is: "The second revolt of the region of Alpujarra, the Calvinist rebellion in the north, and the advance of the Ottomans in North Africa revived the question of the Moriscos at a time when religious feeling was running high, and when there was a definite threat of a Muslim-supported revolutionary alliance with connections throughout and around Habsburg territories." Cf. also Hess 1972. Cf. *Austriada* V.6–7.

distant enemy, the Turks, as the domestic enemy, the *moriscos*. The *Austriad* is thoroughly a Christian epic. The various aspects of John's role are implied in the king's denomination of him as "the just sword of the Christian Empire" (V.16).[55]

Although the Ottomans as well as the *moriscos* represent the infidel enemy, the evaluations of the two groups differ. Both are evil, yet it is in particular the *moriscos* that are vilified. They are people that are not only heretics in relation to God, but also traitors in relation to the king (I.82). The Turks, on the contrary, are referred to as representing an empire and are treated with some sort of respect on the basis of chivalric qualities, whereas the associations with Satan and Evil are less numerous than in the case of the *moriscos* who are devilish, infernal, haughty, infame, traitors, recalcitrant.[56] The illustrious lineage of the sultan is highlighted and brings him in a category similar to Spanish nobility, the old Spanish Christians, as opposed to the converted *moriscos* of dubious religious allegiance. The Turks are admirable warriors and in general of high social standing, in particular their commander Ali Pacha, a worthy opponent for John of Austria, who also acknowledges the worth of his opponent. The *moriscos* are peasants and not worthy of respect. Even if a number of recurrent negative themes in depictions of Turks are absent from Rufo's poem, contrary to the respectful treatment of Ali Pacha, the principal enemy in the battle, the Sultan, Selim II, is not spared a vilifying depiction in line with the tradition of anti-Turkish polemics.

Bringing together in an epic framing two important victories over the 'infidels' under the royal command of John of Austria, Rufo provided at one and the same time a national and a Christian poem that was met with great enthusiasm at the time when the victory at Lepanto was taken as the decisive turning point in the long battle between the West and the East, and the victory in the Apuljarra war was taken as a turning point in the prolonged administration of the outcome of the 'Reconquista' – a dual victory in the battle between the true believers and the infidels.

Ambiguous celebration

Shortly after the battle at Lepanto, Juan Latino authored an epic poem specifically on the battle, yet in the background including the Alpujarra War. Juan Latino was a former African slave, who managed to raise to the level of teacher at a higher educational institution in Granada. His poem *The Song of*

[55] Cicchetti points out that the fact that John is at the center means that rather than following the classic model (Aeneas as founder of *gens julia*) or the Tassian model (the king Goffredo as the unifying leader), Rufo follows Camoes' model: Vasco da Gama realizing the politics of the king at a distance from the center of power (Rufo 2011, 18).

[56] Cicchetti in Rufo 2011, 24–25.

John of Austria (*Austrias carmen,* 1573) celebrates Christianity, the Spanish king, and John of Austria, yet there are glimpses of alternative viewpoints, most strikingly, perhaps, when Juan Latino takes on the perspective of Muslim slaves among the rowers on one of the Christian battle ships, right at the moment when he describes how the Spanish commanders' incitement to fight – "Let each follow the standard, and fight to conquer, for he will vanquish in Christ's name" (II.396–7) – is met with enthusiasm.[57]

> Yet each Moorish rower, captured and bound in chains, is apprehensive even in the midst of his hopes when he sees his Turkish comrades, and fears his own death if the commanders are angered. (II.400–402)

They are told that they might be free, if they stick to their rowing properly, yet if they "treacherously strive to row the oars to assist the Turkish conquerors" their heads will be cut off and their bodies "fall deadless into the salty waters" (II.409–12). Rhetorically one Moor is singled out as he casts "sidelong glances at the cheering Turks" and "poised between death and liberty in the gravest danger […] remembers the fields of his sweet fatherland" (II.415–18). Among the rowers of the Spanish ships were Moriscos who were punished for the Alpujarra revolt as well as North African Muslims. Both Moriscos and North Africans were called Moors, thus including the Moriscos in what was seen by the Spanish authorities as "a cosmopolitan alliance of Muslim enemies of the Spanish Monarchy".[58] Although the passage about Muslim rowers is short, the implications are wide ranging and go against the grain of the poem as a whole.

In a similar manner, the poem occasionally questions glorification of the Spanish warfare at Lepanto. In the vein of Lucan's depiction of the fate of the ordinary fighters in *Civil War* (*Pharsalia,* unfinished at the death of Lucan 65 AD), Juan Latino focuses on bodily destruction, e.g., in describing the effect of the first firing of the Spanish canons: "you could see heads, teeth, eyes, and brains shattered by [the Turks], cheeks, jaws, and torsos gone limp." (II.1022–23) In contrast to modern canon warfare from the Spanish side, the Ottoman commander is described as a traditional fighter when he "bends the bow, and extending his arms […] launches arrows from ear level" (II.1050–1). Ali Pasha's qualities are such that "if by chance the man had been captured while fighting, he would have imbibed the Christian faith because of his wondrous virtue" (II.1207–8). So much more disturbing is, in Juan Latinos account, the way he was treated, when he died at the hand of a simple soldier (as opposed

[57] Latin text and English translation in Wright et al. 2014, 288–405. On Juan Latino and his poem: Wright 2016. What follows is in general based on her detailed analysis. About the specific episode, Wright 131–135.

[58] Wright 2016, 133.

to death in combat with a worthy opponent like Don Juan): his head cut off and put on display, and his body deprived of proper funeral. The aftermath of the victory further undermines the picture of heroic soldiery, when Juan Latino dwells on looting and internal conflicts among the looters:

> Each soldier, striving to assess the captured loot and ensure his share of it was fairly handed over to him, displayed the wounds he suffered on his exposed chest when he had attacked the Turkish enemy for his king. Greedy commanders, as usual, wanted everything. (II.1296–1300)

Although looting after victory was common usage, this description and a subsequent depiction of the soldiers turned merchants and slave traders are remarkable in what is presented as a celebration of heroic deeds in fighting for Empire and Christianity. Nevertheless, towards the end the poem returns to the heroic epic mode and referring to Philip's newly born son spells out a glorious future for Spain.

Universal victory

Despite Juan Rufo's erstwhile success, his *Austriade* did not uphold a status as national epic. There were other concerns further west capturing the minds, and Alonso de Ercilla's epic *La Araucana* (*The Araucanaid*, 1569, 1578, 1589) turned out to move to the forefront of attention.[59] Ercilla did incorporate the battle at Lepanto in his poem, although his main theme was the colonial dimension, Spanish Latin American events and confrontations, similar to Camoes' main occupation with Portuguese adventures to the East beyond the Cape of good hope.

Results of the westward endeavors beyond the Gibraltar hinted at in Tasso's *Liberata,* is thus the main subject matter of Alonso de Ercilla's epic.[60] His poem focuses on the earliest stages of fights between Spanish colonizers and natives in southern Chile, the Araucanians. The first book, published 1569, concentrates on Araucanian confrontations at the background of a description of the natives, yet in the second book, published 1578, a number of passages broaden the general frame to include the state of the Spanish Empire in general and in particular confrontations with Turks and other enemies (like Reformers and the French) in various parts of Europe – as well

[59] Ercilla y Zuñiga 2011 (1993), in English Ercilla y Zuñiga 2006 (quotes in English are from this translation, although it is not always reliable, occasionally the translation is changed here). Davis 2000 on Ercilla and *La Araucana* 20–60.

[60] Tasso 2000: XV.22–32: Fortuna predicts: "the lands there are as rich and fertile as your own" (27); "Their laws, their faith, there is no more to tell, / are all barbarian, and infidel" (28); "The boldest sailor in those days / will circle the earth along the circling sea, / mapping the world, […] victoriously striving with the sun" (30); "The faith of Peter will one day be taught, / with every civil art to the people here" (29).

as a global vision. The third book, published 1589, does on the European side take the Spanish annexation of Portugal in 1581 into account.

In the European theater of war as described in the second book, the role of the naval battle at Lepanto is crucial. The narrator is, from a mountain summit in Chile, offered a broad prophetic vision of the European scene. The first and most elaborately depicted action is Philip II's victory over the French at Saint Quintin near the border to the Netherlands in 1557.[61] Since France was "joining the unfaithful and forming an army against the Church and proper king" (xviii.53), the victory at Saint Quintin is significant in the fights against the Turks. In general Philip II will be a staunch opponent of the Muslims, as in the intervention in The Great Siege of Malta (1565). The following year Suleiman will conquer Siguet (Sziget, in Hungary), yet "wrathful / death" will end his life (46).[62] In "the prosperous Kingdom of Granada" the "Moorish" will "with pretense of being liberated […] come to lift themselves / and deny obedience to the sworn king" (48) – similar to the rebellious Araucanans, who in the view of Ercilla broke their oath to the Spanish sovereign. In Granada a "young man […] valiant and strong, vigorous" will "go to this war" (49 and 50), he will "come to make them take refuge inside the mountain, / where he will have them so squeezed in / that in the end he will displace the raised earth / transplanting to different counties / evil roots and seeds" (51) – a reference to the enforced relocation of the *moriscos* from Granada elsewhere in the peninsula. Yet in other parts of the Mediterranean renewed warfare, "the weapons of the inhuman Turks" will rise "against the powerful Venetians" (54). The narrator is told that when the Turks "will go navigating the road to Italy, / scorning the rest of the world, / even the power of the sky rejecting", "this pride and ferocious showing" will be "born of your sin and your blame" (56). What is at stake here is a theme that is also spelled out in relation to the Araucanians, i.e., that when the enemy seems to have the upper hand, it is only allowed by "the Lord on High" (57) as punishment for sins, in this case the sins of the Spanish or, broader, the sins of the Christians, in the South American case the sins, i.e., the repressive excesses, of the Spanish forces. This is not the only thematic association between the Turkish enemy and the Araucanians, as the Turks they are *diabolic*: "People without God or law, although they respect / he who was cast from heaven, / who like a powerful and great prophet / is always praised in their songs" (i.40) – associating Satan and the term 'prophet' seems to allude to the standard association of Muhamad and Satan, so much more as the term 'false sect' in the following

[61] As the introductory summary to canto vii says: Is told what at the same time happened at the fortified San Quintin.

[62] This is the battle that later became the subject of Miklós Zrínyi's epic poem *The Siege of Sziget* (1651), cf. below and di Francesco's contribution.

verse is a widely used denomination of Islam, and as one of the Araucanians are provided with *una cimitarra* (i.e. the curved Turkish and Saracen sword, xxi.33). The term 'infidels' is used referring the Araucanians like it is used referring to Turks.[63] They are so to speak framed as Muslims: as the Spaniards "began their conquest of the Americas [they] transported their anti-Muslim ideology of religious war across the Atlantic and applied it to the American Indians […] The Spaniards had treated the Muslim infidel as an object of polarization and holy destruction, and they began viewing the American Indian in the same light."[64] On one hand the fights at home in the Mediterranean and European theater as well as the colonizing warfare in South America are about the defense and expansion of the Empire, on the other hand both are about defense and expansion of Christianity.

Whereas the outcome of the attempts to subdue the Araucanians is uncertain and Ercilla could not bring the main narrative of the epic to a victorious closure in the manner of Vergil, two comprehensive accounts in the epic from the European scene *are* about victories. *First* the victory over the French, the Ottoman's ally, at Saint Quintin, where the excesses of the Spanish soldiers mirror the excesses in Chile and are only reined in by Philip II who is thus exempt from Ercilla's critique, *second* the naval battle at Lepanto.

The battle at Lepanto is presented in a vision seen by the narrator when he visits a magician in his subterranean cave in Chile and is shown "a globe", wherein he can see "the world in greatly abbreviated form" (xxiii.71), including the future: "everything, point by point, that you shall see / is disposed by fate" (xxiii.75), and in particular "a strange naval battle, / where will be manifestly shown / the supreme valor of Spain" – as the narrator is told by the magician (xxiii.79). The battle is presented as nothing less than a "universal" event, a victory of global importance, that is, under the leadership of Don Juan, the son of Charles V. The universality of the battle is spelled out by both leaders. In his speech before the battle, Juan of Austria points out that "God here has joined so many people […] so that […] here today the whole East should submit / to our yoke the tamed neck" (xxiv.15) – "Today […] we establish / in the entire world Christian faith, / our God wishes us to smash / Mohammedan pride and furor" (16). By the last words of his speech he claims that "the fair cause [*justísima causa*] we follow / has for us assured victory: / so already by the sky promised, / I can affirm to you we have conquered." (xxiv.18) The realities of this *justísima* battle for universal dominion in the

[63] These examples, that seem to relate fight against the Araucanians with fight against the Turks, are pointed out by Monsalve 2015, 121–122.

[64] Matar 1999, 130. Indians as well as Muslims were regarded as 'worshippers of the devil'.

name of Christian faith are spelled out in details that are so horrible that the sun cannot stand to be witness: "The sun gathering its clear beams, / with its face the color of blood disturbed, / among black clouds hid, / so as not to see the destruction of that day." (xxiv.52) Following Lucan's picturing of bodily destruction a long way, Ercilla does not shy away from detailing the horrors, yet he does not here take a critical stand or articulate emphatic identification – as it is the case in Juan Latino's epic.[65]

During a second visit in the cave of the magician, the magic globe allows the narrator an overview of the entire world, "the great appearance of the universe" (II.xxvii.5), guided by the magician.[66] During his longwinded pointing to and description of various parts of the world, the magician reaches as far east as to Maluco, i.e., the Spice Islands. And having reached South America he points to the Magellan Strait, before he wraps up pointing out that the narrator has now seen "in true form / the great circumference of the earth" (53). Mentioning the Magellan Strait, he underscores that not only did Magellan discover this link between the two oceans, he also sailed through the strait and navigated northwest to Maluco. This is the second time the Spice Islands, the origin of much of the wealth in the imperial center, is mentioned, *the first time* as one of the easternmost points, *here* as the westernmost point for the survey, thus finishing the circumference, turning it global or universal. It has been argued that by pointing to the westward itinerary to the spice islands Ercilla implicitly attempts to outdo Camões' account of Vasco da Gama's eastern navigation, and thereby, on behalf of the Spanish king, to outshine the glory of the Portuguese.[67] In this global perspective, fighting the Turkish infidels and the local moors is only part of the national and imperial endeavor, yet even the fight against distant Araucaneans is framed as similar to anti-Muslim fights at home and in the Mediterranean.

Gundulic – Tyranny, Freedom, and the Wheel of Fortune

In a letter, Thomas Roe, the English king James I's ambassador in Constantinople, reported about "the present Grand Signor following dreams and visions and having phantastique designs, that they say here are ominous; and all sorts of people are discontent, even to a promesse to revolt." The Grand Signor was the very young Sultan Osman II; returning from the battle at Chotim in 1621 and dissatisfied with his forces' performance at the battle,

[65] Such as Juan Latino's identification with the moorish rower, or Camões' glimpse of anti-war feelings: "Some went away blaspheming, cursing / Whoever was the first to invent war" (*Lusiads*, IV.44).

[66] This 'mappamundi' is in the focus of Nicolopulos 2000 and Padrón 2004.

[67] This is the overall theme of Nicolopulos' meticulous analysis of the way in which Ercilla, mostly implicitly, elaborates polemical imitation of Camões.

he wanted to reform the army (the "phantastique designs", Thomas Roe referred to). His plans provoked the janissaries, and revolt actually followed, leading to his imprisonment and death. The following year Ivan Gundulic initiated his epic poem in the manner of Tasso, *Osman*, about the events.[68] The confrontation between the Ottoman forces and the forces of the Polish-Lithuanian Federation at Chotim at a strategic point of the river Djnestr, then the border between Ottoman and Polish-lithuanian areas, was a major event in the defense against Ottoman aggression – at a European level it was considered to be as important as the naval battle of Lepanto. Gundulic articulates the link:

> [At Lepanto] not long ago, / With great forces, the chosen Spanish knight [i.e., Juan of Austria] / Dyed the sea in Turkish blood, Defending his Christian faith; // He defeated the Turks at sea / And gained a victory of eternal glory / Whilst you, oh glorious Vladislav [the Polish crown prince, who was formally in command],/ Defeated them by land. (VII.337–44)

In fact, none of the two sides won the battle, yet both sides claimed victory; the resulting stalemate did not change the power balance, but the Ottoman attempt to push forward into Polish-Lithuanian lands was blocked.

Defeat or victory are obvious themes in Gundulic's epic, yet more specifically loss of freedom is the central concern. Greece is a case in point: "Your freedom is laid low. […] / The cursed Turkish despotism / Holds you by the neck in chains." (VII.297–300) Ottoman tyranny is the opponent of freedom, and Gundulic elaborates on the theme of 'Oriental despotism' describing how people even bow to the *shadow* of the "emperor" and how "honour and fortune rest in his hand" and "the law be in his word" (XX.413–15). Yet there are higher forces: "The wheel of fortune spins about / And about ceaselessly." – "[…] God's power swiftly destroyed / And shattered tyrannies in themselves, / To show that in heaven / And on earth it alone is powerful." (XX.473–76) That freedom and opposition to tyranny and despotism are prominent themes corresponds to Dubrovnic as a relatively autonomous city-state at the edge of Ottoman domination of the Balkans. Government of justice and reason as opposed to despotism and the rule of the sabre clearly refers to the patristic governance of Dubrovnic where Gundulic was a member of one of the leading families. This thematic cluster is quite different from Tasso's opposition between infidels and Christianity and his stress on subservience to unity.

[68] Gundulic 1991, with excellent introduction. Jensen 1900 and Zlatar's more recent book 1995 are the major contributions to the study of the poem. Both are extensive studies that provide analysis of the poem in its historical context. Cf. also Madsen 2011.

Gundulic writes about the "savage merciless Turks", yet when Osman towards the end of the poem is confronted with execution there are limits to the vilification, estrangement, and dehumanizing of the enemy:

> […] each went proudly, / Showing mercilessness and anger, / Yet a tear flowed from their eyes, / A hidden power drove it. // Although they made themselves look evil, // They pretended in vain / That they were not men of flesh / And that they had no hearts. (XX.289–304)

Not only does Gundulic express his own empathy, he also allows the Turks to manifest their share in common human nature – even if it does its work against their will.

Zrínyi – The Fate of Hungary

Like Gundulic's *Osman*, Miklós Zrínyi's Hungarian epic *Obsidio Szigetiana* (*The Siege of Sziget* or *The Peril of Sziget*) in many respects followed the model of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*.[69] Zrinyi, who was out of a prominent noble lineage, chose as the *subject* of his heroic epic the Ottoman siege under the command of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent of the fortress Szitgevar in 1566 and as *hero* the commander of the fortress, his namesake great grandfather. At the time when the young Zrínyi (1620–1664) wrote his epic poem (1645–1646), Hungary had for an extended period since the defeat at Mohács, and in particular since the capture of Buda in 1441, been under foreign sovereignty, partly Ottoman, partly Habsburg. Politically speaking Zrínyi endeavored to contribute to the formation of an autonomous Hungary headed by Hungarian nobility.

The political and social situation in Hungary was quite peculiar.[70] Contrary to the Ottoman areas in the Balkans there was no serious attempt to Islamize the population.[71] There was no stable borderline between Habsburg and Ottoman domains, both sides relied on fortresses as power points, and fortresses were occasionally under attack from the opposite side – the Ottoman capture of Sziget is a prominent example. Furthermore, there were raids into the areas of the opposite side, and even Hungarian nobility that had moved to the Habsburg (or the Transylvanian) side collected tax among their subjects in the Ottoman area; local jurisdiction was in many respects in the hands of local authorities, even if the fortresses also had jurisdictional functions (e.g., concerning capital punishment) besides their task to collect taxes. Peasants could be forced to pay taxes not only to the Ottoman

[69] Zrínyi 2011.

[70] This is an unusually complicated issue, cf. above and Hegyi 1987; Ágoston 2011; Dávid 1995; Brummett 2012, in particular 59–73; Molnar 2001.

[71] Hegyi 1987, 210.

authorities but also to their masters from the Habsburg (or Transylvanian) side.[72]

On one hand the Ottoman and the Habsburgs were in power, *en principe*, on the other hand the nobility was to a large extent in charge, and a sizable part of the nobility was nationalist in the sense that they wanted autonomy from the Habsburgs and a reconstitution of an independent Hungary. Despite a certain amount of commercial activity there was no strongly influential bourgeoisie – peasants and artisans did not count politically. Nationalist politics was thus all about the nationalist nobility, and about a nation governed by the nobility and a king elected by the nobility.[73] Miklós Zrinyi was the most prominent and influential is this group of noblemen. As his political writings, his poem is an exhortation to unity as a precondition for fighting the Ottomans as well as the Habsburgs. *The Siege of Sziget* achieved status as a kind of national epic that has only sparsely been known outside Hungary, yet in his own time his role as politician and military strategist in defense against the Ottomans was of European renown as it appears from publications of various sorts providing information about his role in the campaigns against the Turks in 1663–64 and from reactions to his death during a hunting event in 1664.[74]

As Amedeo di Francesco points out in his contribution, an intriguing aspect of Zrínyi's epic poem is relations between the role of the Divine, the role of Fortune, and the role of individual and collective agents. God, The Great Almighty, realizes, how the Hungarians "Do not walk on the path which His Son ordered." (I.7): "They pursue their pleasure without restraint" (I.8), they demonstrate "Much loose virtue and grave blasphemy, Avarice, hatred, and false divination, Unnatural perversion and slander, Theft, murder, and

[72] A somewhat longer account provides an indication of the complications: "Les habitants d'une ville au cœur du territoire turc pouvaient juger les assassins, voleurs et luxurieux selon leurs propres normes éthiques, mais ne savais jamais quand des soldats turcs ou hongrois mettent le feux dans leur maisons. […] les Turcs toléraient même, dans les territoires leur soumis, la présence des soldats et de la noblesse hongroises. Au XVIe siècle la voie était ouverte par les soldats des forteresses hongroises qui percevaient les impôts dans les territoires turcs. Au XVIIe siècle, par cette voie, la noblesse hongroise reconquit, elle aussi, son influence et son droit d'intervention dans la vie du people de la province turque: elle faisait l'imposition, donnait des ordres, prenait des dispositions, des règlements et contrôlait leur observation, publiait des interdiction et punissait sévèrement les réfractaires. Le people des régions occupies devait se résigner à ce que ses anciens maîtres retournés restaient à côté des nouveaux, et les Turcs devaient supporter cette véritable double domination, le condominium sur leur territoire. Ils le supportaient ne pouvant pas y parer, et car, en fin de compte, cela ne mit pas en question le plus important, leur règne militaire sur la province." Hegyi 212–213.

[73] Cf. Molnar 2001, 95–100: "Partition, population and society".

[74] Cf. the section 'Fame and Memory', in Hausner 2016, 281–380.

eternal depravity." (I.10) In anger, God therefore entices Suleiman to attack the Hungarians and thus become "the scourge of my fury" (I.24), yet if the Hungarians find better ways, return to God and repent, God will break the Turks. (I.24) The epic events unfold within this overarching frame: everything is in God's hand, yet the fate of the Hungarians depends on their own endeavor, if they do not improve, the Turks will have the upper hand. "The God sat on His throne (...) Fortune and Nature humbly / Stand below him, ready for service", as Zrinyi has it at one point (XV.18–19). Yet not only does Fortune depend on the character of actions in relation to Divine norms, "the heroic man" must "cede some things to fortune." (I.43) What Fortune will bring is as inscrutable as Divine will, the task is thus to react to Fortune in the appropriate manner, as Suleiman demonstrates:

> Fortune did not toy with him, as with others: / If she wanted to scare him with a blow, / Or with defeat in battle, or with other harm, / He was always prepared, with his Intelligence; // He did not bend, like a twig, but like a boulder stood / Amidst the waves of the sea, steeled himself; / So, if fortune gave him something good, / He became not proud, nor boastful. (II.48–49)

Yet similar attitudes do not lie at the hand of less stoic characters. Stressing this thematic complex, Amedeo Di Francesco, in reference to Maravall's seminal book on the subject, identifies a baroque pattern of experience of being toyed with: "the confusion and disorientation among those who have to act in a mad world, that is considered seriously ill and nefarious." At the time when Zrínyi wrote his epic poem, he was also occupied with his first work in prose, *The Virtuous General*, including an aphorism entitled Constantia:

> But should Fortune turn its back on him, the good warrior is not to be alarmed, since these are times when humanity and valour are tested, the times that bring him his fame and name. As gold in fire, a helmsman in a tempest, a warrior is revealed in peril, he is to play with fortune and not let that woman [i.e., Fortuna] on the road play with him, he is to remember the greatness of his forebears, his growing fame, he is to despise death, which is not so unfamiliar and horrendous, as it is perceived by this base earthly body of ours, because it is a duty every man in the world owes to the world. And when the warrior shows resolution, God will collage Fortune and send her to him, and Fortune will take pity and avert danger.[75]

Justus Lipsius' neo-stoic book *De constantia in publicis malis* (On constancy in times of public evil, 1583) was one of Zrínyi's main inspirations.[76]

[75] Hausner 2016, 255–57.
[76] Hausner 2016, 255.

Similar ideals are not easy to uphold: "Man scrambles, fatigues, grasps at the world, / He expects to yield constant happiness; / He does not believe that Fortune will snap apart / In his hands, and after a little sweetness will yield a hundred agonies." (IV.1) Suleiman's stoic strength is exceptional and so is his opponent Miklos Zrínyi's mental situation, not only is his religious belief steadfast, he is furthermore chosen by God, who "gave him such power, / That enemies before him, like sand, were swept away; / God knew well that he was a faithful servant, / And so blessed him in all his doings." (II.63) Jesus even assures him of his destiny: "Martyrdom you shall suffer from the pagans, / Because for my name you shall bravely die." (II.83) In the epic poem about his ancestor, the martyrium turns, at the background of the virtues manifested by the commander of the fortress, into a pattern for and a premonition of Hungary's potential future grandeur and victory over the Turks. To the author, contemporary Hungary manifests deficiencies that are akin to what determined God's anger at his ancestor's time, and the poet's own time demands virtues echoing the unanimity and collective backing of his ancestor's authority in the defense of the fortress of Szitgevar as described in his poem.

Zrínyi's opponent, Suleiman, is initially described in glorifying terms: "Only his faith being pagan aside, / Perhaps never was such a lord amongst the Turks." (I.44) Zrinyi does even articulate the ultimate, albeit hypothetical appreciation: "Maybe even amongst Christians he would have been the greatest", yet qualifying: "Had cruelty not made a mark upon his heart." (I.46) As it turns out, despite his outstanding qualities and his celebrated wisdom, Suleiman degenerates into tyrannical and dividing attitudes.

Compared to Tasso's representation of relations between Christians and their Muslim opponents, including internal conflicts and amorous pursuits undermining Christian unity and the authority of Godfred of Bouillon, Zrinyi displaced some of these conflicts to the Muslim Camp.

Zrinyi's attitude to and representations of the Ottoman world did not rely on reproductions of standardized prejudices, he lived near the Ottoman part of Hungary and was very well informed. One of the major themes in Amedeo di Francesco's contribution is thus the complexity of Zrínyi's representation of the Turks. As a warrior he held the military capacities of the Turks in high regard. Di Francesco also highlights the sensualism in Zrínyi's thematization of love – contrary to the Petrarchism of the major Hungarian poet of the previous century, Bálint Balassi. The love affair in Zrínyi's poem take place in the Turkish realm, contrary to the partly similar love affair between Ronaldo and Armida in Tasso's poem, that affects the Christian warfare (in

both cases love keeps a prominent warrior away from the battlefield). Here again, Zrínyi relocates one of Tasso's themes to the Ottoman sphere.

Di Francesco summarizes: "With the Turks, there can never be friendship, but this forced choice of side does not preclude the envy of what is positive on their side, what they have that is denied to the Hungarians by history and destiny. The Turks represent a loved and hated counter-world [...]."

Defending Vienna

Zrinyi was not only prominent in Hungary, his renown was – as mentioned above – of European scale. In a book published in London in 1664 the anonymous author writes about him as a hero "upon whom Providence hath devolved the Fate of Europe". The "Western world seems to stand or fall" upon his "success or overthrow" in the situation where the dangers are

> as considerable as they have been these hundred years, the Grand Seignior straining himself for an universal and complete Conquest this Spring [meant is Spring 1663, when the book was written], threatening Europe with no less than three hundred thousand men […] and contriving the most terrible confederacy against us that ever was thought of, taking the most unhappy occasions and advantages of divided interests and parties that ever was offered him.[77]

As this text demonstrates, Turkish threat could at this point, twenty years before the Ottoman defeat at Vienna in 1683, still be perceived as decisive, even from a standpoint as far away from the frontiers as England.

Lohenstein – Turcology and mirror for princes

Leopold I, the Holy Roman Emperor (from 1658 to 1705), was a protagonist in the defense of Europe against the Ottoman Empire. In the works of Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683) the role of the Holy Roman Emperor and confrontation with the Ottoman Empire are recurring points of reference, even if the subject matters of his dramas (like antique or oriental matters) and his other works are not directly related to contemporary conflicts.

In the summer of 1663 Ottoman armies invaded the Austrian part of Hungary as an attempt to reach Vienna; although they were defeated in 1664, Ottoman forces to the north penetrated as far as Moravia and Silesia (Turkish wars in which Zrínyi took part). A contemporary account, according to the author based on "the most valued authors" and "reliable letters and information forwarded to me", relates frightening Ottoman violence (including what seems to be reproductions of standard – verbal or pictorial – representations):

[77] Anon. 1664.

> Turks and Tartars […] spread out as a swarm of bees / roamed the length and breadth of the land / looted and burned / all open hamlets and villages / […] whatever people they found there or in the field / had to endure their inhuman tyrants: Old people were mercilessly cut down women and virgins were humbled / the young children were smashed against the walls as newborn dogs / or they held them high / and cleaved them in two / or threw them to the ground / and trampled with their feet [..] Strong men and young women they tied together / and dragged away like cattle [...] In the countryside there was a great flight / towards the towns and fortified places / and in the towns there was great fear for the invading enemy.[78]

Daniel Casper von Lohenstein's Silesian hometown, Breslau, was one of the towns refugees from the countryside wanted to reach, and the town had to provide soldiers for the imperial army. The effects of the war with the Ottoman army was thus close at hand, and matters related to the Ottomans were prominent in his writings, even when the immediate subject matter was of a different kind, as it is the case in his dramas on events from the antiquity. In *Ibrahim Sultan*, one of the texts analyzed in Todd Kontje's contribution on Lohenstein, the subject matter is directly Ottoman, though, and even next to contemporary, since the protagonist was deposed and strangled in 1648. Ibrahim represents depravity, *luxuria*, and tyranny, in particular uncontrolled sexual urge engendering equally uncontrolled violence. In these respects the drama takes part in standard representations of Turkish vices, yet it turns out that the Ottoman court and society – the divan (the council), the religious leaders, the janissaries, and 'the people' or 'the masses'("*Rath und Janitshar und Pöfel*", "*Heer und Volck*") – are united in opposition to the Sultan and in the end deposes him. The conflict generates debates about legitimate use of power, and in general the play – as Todd Kontje points out – takes on a character of 'mirror for princes', possibly somehow mirroring aspects of the relation between Lohenstein as a an official of the government of Breslau and a diplomat vis-à-vis Vienna on one hand and Leopold I as an absolute monarch on the other hand.

Lohenstein's philosophy of history in some respects follows Luther's, although he does not think in terms of the imminence of Doomsday. In terms of *translatio imperii*, in his view Leopold's historical role as Holy Roman Emperor is to conquer the Ottoman Empire and thereby establish world power and inaugurate a Golden Age – this is what is written in the book (*Geheim-*

[78] Quotes from *Ortelius redivivus etc.*, Martin Meyer's edition and continuation (Meyer 1665) of Hieronymus Oertels (in Latin Ortelius) widely read *Cronologia* etc. (Oertel 1602). Meyer's remarks about sources are from his "An den Geschicht-liebenden Leser". Longer quotes are from Zweiter Theil, 272 and 273.

Buch) of Providence (*Verhängniss*). In his copious notes to Ibrahim Sultan, Lohenstein refers to Book of Daniel in relation to this view of the point in providential history bestowed on Leopold, the addressee of the dedication.[79]

Lohenstein follows and expands on the tradition for Silesian school dramas, plays – as in the case of Andreas Gryphius – were in this context meant to be enacted by pupils as part of the education, and annotations should further insight. In his notes, Lohenstein similarly, yet much more elaborate than Gryphius, refers to sources for and explains habits and beliefs that are represented in the drama, providing a broad panorama of (his own and his sources' view of) the Ottoman Empire and Islam. Information about Sultan Ibrahim is first and foremost derived from an Italian source, whereas knowledge about the Ottoman Empire largely is based on Sansovino's compilation mentioned above, in an edition from 1654 (a printing that includes Lohenstein's source about Ibrahim). This means, in fact, that a major source is Menavino as reprinted in Sansovino's compilation, supplemented in particular by Pierre Belon's *Observations*, yet Sansovino's compilation also included texts from Peter the Venerable's compilation, among them the text known as 'Doctrina Machumet', a translation of what seems to be an authentic Arabic description of popular beliefs. From this text Lohenstein reproduces some, as he takes them, ridiculous beliefs. Supplementing the medieval and largely 16th century sources (in Sansovino's compilation and elsewhere), he adds contemporary information: first and foremost Paul Rycaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668, in the French translation from 1670) providing detailed information on the Ottoman court, but also Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's *Nouvelle relation de l'intérieur du sérrail du Grand Ségnieur* (1675). Lohenstein's notes thus provide an interesting glimpse of the way in which information circulated and how even very old sources were taken at face value, thus prompting Lohenstein to reproduce ancient prejudices despite the breadth of his more recent information.

Abraham of Sancta Clara – Exhortation and Tradition

When the Ottoman army approached and besieged Vienna, the Austrian Augustinian Abraham of Santa Clara articulated the urgency of defense in the historical situation: "the sabre is at the gate", the fate of Christianity will depend on the outcome of this second attempt to open the gates not only to Vienna, but also to Central Europe and the West in general. In his pamphlet entitled *Auf, Auf, ihr Christen*, which was published during the siege, he reiterated in colorful language a series of classic anti-Muslim and anti-

[79] Cf. Béhar 1988, chapter V: "Lecons de l'œuvre tragique" 245–344.

Turkish themes.[80] In this respect his widely read text demonstrates the continuity of this tradition. "Mohammad was such a Devilish cook, who cut diverse pieces from various beliefs, Old and New Testament, Arian and Nestorian sects, and stewed them together in a pot, so that the Turks are still licking their fingers after this mixed dish." In Abraham's characteristic phrasing, this is what he could read in the earliest sources about the formation of Islam provided by Peter the Venerable in the *Collectio Toletana*, i.e., that Mohammad's formation of the Muslim creed was using Jewish and heretic Christian sources, and thus in no way was a Divine revelation. Muhammad is a "satanic man" who has disgusting visions of Paradise where the diseased will "forever enjoy all sorts of lasciviousness". Abraham's description of the Turks is no less eloquent, the Turk is "a copy of Anti-Christ, he is a conceited potbelly bailiff, he is a gluttonous tiger, he is an incarnated Satan, he is a darn world-assaulter, he is an atrocious insatiable, he is a revenge-avaricious beast, he is an unscrupulous crown-thief, he is a murderous falcon, he is an insatiable lecher-bastard, he is an oriental throat-poison, he is the unleashed hell-hound, he is a never satisfied voluptuous, he is a tyrannical monster etc."

Abraham hints at the idea of *translatio imperii*, positioning Leopold as governing the last of the four empires, "the last monarchy, that is the Roman monarchy, where Leopoldus already carries the scepter". At the threshold of a decisive confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and European Christianity headed by the Holy Roman Emperor, Abraham's widely read book thus summarizes a series of motives and themes, reaching back to the Middle Ages, in polemics against Islam and in interpretations of the historical role of 'Sarazens' and 'Turks'.

Jan Sobieski – Sarmatian, crusader, Old Testament warrior

As it is pointed out in Barbara Milewska-Waźbińska's contribution, in the Polish context the hero of the defeat of the Ottomans is the Polish king, Jan Sobieski. In numerous literary works, in Latin as well as in Polish, he is celebrated as incarnating Sarmatian virtues, i.e., what was taken as particular virtues of Polish nobility. He is simultaneously associated with the hero of Tasso's also in Poland particularly influential epic on the first crusade, i.e., with Godfrey of Bouillon. Yet a third reference is important: Israelite victories as spelled out in the Old Testament. This frame of reference is, as Milewska-Waźbińska underscores, prominent in Wespazjan Kochowski's *Polish Psalmody* (1695). In his psalm XXI he brings three of the most widespread anti-Muslim themes in play – Muhammad as false prophet,

[80] Abraham à Sancta Clara 1683. Cf. Eybl 1992, in particular on *Auf, Auf*: 277–283. Cf. Schillinger 1984 and 1993.

repeated ablution, and excessive sexuality: "The false prophet helped them not in their trouble, and their constant washings have not cleansed the whoremasters of their sins." To the contrary, they are now lying "strewn about the field like fatted cattle after slaughter".

> The stronger one [i.e., Sobieski] hath mounted their horses, broken their spears over them, and shot bullets into the backs of the fleeing.
>
> Their purple-robed leaders have all fallen, those who had said, "Let us go and possess the Christian land."
>
> Unmanly hath the vizier perished, strangled with a cord; and soon did Jael pound a nail into the forehead of the destroyers of the Lord's churches.
>
> And it has passed for them as it had passed for the Midionites and for Jabin on the river Kishon.[81]

In Book of Judges, chapter 5, Jael kills Sisera, Jabin's army commander, who is threatening the Israelites – as Kara Mustapha, the Ottoman vizier, is threatening Christianity attacking Vienna. Not only associating, but literally identifying Sobieski with the Old Testament character, Kochowski situates the victorious defense of Vienna within the Biblical interpretative frame, thus – as Milewska-Waźbińska argues – implicitly attributing to the Poles the role of chosen people.

Depending on their specific situation vis-à-vis the Ottomans and the events leading up to and during the defense of Vienna in 1683, Lohenstein, Abraham a Sancta Clara, and Polish authors like Kochowski had each their frame of interpretation, yet in various ways they all applied patterns of thought and imagination derived from the tradition, whether it was stereotypical negative depictions of Islam or 'Turks', historical or biblical analogies, or general religious views of historical developments. In this sense, certain continuities in reactions from the Fall of Constantinople through the second siege of Vienna are obvious, yet as some of the examples highlighted above like *Viaje de Turquia* and Bodin's *Colloquium of the Seven* were meant to demonstrate: attitudes were not at all uniform during that span of time, and as the variety of reactions to the fall of Constantinople among leading men of the church likewise were meant to demonstrate: even within the Christian elite, attitudes were variegated. Nor did interpretations in terms of religious confrontation correspond to commercial relations, pragmatic political alliances, and personal experiences of real-life relations. The contributions brought together here at one and the same time demonstrates to what an extent the presence of the 'Turks' had a literary and intellectual impact *and* how variegated reactions and representations were, depending on the interaction of preconceived ideas, information, personal experience, and the broader patterns of framing.

[81] Kochowski 1983.

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From Rhetoric to Memory:

Islam, Ottomans, and Austrian Historians in the Renaissance

By Paula Sutter Fichtner

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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Stars, Signs, and Tears:

Turkish Threats, Politics, and Apocalyptic Historiography in Sebastian Brant

By Peter Madsen

Towards the end of Brant's immensely successful Narrenschiff *(1494), the Turkish question turns out to be crucial to the organization of the book, as it is to Brant's entire intellectual activity, from shorter poems published as leaflets to the most extensive treatment in his history of Jerusalem. In* Narrenschiff *he writes about "Moors, Turks and Heathens" doing the Devil's work, and about the Moors and the Turks as a decisive threat against Christianity. "Endchrist" is knocking at the door. His view of the historical situation is impregnated by the apocalyptic tradition.*

Interpreting Strange Occurrences

Wednesday 7 November 1492 a meteorite of roughly 130 kg landed in a wheat field near Ensisheim in Alsace. According to a chronicle many people saw it as "ein Zeichen seltzam wunder" – a singularly miraculous sign.[1] The scholars had no inkling; a similar stone does not appear out of thin air, it must consequently be taken as a supernatural phenomenon. Furthermore, the event was unique, and no account or sighting of a similar thing had ever been reported. The impact was heard far away and was so deafening that people thought houses had collapsed. In addition, the stone was buried half man deep in the earth. Several contemporary reactions agreed on the divine nature of the meteorite as a sign from God.[2] The printing press made it possible to report the incident everywhere, and there was a common interest in and concern with awe-inspiring phenomena, such as meteorites, visions of three suns, Siamese twins, or pigs with eight legs, phenomena that were widely regarded as ominous.

Sebastian Brant subjected a number of these incidents and occurrences to poetic elaboration in printed flyers.[3] Before the end of the month of the meteoric impact, he published a flyer, an *Einblattdruck*, with the heading *Uon*

[1] Cf. Wuttke 1976, the said chronicle is reprinted 147–148; in his epilogue to Pauls Hertz' edition of *Flugblätter des Sebastian Brant* 1915, Franz Schulz writes, that the decription is drawn from a protocol of the town of Ensisheim, 1589.

[2] Wuttke 1976, 147.

[3] About Brant's interpretations in general, cf. Wuttke 1974.

den donnerstein gefallen jm xcij iar (About the meteorite landed in the year 1492): *vor Ensisheim*. Similar sheets are approximately in A2 format.[4] Below the headline a woodcut across the sheet illustrates the meteorite's impact. Beneath follows another title: *De fulgetra anni xcij. Sebastianus Brant* and 22 Latin couplets facing a German version, albeit not a direct translation. Brant mentions other remarkable phenomena, but the most notable is the meteorite, an event he cannot explain in a scientific way. A similar occurrence is mentioned by Anaxagoras, and people close to the site of the impact did actually hear it – this way of linking evidence from antique references and contemporary records is a common feature in the writings of Brant and other humanist intellectuals. Whatever happened with this meteoric impact, do believe me, Brant implores his readers, it "manifests a momentous ill-boding omen for the future. I pray that it may haunt our evil enemy".[5] Contrary to the Latin text, the German version does not mention any difficulties of scientific interpretation (perhaps because that was primarily a matter of interest to a Latin reading public), and Brant here directly identifies the evil enemy as the French. At the bottom of the sheet finally a poem to "*Maximilianum. Romischen kuning*", calling Maximilian (I.) to confront the enemy courageously: He must grasp the spokes of the Wheel of Fortune, luck will stand by him, Austria, Burgundy, and the German Nation will be on his side. "The stone is sent to you by God, / God himself is telling you in your country: / stand up and defend yourself".[6] Thus conveying God's call for a defensive war, Brant's interpretation of the meteorite's "heinous thunderbolt" (*grusam donnerschlag*) endorses already extant war preparations and endows them with divine assistance.

The Latin poem about the Ensisheim-meteorite was reprinted in Brant's collection of poems *Varia Carmina* in 1498, with an additional poem about the meteorite composed in 1493, the year after the flyer.[7] There are no extant copies of the original version of this second poem, just a duplicate and the reprint in *Varia Carmina*; the printing medium of the original publication is unknown. After the amazing meteorite, great events indeed followed, but the full import of the apparition had yet to be seen. Brant thought that the huge weight of the meteorite signaled some huge event, something momentous. Here again Maximilian enters the picture. He is asked to bring his reputation on a par with the meteoric thunder. Yet the foes to fight are not the French – in the meantime they were defeated – but the Turks. Thus, Brant thematizes

[4] Cf. Hertz 1915, with a selection of facsimile-prints rendered in the original format.

[5] Quoted from Wuttke 1976, 151.

[6] "der stein ist dir gesant / Dich mant gott in dim eigen lant / Das dü dich zu stellen solt zu wer".

[7] Cf. Wuttke 1976, 157 ff., on which the following description draws.

a commitment that pervades the entire body of his work: the relation to the Ottoman Empire, and the preconditions for a victorious struggle against its expansion and against the Muslim (Mamluk) rule of Jerusalem. The perspective is twofold: on one hand the idea of crusade, on the other the necessity of consensus in the Holy Roman Empire as well as unanimity in a broader European sphere under the leadership of Maximilian.[8]

Brant gained reputation as a skilled interpreter of extraordinary phenomena, consequently a pig born in Alsace with one head and one heart but two snouts, two tongues, four ears, and eight feet was immediately brought the twenty-two kilometers to Basel for Brant's consideration.[9] His interpretation is, as Dieter Wuttke notes, based on "a combination of augurship, mythological visionary power, Bible-oriented prophecy and field observation".[10] In a salient moment of his intricate considerations he establishes the pig's relation to dirt and its fondness for stinky environments, which leads him to identify dirt with Turks:

> Of the Turks it is rightly said / their nature is akin to the sow's / The sow is an awfully unclean animal / seeking all its beauty in dirt / as does the Turk's unclean crowd / living in all sorts of dirt.[11]

The conclusion is close at hand:

> Who could deny that the meaning of the sow was the people of Mohammed, full of swinish lust, only seeking the earthly goods, loving them and living in luxuriance under the yoke of dirt?[12]

The emphatic manifestation of the Muslim in this pig heralds, evidently, Turkish defeat, since the pig quickly died. Brant sees the pig as an omen of the coming of the Antichrist: "The sow is the brother of the Turk / She is truly

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[8] The entire field has recently been researched and described in detail in a number of publications, that have been important for the present essay; most recent is Mertens 2010, further cf. Schillinger 2008, Niederberger 2005 – her excellent article draws on her Inaugural-Dissertation (2004), by far the most exhaustive treatment of our theme, and Schünicke 2002. These publications have rich bibliographies concerning the general historical and cultural context. On the question of the crusades, see recently Housley 2012. The classic description, in the perspective of cultural history, of relations to the Ottoman Empire in the period, is Schwoebel 1967. In recent research excellent pioneering accounts are presented in contributions to Guthmüller & Kühlmann 2000.

[9] Also on this event and Brant's reading of it, cf. Wuttke 1994.

[10] Wuttke 1994, 107.

[11] Cit. Niederberger 2005, 185: "Als Turcken, die man halt billich / Das ir wesen der Su syg glich, / Eyn Su ist eyn wu(e)st unreyn thier / Die in unflat su(o)cht all ir zier, / als du(o)t der Türcken unreyn Schar / Jn allem unflat leben gar."

[12] Wuttke 1994, 111: "Hinc Mahumetanam spurcamque libidine gentem / Hac designatam quis negat esse Sue? / Quae terrena sibi dumtaxat quaerit amatque / Et luxu vivit spurciciaque iugi".

like Antichrist."[13] But only God knows the due date, he could decide "that the little ship stays on keel"[14], a formulation that brings *The Ship of Fools* to mind.[15]

With the *Donnerstein*-flyer and similar publications Sebastian Brant is operating as a humanist activist exploiting new forms of publication in his support of Maximilian and his policies. The development of the printing press and movable types initiated by Gutenberg half a century earlier rapidly became crucial for interventions in the sphere of political-ideological public opinion.[16] Brant's flyers were an early example of the amalgamation of texts and xylographic illustrations. The immediate appeal of the image is followed by a textual bifurcation, which suggests two – overlapping – types of readers: a learned public schooled in Latin and a wider public using the vernacular. Even the illiterates could be reached by way of a combination of illustration and oral reading of or comment on Brant's texts. Brant represented the new intelligentsia, which emerged in relation to the establishing of a number of new universities, and for a time he was active in Basel as a professor of Roman as well as canonical law (and poetics).[17] Most of his writings were in Latin, contrary to his greatest success *The Ship of Fools*, widely known in all of Europe primarily due to his student Jacob Locher's Latin version. The humanist Latin tradition from Petrarch and onwards is present in Brant's texts not only in his extensive writings in Latin, but also in the many allusions and

[13] Wuttke 1994, 112: "Die Su der Türcken bruder ist / Wol würd verglicht sie dem endkrist." The history of the ideas of AntiChrist (Endkrist) is highly complicated, yet generally speaking AntiChrist is a manifestation of evil, doing Satan's work, often also depicted as deceptive, pretending to represent the true belief. In particular, in times of crisis historical characters (like Nero), institutions (e.g. the Catholic Church in the Lutheran view), or even ethnic groups (in the Middle Ages often Jews, in Brant's time – as in Luther's – Turks) are identified as 'AntiChrist', i.e. as opposing and threatening true Christianity. Furthermore, the supposed appearance of AntiChrist may herald a final apocalyptic confrontation and thus 'Endtime', of which there are numerous scenarios, generally including the Second Coming of Christ and the Final Judgement, often also a decisive role of a 'Final Emperor' (EndKaiser). The sources of these apocalyptic and eschatological scenarios are manifold, important are in particular a few indications in the Gospels, the Johannine Letters and in Saint Paul, as well as not least the Revelation, and in the Old Testament Daniel's Book, yet also prophetic traditions, among them the impact of the 7th century so called Pseudo-Methodius (see below). Daniel's Book and Pseudo-Methodius are also important outsets for visions of historical epochs, *translatio imperii*, that point to the Roman Empire as the last, visions that are implicated in interpretations and actualizations of John's Revelation. On various versions of AntiChrist and Endtime cf. McGinn 2000 and his anthology with historical introduction (1979).

[14] Wuttke 1994, 112: "Do mit das schyfflin vff recht blib".

[15] Section 99.

[16] About Brant in Schilling 2008.

[17] Cf. Müllers excellent article 1980. On German humanism cf. Helmrath 2007. On Brant in general, cf. Wilhelmi 2002; there is a somewhat older monograph by Zeydel 1967.

references to ancient, especially Roman, analogies, and on a more comprehensive level – like in Petrarch – as the dream of a new power emulating the Roman in its heyday. It was Maximilian I, who was crowned king in 1486 and later became Roman Emperor in 1508, Brant had in mind as the new powerful Roman emperor. This notion he argued in both Latin and German, through flyers and other types of his own publications as well as by active participation in the thriving publishing activity in Basel and elsewhere. Brant partook in a number of publications, also by providing them with introductory poems. Among these publications were the works of Augustine and Petrarch, major protagonists of the ecclesiastical and the humanist traditions respectively. In 1496 he co-published Petrarch's Latin works. After his time at the University of Basel, he moved into public administration as a senior official in Strasbourg (Strassburg, at that time German).

Sebastian Brant's spheres of activity thus include academia and publishing – not least as a public author – as well as political activity related to Maximilian I, whose policies he supported through his production. He was not only Germany's first author with a wide European circulation, but also one of the first bestselling authors on a European level. Both Brant and his translator Locher stress the importance of the new printing technique for publishing and circulation. In his own Latin praise poem to the publisher John Bergmann von Olpe in Basel, his main collaborator, Brant acknowledges:

> what in the past could barely be written in a thousand days by one, / art now helps to handle in a single day. / Earlier the libraries of scholars were sparse […]. / In earlier days many a town had at most a few books, / today we find books even in modest homes. […] And all of this is thanks to the art and work of German printers.

Neither Italy nor France have inventions that can compare to the German printing technique: "Tell us, if you still call Germans barbarians".[18]

Brant's propaganda-texts again and again merge campaigning for the struggle against the Turks and other Muslims with promotion of a strengthening of the emperor in his own realm, where he is weakened by the reluctance of local princes *vis-à-vis* centralization, and on the European level where his project is undermined by the particularistic interests of the individual states and cities. In the additional poem about the Ensisheim meteorite mentioned above as well as in other texts Brant refers to the first Crusade as well as to Charlemagne's (purely legendary) pilgrimage to

[18] From "Preislied von S. Brant an Herrn Johannes Bergmann von Olpe über den Vorzug der kürzlich von Deutschen erfundenen Druckerkunst" (Eulogy for Mr. Johannes Bergmann from Olpe, about the excellence of the art of printing that was newly invented by the Germans), translated from German version in Knape 2005, 22–23 (after Schnur 1966).

Jerusalem. Arguments and assurances are thus taken from natural phenomena, both extraordinary (like the meteorite) and ordinary (like significant constellations), as well as from past and present history, and even if the political analysis refers to real events it is organized with a view of furthering the aims of the campaign at hand. This is also the case in a poem he added to his collection of poems, *Varia Carmina*, in some of its prints.[19] Once again he calls on Maximilian to fight against the Turks, noticing that when they hear of his coming, they will be overcome by fear and trembling, since they are very well aware of Charlemagne, Godfrey, i.e. the protagonist of the first crusade, Constantine, and Justinian (272–273).

Apocalyptic Vision of History

Remarkably, in Brant's interpretation of the deformed pig, the Turks are linked to Antichrist and thus to a final stage in world history, where the battle will be between Christian forces and the satanic forces incarnated in Antichrist. The integration of the confrontation with the Turks in the Christian historical perspective allots them a pivotal role. In the framework of a history of salvation, every major current event will have its place in a historical pattern leading towards judgement and salvation of the righteous. A variety of versions of this pattern were in use, but Brant's interest turned towards the apocalyptic. For him the pivotal turning around would occur in the not very distant future, and the confrontation with the Ottoman Empire had, in Brant's view, an essential role in the turn. In the poem just mentioned, which was added to the later versions of *Varia Carmina*, he enumerates the list of heroes of the past referring to prophetic writings in the apocalyptic tradition:

> Likewise, they [the Turks] predict from their writings, that it will not last long before Mohammed's name will go under. This is also sung by our prophets and the eminent writings of Saint Bridget and Saint Methodius and other eminent texts.[20]

He is hinting particularly at Daniel, but also at other prophetic writings of the Old Testament, along with the Revelation, as well as later references.

Brant's commitment to the apocalyptic tradition is particularly manifest in his reprint in 1498 of a text which includes a version of *Methodius* with an application in relation to contemporary history. The document commonly referred to as *Pseudo-Methodius,* a prophetic tract from the seventh century (about 692), was originally presented as authored by Methodius of Olympus,

[19] Cf. Ludwig 1997.

[20] Quoted in Ludwig 1997, 272: "Vaticinatur item scriptis: multum nec abesse / Ab Mahumaetani nominis intritu: / Id quod nostri etiam vates: sacraeque Brigittae: et / Methodii: atque alia scripta propata canunt." (23–26).

the fourth century church father. Thus, antedating the predictions, the text pretended to foresee the Muslim expansion in the seventh century several centuries before the event, and it presented further predictions of what the future would hold in store. What made *Pseudo-Methodius* especially interesting to Brant and his contemporaries were predictions about the Muslim – at the time of writing 'Sarazen', at Brant's time: Turkish – expansion followed by Christian supremacy, and about the end times. The document had been printed in Cologne in 1475, but Brant decided to re-publish a version established by Wolfgang Aytinger, a Dominican from Augsburg. The first edition of this version appeared in 1496 including not only the *Pseudo-Methodius* but also Aytinger's contemporary application *Tractatus super Methodium*. When Brant in 1498 reprinted *Methodius* in Basel, again including Aytinger's *Tractatus*, he not only added his own preface, but also numerous illustrations, fully in line with the approach used in his own single sheet prints. The intention was to make the publication, which was in Latin, appealing to a plurality of readers and to bring several communicative options in play.[21] As Brant stressed in the preface: "[…] I enter into the popular sphere. I have arranged for engraved pictures, in order to make this prediction in the spirit of prophecy more easily accessible to many."[22] Referring to Gregory the Great, he notes that what text is to readers, pictures are to those who cannot read, "in the picture, those who do not know letters are able to read."[23]

The combination of text and image is, in principle, the same as he practiced in the single sheet prints. Furthermore, the illustrations to Aytinger's *Methodius* were colored (green, yellow and several shades of red).[24] It was obviously a successful publication, since in 1516 six editions of this work had been printed.

The title indicates an angelical source to Methodius' revelations while in prison. The angelical apparition, depicted in a woodcut taking up most of the title page, addresses Methodius, who is looking out of the window from his prison cell. With a book in the hand the angel is looking at Methodius seemingly conveying what the book says. Since the prophecies of the *Pseudo-Methodius* were based on extensive interpretations of relatively short

[21] The edition is available online via the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; the Aytinger edition is summarized and commented on in detail in Zoepfl 1935. On Brant and Aytinger, cf. in particular Ludwig 1997, 275–99, but also Niederberger 2004, 201–211; on text and illustration, cf. Green 2012, on Brant and Pseudo-Methodius 92–94. The outset for the discussion of Aytinger and Brant here is primarily Zoepl and Ludwig, but also Niederberger.

[22] Translated by Green 2012, 93.

[23] Id.

[24] This regards the copy at the Herzog August Bibliothek.

passages of the Bible, it is lies at hand to assume that the illustration aims at depicting how the angel is communicating a divinely inspired prophetic reading of the Bible to Methodius. The caption on the version used by Brant indicates briefly the content of the prophecy:

> the divine revelations made by the holy angels about the beginning of the world and the extinction of various kingdoms and the deeds of the last king of the Romans and the future triumph over the Turks and the liberation of the Christians and the suppression of the Saracens, about the Restoration of the Church and the universal peace, with authentic comments regarding the relevant citations about the prophecies and about the completion of the earthly Saeculum.[25]

The comments mentioned here are Aytinger's *marginalia*; they were also included in Brant's 1498 edition. The work, as the quoted caption indicates, is nothing less than a history of the world from creation to universal peace, yet with a special focus on the relationship between Christianity and Turks, as in other Latin writings from the same time that, like Aytinger's edition of 1496, were printed in Ausburg, such as the *Destructio Turciae* from 1498 and *De futuris Christianorum triumphis in Turcos et Saracenos* from 1499.[26] Aytinger may have been involved in the publication of both of these contemporary writings.

The prophesy of *Pseudo-Methodius* presents the Seventh Century Muslim conquest of the Holy Land as willed by God as a punishment for the Christians' sinful behavior (this Old Testament motive was in fact a common interpretation at the time, as it turned out later on to be repeatedly). But the prophecy points towards a future Christian victory over the Muslims. As a justification of the publication Brant wrote in his preface that prediction of this victory over the Turks as imminent could be deducted from the Methodius-text, likewise Aytinger elaborated in his commentary in detail a computation of the date of the Turkish defeat, which he believed would take place 56 years after the fall of Constantinople.[27] The prophecy said that the last king or emperor would bring about the ultimate defeat of the Muslims; the year calculated by Aytinger (1509) would consequently point to a contemporary king – possibly Maximilian – corresponding to Brant's

[25] Ludwig 277: "revelationes divinas a sanctis angelis factas de principio mundi et eradicatione variorum regnorum atque ultimi regis romanorum gestis et futuro triumpho in turcos atque de liberatione christianorum ac oppressione sarracenorum, de restauratione ecclesie et universali pace cum autenticis concordantiis prophetiarum deque consumatione seculi hic annotat[is]."

[26] A passage from Annius 1480, of which there are several later prints.

[27] That Aytinger's calculations were not unique appears from a decree from the Fifth Lateran Council in 1516 condemning "all attemps to fix the time of Antichrist's coming and the end of the world" (McGinn 2000, 189).

frequent call for the Emperor to shoulder the role as leader of a decisive confrontation with the Turks.[28]

Brant did not believe that a similar precise estimate was possible, yet he was, as he wrote in the preface, convinced not only that the defeat of the Turks was a divine revelation (as in *Pseudo-Methodius*), but also that astrological calculations pointed in the same direction. Although not everything that is handed down in such prophecies is to be believed, he reasoned, realizing that much of what had been predicted actually *had* happened, there was no reason to doubt "that also what still remains, will follow, for as Gregory says, the certainty of the coming things are based on the previous having occurred."[29] He concludes his preface with an explicit reference to Maximilian,

> May the Suprime God [...] hasten the completion, and especially under the leadership of our invincible and most Christian King Maximilian and his most fortunate inspiration, may his kingdom and dominion, life and happiness increase and be protected by divine grace. [30]

Pseudo-Methodius writes about the final victory over the "Ismaelians", i.e. Arab Muslims:

> Swiftly then the king of the Greeks or the Roman king arises over the Ismaelians in great anger and he is like a man who rises from sleep, having drunk wine and looking dead to the people, and he brings his sword and destruction.[31]

It is a contemporary version of this king Aytinger is looking for: "Judging by the blessed Methodius' words, it is a certain German king, given that the Roman Empire is now in Germany, whose head is the Roman king."[32] Aytinger had two additional candidates, but Brant did stick to Maximilian.

In the apocalyptic tradition Daniel's Book and The Revelation have been subjected to numerous interpretations.[33] The origin is Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue, whose "head was pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs bronze, the legs iron, its feet partly iron and partly clay" (2:32–33). Daniel suggests, that the dream predicts the coming of three kingdoms following Nebuchadnezzar's, after which "the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, [...] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (2.44)

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[28] For details about the context of and background for Aytinger's publication cf. Reeves 1961, in particular 341–348.

[29] Ludwig 1997, 282.

[30] Ludwig 1997, 283.

[31] Ludwig 1997, 288.

[32] Ludwig 1997, 289.

[33] Cf. – besides McGinn 1979 and 2000 – Delgado et al. 2003, Aytinger and Brant are not mentioned in this otherwise comprehensive book.

In interpretations of this prediction, the idea of *translatio imperii* is crucial.[34] Following St. Jerome's pivotal interpretation (c. 407), the four kingdoms were identified as respectively the Babylonian, the Persian, Alexander's kingdom and the Roman Empire – with Maximilian at its head, as Brant saw it.[35] Later in Daniel, in a vision of his own, four animals are mentioned, of which the fourth has ten horns, and then, an additional horn, a little horn, crops up among them, uprooting three of the other horns (7.2–12). Again, it seems that four kingdoms are at stake, but the last of them, the Roman, seems to split into ten, among which an eleventh pushes forward, interpreted by Jerome as Antichrist.[36]

When Jacob Locher in 1498 published his Latin translation of *The Ship of Fools,* Brant supplied the publication with a nearly 600 verses long poem, *De corrupto ordine vivendi pereuntibus* (*About those who will perish from their corrupt ways of living*).[37] Here he follows the successive kingdoms and incorporates his own time in the interpretative pattern. The overarching issue is the question of order, *ordo*, in which a hierarchical arrangement of levels is crucial. The first violation of order was Lucifer's revolt, followed by the transgression of God's prohibition by Adam and Eve. Brant delineates the sequence of the various kingdoms but concentrates on the Roman Empire and its history in relation to his own time. With Emperor Constantine the unity of political power and religion was established. Yet this order was later disrupted by conflicts between Pope and Emperor. According to Brant only political power sanctioned by the Pope is legitimate, and Charlemagne's imperial coronation (in the year 800) institutes the legitimacy of the Holy Roman Emperor, while the schismatic relationship with Rome made the Byzantine Empire illegitimate. The Turkish conquest of Constantinople finishes off the eastern empire bringing it under Muslim rule in 1453.

The seven centuries from the imperial coronation of Charlemagne in 800 to Brant's own time made the Holy Roman Empire the longest lasting of all kingdoms. To Brant the Germans are thus obviously God's chosen people. But Maximilian's position is unstable, inwardly and outwardly. Brant notes how the position of the stars in the near future, i.e. in 1503, will be ominous – not necessarily signaling imminent ruin, but certainly a warning of the necessity of counteracting the precarious prospects:

[34] Cf. Goez 1958.
[35] Cf. Schillinger 2003.
[36] Schillinger 2003, 8.
[37] Brant 1998, 321–338. What follows is based on Schillinger 2003.

> It is fitting to be subjected to this illustrious, pious and magnanimous king. […] Certainly, adverse stars and fatal omens threaten us. But may the cruel stars twinkle; these stars will be overcome, if only we respect the order, and the less eminent members remain subject to their leader.[38]

Then it will be possible to triumph over the Turks and reconquer the Holy Land, as Brant has it in *The Ship of Fools*: "The noble Maximilian, / He merits well the Roman crown. / They'll surely come into his hand, / The Holy Earth, the Promised Land."[39] The translation of imperial power within the Roman Empire has, in the eyes of Brant, reached Austria, "all of the earth is submitted to Austria", and under Austrian leadership the victory over the Turks can be achieved: "The Turk, the heathen, all of the earth will come under your power, rule and crown", as he wrote in 1502.[40] This conceptual pattern situates Maximilian as the final emperor who will defeat Antichrist in Turkish guise. Although Brant does not share Aytinger's belief in predictive accuracy in establishing the time of the decisive victory, his apocalyptic view of history agrees with Aytinger's as far as the role of the Turks is concerned.

The most elaborated version of this view is his book on Jerusalem, *De origine et conversatione bonorum regum et laude civitatis Hierosolymae cum exhortatione eiusdem recuperandae* (About the good kings' ancestry and life and the praise of the city of Jerusalem with an exhortation to reclaim it) published in 1495.[41] As the title indicates, the historical presentation is linked to a call for crusade. Whereas he at other occasions relied on Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon as models for Maximilian, here he enacts a reverse actualization: in his rendering of Urban II's call for crusade (1095) he, rather surprisingly, yet emulating the Italian humanist Flavio Biondo, lets Urban refer to the Turks as Brant's own contemporaries. In a certain way, though, this approach is consistent with the entire interpretative tradition of taking the ancient texts as statements about the present. The situation is threatening, and

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[38] De Corrupto ordine… 522–533: "Quod tam praeclaro: iustoque: pioque, subesse / Vos decuit Regi: magnanimoque viro: […] Astra licet nobis contraria multa minentur: / Dira simul: qvamvis sydera saeva micent: / Sydera vincemus: maneamus in ordine saltem: / Et capiti subsint, membra minora, suo." Cit. Schillinger 2003, 25.

[39] Citations in English from *The Ship of Fools* follow Zeydel's translation (Brant 1962), here 320–321. The most recent standard edition of the German text is Knape's (Brant 2005), with an excellent, detailed introduction and bibliography (11–99), this edition is the source of quotations from the original text. Here: "Der edel fürst Maximilian / Wol würdig ist der Römschen kron / Dem kumbt on zwifel jnn sin handt / Die heilig erd / vnd das globte landt." (99.160–2).

[40] "All erd ist ostrych underthon", "Turck, heiden, all ertrich wird gon / Under din gwalt, gebott, und kron", Brants flyer from 1502 *Zu eren romscher kuniglicher maiestat von der vereyn der kunigen und anschlag an die turchen.* Cit. in Niederberger 2004, 240–241.

[41] Cf. in particular Niederberger 2004, as well as Niederberger 2005, Schillinger 2008, and Mertens 2010.

in Brant's text Urban II stresses, how Constantinople no longer stands between the Turks and Europe:

> Until now even in the most distant parts of Europe, the Empire, from Constantinople to the north, has been a bolt and like a wall that checked all major devastating avalanches of the Turks and Saracens, preventing them from burying among themselves first the Hungarians, the Poles, the Bohemians, and even the Germans and then the remaining Christians.[42]

In the long poetic epilogue, Brant added to Locher's Latin 1497 version of *The Ship of Fools,* he similarly wrote:

> While we still are taking counsel, the Turk has left his Greek coasts and robs Illyria and Pannonia, and hardly has he taken possession of the Danube, he will attack the banks of the Rhine and prepare the destruction of the Germans. Then, it is to be feared, we will see that he will make off with the scepter of the kingdom to some place, and the end of our empire will be near.[43]

What appears from reports on the Turk's behavior during the conquest of Constantinople is a message to the rest of Europe of what is in store, if the Turks are not fought back. They invaded the city in the cruelest way and defiled it, according to Brant's book on Jerusalem – as well as other sources, of course, among them descriptions used by Brant. The emperor's head was cut off and carried around on a spear. Deceived by fraudulent promises defenseless nobles were mowed down, and the common man was sent away into slavery in Asia. Women were prostituted and nuns raped. Finally, the Turks profaned the sacred symbols, the cross was dragged in the mire, and Hagia Sophia devoted to Mohammedan dirt.[44] The term *dirt,* along with cruelty and unbridled lust, will explicitly and implicitly become a common theme, as in the interpretation of the deformed pig.

The aforementioned poetic epilogue – which was added to *Varia Carmina* – assures that God has not rejected us completely. As soon as we are cleansed of our sins, he readily will stand by our side. However, the Turk, can he be defeated? Apart from the reference to cruelty and falsehood, Brant, in line with much earlier literature about the Turks, also evokes other characteristic features: the Turks are hedonistic and lazy; they are feminized and therefore

[42] Mertens 2010, 188–189, on Flavio Biondo see Mertens 2000.

[43] Ibid. 193: "Dum nos consulimus, Thurcus sua littora Graeca / Post habet Illyricos Pannoniasque rapit, / Quique Istrum prius obtinuit, mox littera adibit / Rheni et Germanis inferet exitium. / Inde alio (timor est) regni traducere sceptra / Cernemus nostrum et deficere imperium."

[44] Schillinger 2008, 176.

vulnerable, despite their obvious military strength.[45] The Germans in contrast are highly virtuous fighters. Brant furthermore validates his plea through references to the Old Testament, calling Maximilian not only to fight the Turks in a European perspective, but also from the specific Christian viewpoint as the savior of Jerusalem. As elsewhere in Brant's *œuvre*, Maximilian here is presented as capable to realize the final defeat of the Turks, and, in an apocalyptic perspective, mantle the role as Pseudo-Methodius' 'Final Emperor', the savior of Christian world order.[46] Maintaining the idea of crusade, the dream of a rebirth of Roman culture and virtues, as well as a restoration of Roman imperial power, Brant is in line with the Christian humanist tradition from Petrarch to Piccolomini[47], yet specific aspects of his work are the centrality of the apocalyptic tradition in his ideas of crusade and as an aspect of his humanistic approach to history, focusing not only on history as history of salvation, but also interpreting his own time as on the verge of a world-historical critical change pointing towards the last days.

From Folly to Sin – The Ship of Fools

His best-known work, *The Ship of Fools*, unfolds within this interpretative horizon. Yet only towards the end of the book this thematic cluster becomes explicit, the work is presented and set out as more general popular instruction. In his *vorred* (preface) Brant thus presents his purpose as follows:

> For profit and salutary instruction, admonition and pursuit of wisdom, reason and good manners: also, for contempt and punishment of folly, blindness, error and stupidity of all stations and kinds of men: with special zeal, earnestness, and labor compiled in Basel by Sebastian Brant, doctor in both laws.[48]

Despite the many books, not least the Bible, that are available for the salvation of the soul, the world lives "in darksome night, / In blinded sinfulness persisting, / While every street sees fools existing / Who know but folly".[49]

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[45] Niederberger 2004, 191-192.

[46] On this theme cf. Möhring 2000.

[47] On the attitude of humanistic tradition to the Turks cf. Hankins 1995, 111–201, and Bisaha 2004, on Petrarch and the Turks, see in more detail Bisaha 2001, as well as Lausten 2016 and Madsen 2016, on Picolomini (Pius II) cf. also Cotta-Schönberg 2015 and 2016.

[48] Zeydel 57. Knape 107: "Zu nutz vnd heylsamer ler / verma= // nung vnd ervolgung der wussheit / ver= // nunfft vnd guter sytten: Ouch zu ver= // achtung vnd straff der narheyt / blint= // heyt yrrsal vnd dorheit / aller ståt / vnd // geschlecht der menschen: mit besun= // derem flyss vnd arbeyt / gesamlet // zu Basel: durch Sebastianum Brant. // in beyden rechten doctor."

[49] Id.: "in vinstrer nacht / Und dut in sünden blint verharren / All strassen / gassen / sint voll narren" (*vorred* 8–10).

Brant devised, therefore, to bring all the fools aboard a ship of fools, however, one is not enough. The book's descriptions must be a mirror for fools (like Mirrors for Princes are to princes). The book offers a general view of world affairs: "The world's whole course in one brief look – / Are reasons why to buy this book".[50]

In the first half of the original print, the length of the individual chapters typically allows each book-spread to accommodate an illustration, the header and the text itself, and additionally above the illustration a very short motto. Such a spread was similar in character to Brant's illustrated flyers. Further on in *The Ship of Fools,* though*,* the size of the texts in some parts go beyond this layout.

Brant covers a lot of ground, as also his language operates in several registers, including everyday usage. With turns of phrase and proverbial formulations he succinctly makes his point. Throughout this work, Brant accumulates a broad and dramatic picture of his own time, focusing on follies, idiocies and sinful behavior. Teaching goes hand in hand with everyday realism, and the vividness of the description of common life was not the least important reason for the enormous success of *The Ship of Fools*. Yet also the many woodcuts, accompanying each part of the work, contributed to the popularity, as the re-use of the images from this book in other publications suggests.

Brant's German text was published in 1494.[51] In 1495, 1499, 1506, and 1509 he released new versions (all identical to the first in Basel), in 1512 a second edition was printed (in Strasbourg). However, a number of unauthorized versions were brought to the market, at least six in Brant's lifetime, some more or less close to the original text, others modified in various ways. Also, after his death *The Ship of Fools* was printed in a variety of versions, now without woodcuts, and not always very true to the original, numerous versions were grossly distorted. In total 29 editions of a relatively untouched version have been registered, most of them published within 125 years after the first edition, i.e. until 1618, at the beginning of the 30 Years War. Thereafter interest in the work decreased radically. But it was, as mentioned above, first and foremost the relatively free, Latin version prepared by Brant's student Jacob Locher with the author's participation in 1497 (also published in Basel), that furthered the work's notable international success. Almost all translations from the fifteenth and sixteenth century are entirely or partly based on Locher's version, which in the same year was printed in a new

[50] "Hie findt man der welt gantzen louff / Diss buchlin wurt gut zu dem kouff" (*vorred* 53–54).

[51] The history of the publication and the translations is described in detail by Zeydel and by Knape in their editions of the book, see also Müller's instructive article (2010).

edition, and a third the following year – an edition was published in Paris also in 1498. Reprints were published in Strasbourg, Augsburg and Nuremberg, in a total of eight versions. Translations into French, Dutch, Flemish, and English followed the Latin version; a Low German version was based on Brant's German text. All in all, it is no exaggeration to take *The Ship of Fools* as a bestseller, probably the greatest German literary success before Goethe's *Werther*.[52] In Germany the book acquired the status of a sort of layman's Bible, and it is significant that Brant's friend Geiler von Kaiserberg in 1498–1499 delivered 142 highly influential sermons on the book from the pulpit of the Cathedral of Strasbourg. A version of these sermons was published in Latin in 1510, shortly after Geiler von Keiserberg's death – with woodcuts from *The Ship of Fools*. A German version of these sermons, again with woodcuts, appeared in 1520.[53]

Brant's overriding concern was to make the readers aware of their own weaknesses and, as a first step, to appeal to their reason in order to lead them towards wisdom, and to further the insight that a flawed use of reason could lead to folly. Ultimately, though, he appealed to their religious consciousness – from the religious viewpoint foolishness is sinful. He did thus merge the ancient ideal of the wise man with Christian ethos. It is important to mobilize reason against human folly, yet *lumen naturale* and *sapientia* are crucial terms not only in ancient but also in Christian tradition.[54] This basic learning corresponds to the didactic nature of the book: the various chapters demonstrate, overwhelmingly, how common sense is seldom used, while foolishness – and thus sin – abound.

In the preface to his Latin translation of *The Ship of Fools,* Jacob Locher compared Brant's work to Dante's *Comedy* and noted that it could have been given the title Divine Satire. As Dante's work, *The Ship of Fools* presents a catalogue of offenses, yet also Dante's multilayered correlation of meanings can be a key to Brant's satire.[55] The songs or sections are, on the surface, *satirical depictions* of contemporary ways of life, a colorful depiction of the time and its folly, its weaknesses. But, *second*, highlighting the weaknesses is a sign of the work's *moralizing* character, as well as of Brant's dedication to encourage the awareness of and recovery from these weaknesses. An additional and *third* dimension is Brant's *humanism*. His frame of reference participates in many respects in contemporary intellectual efforts to promote ancient culture, in particular Roman virtues. While satire and moralizing in

[52] After Brant's success with *The Ship of Fools,* the literature about folly multiplied during the sixteenth century, see Könneker 1966.

[53] Cf. Israel 2010, in particular 61–64, with numerous bibliographical references.

[54] Knape 2005, 65–70.

[55] As Peter Skrine argues (1969).

principle relate to a wide audience of his time, the humanist level and his stress on the *ideal of wisdom in the Roman sense* appeal primarily to his contemporary educated peers. The *fourth* and highest level of significance, the *religious* frame of interpretation, underscores the limitations of humanism. The Christian interpretative horizon is, ultimately, crucial: what an extrinsic reading may take as variegated follies and human weaknesses are, *from the Christian point of view,* sins that ultimately will lead to Hell, if they are not overcome, whereas the Christian way leads to Heaven and salvation. The image of the ship is thus linked to the broader image of a journey and its existential risks. This dimension had, of course, a special appeal in the context of a notion of the imminence of the end time.[56]

The frame of reference is thus, together with ancient culture, the Bible and the Christian tradition, whereas Brant's realism provides substance and linguistic expression from daily life of his own time. To the reader, who is familiar with both Christian and ancient tradition and with contemporary daily life, this multiplicity of frames of reference and the array of sources of linguistic formulations turn the work into a kind of collage. This corresponds to the humanists' textual endeavor to include or allude to ancient material; just as in a Christian milieu it was important to keep the Bible and other traditional Christian elements in mind. As an application of this principle Brant supplied Locher's Latin translation with marginal notes referring to Christian as well as ancient sources.

The last (112.) song may seem to bring the work's conclusive remarks asserting ideal ancient wisdom. Here the poem *Vir bonus*, attributed to Vergil, is to a considerable degree merged into the text. In his very brief postscript Brant repeats the characterization of his work as is was stated in the preface.[57] Neither in the preface, nor in the postscript the religious dimension is underscored, but it is significant that the great model of wisdom, Odysseus ("By wisdom sage, by counsel shrewd"), may use his wisdom to dodge many dangers, but it will, eventually, as Brant unfolds his fate, fall short: "[…] misfortune came again / When by his son the man was slain / While knocking at his rightful door, / His prudence could not help him more."[58] A different kind of wisdom is needed. "We err in dark obscurity", but "The Lord has given us the light / Of wisdom, making all things bright. / To darkness wisdom

[56] Cf. Delumeau 1978, in particular 262–272.

[57] Zeydel 366, Knape 511.

[58] "Der wise rat gab / vnd gut anschlag […] Vnd wust von vil unglück zu sagen / Wart doch von sym sun dot geschlagen / Als er kloppfft an synr eygen tur / Do künd wissheit nit helffen" (108.73, 94–97).

puts an end / If but to wisdom we attend."[59] The light of faith, shining in the darkness of this world, is a kind of wisdom that is entirely different from the one concerning, exclusively, worldly matters. Faith is the general framework, within which humanist virtues obtain their actual value as parts of opposition to foolery, perceived as sin. From this point of view the variegated immediate folly of everyday life is a strong challenge to Christianity.

But Christianity is also a religion of hope. Salvation does not only depend on human efforts in fighting sin, it is also the result of divine grace. It seems like the poem's image of Odysseus who, having eschewed all sorts of dangers with wisdom and cunning, stands at the door to his desired goal and there encounters death, should be read allegorically as an emblem of earthly wisdom's limitation – the door as an image of heaven's gate.

Although the work, as a whole, does not use the image of the ship in a coherent fashion (occasionally there is more than one ship), in the second part there is a more consistent use of the motif, and from an allegorical interpretative angle the depiction of the motley crowd on board the ship of fools attains important significance. To sum up the main aspects of the image of the ship: *first*, worldly life is considered a kind of seafaring, threatened on the moral level by many dangers, *second,* persisting in acts of folly can increase the dangers, while awareness of foolishness – wisdom as represented by Odysseus – can be of help in need, and, *third*, wisdom is from a humanist perspective, a tool for navigation, but, *fourth,* the image of the ship is, crucially, to be interpreted on a Christian-allegorical level. The church, the Christian community, is seen as a ship (as the church building itself is): a ship to salvation. In the Christian allegory the ship's mast is the cross to which Christ is fastened and by which the ship may lead to salvation (in the *Odyssey* one of Odysseus' wise acts was to let himself be tied to the mast to avoid acting on temptation, but in his case, faith was lacking – this partial analogy may be an underlying allegorical point). This implied view of the church as a ship has a consolatory dimension in contrast to the enumeration of all the dangers, navigation on life's sea holds for mankind, led, as it is, by the multitude of follies and with only limited hope of overcoming them. Christianity represents hope of a different kind.

Tears

Such hope is all the more needed as there is reason to fear that the end of time is closing in, and here the Turkish danger enters the picture. "The time comes, that it comes is clear, / The Antichrist is very near […] We do approach the

[59] "Vnd wir irren jn vinstern schyn / So hat got geben vns das leicht / Der wissheit / dar von man gesicht / Die macht der vinsterniss eyn end / Wann wir sie nemen recht für hend." (107.58–62).

Judgment Day."[60] Not all fools belong within the Christian framework; among the excluded are "Turks, pagans, Saracens – in brief / All those who have no true belief".[61] The followers of Islam, Moors and, in particular, Turks, are the topic of the longest song in the work, number 99, where, again, the tears well up at the thought of the decline of Christianity and Christendom.

Brant is here in line with Piccolomini and so many others, who after the fall of Constantinople deplored the infighting of the European rulers and their lack of commitment to defense and struggle against the Turks, yet his formulations are also in line with Petrarch:

> When I regard neglect and shame / Which everywhere appears the same / Of prince and lord, of city, land, / No wonder then the tears do stand / In these mine eyes and flow so free / That one should see disgracefully / The faith of Christians ebb, recede.[62]

Heresy has weakened faith,

> And then Mohammed shamefully / Abused its noble sanctity / With heresy and bad intent. / Our faith was strong in th'Orient, / It ruled all of Asia, / In Moorish lands and Africa. / But now for us these lands are gone, / 'Twould even greeve the hardest stone.[63]

Faith has been eradicated in Asia Minor and Greece as well as in "Greater Turkey". Yet that is not all: "In Europe we've been forced to see / The loss but very recently / Of kingdoms, even empires two / And mighty lands and cities true, / Constantinople, Trapezunt" etc.[64] Brant carefully lists a number of countries and cities lost in South-Eastern and Central Europe.

> So strong the Turks have grown to be / They hold the ocean not alone, / The Danube too is now their own. / They make their inroads when they will, / Bishoprics, Churches suffer ill, / Now they attack Apulia, / Tomorrow e'en Sicilia, / And next to it is Italy, / Wherefore a victim

[60] "Die zyt die kumt / es kumt die zyt / jch vorcht der endkrist sy nit wyt […] Es nah sich vast / dem jungsten tag." 103.92–93, 147.

[61] "Saracenen / Türcken / Heyden // All die vom glouben sint gescheyden" (98.9–10).

[62] "Wann ich gedenck sümniss / und schand // So man yetz spurt / jn allem land // Von fürsten / herren / landen / stett // Wer wunder nit / ob ich schon hett / Myn ougen gantz der zahern voll // Das man so schmächlich sehen soll // Den krysten glouben nemen ab." (99.1–7)

[63] "Dar noch der schändlich Machamet // Jnn mer / vnd mer verwüstet het // Vnd den mit sym jrrsal geschänt // Der vor was gross jnn Orient // Vnd was gloubig alles Asia // Der Moren landt / vnd Affrica // Jetz hant dar jnn / wir gantz nüt me // Es mocht eym hertten steyn thun we" (99.15–22).

[64] "On das man in Europa sytt / Verloren hat / jnn kurzer zyt // Zwey keyserthum / vil künig rich // Vil mechtig land / vnd stett des glich // Constantinopel / Trapezunt" (99.31–35). The two empires are the Byzantine Empire and the Byzantine Empire founded by the dynasty of the Komnenos im Trapezunt, after the crusaders' conquest of Constantinople in 1204.

> Rome may be / And Lombardy and Romance land, We have the archfoe close at hand, / We perish sleeping one and all […].[65]

This is the perspective. Otranto in Apulia was – albeit briefly – conquered by the Turks in 1480–81, and an attack on Rome seemed imminent: "The wolf has come into the stall".[66] Brant was by no means alone in the awareness of and preoccupation with imminent threats. Yet internal disagreement and conflict at the European level lead to a completely meaningless shedding of Christian blood, while nobody realized the enormity of the approaching external danger. "We're like the oxen famed in tale / Who watched the rest without avail / Until the wolf consumed them all."[67] "For Europe's gates are open wide, / The foe encircles every side, / With sleep or rest he's not content, / On Christian blood alone he's bent."[68]

Brant also shares Renaissance humanism's recurring dream of the rebirth of the Roman Empire: "Would God you'd be augmented soon".[69] Saracens have taken the Holy Land and the conquests of the Turks are so many that it is no use to count. The future of the Roman Empire depends on the German Empire, and the Roman emperor is German. But in the German realm as well, the situation is bad, despite the fact that "The Germans once were highly praised / And so illustrious were their fame, / The Reich was theirs and took their name".[70] On this background Brant summons "you lords, you states and kings" – "If you'll support the ship of state / It will not sink but bear its freight".[71]

This is an example of how a short allusion to the image of the ship links it to the crucial historical questions of the revival of the Holy Roman Empire. From the pessimistic view of Christian losses, the Turks' onrush, and the misery of the European powers as well as of the Roman Empire, he now turns the attention to his own heroic figure, Maximilian:

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[65] "Jetz sind die Türcken also starck // Das sie nit hant das mer alleyn // Sunder die Tunow ist jr gemeyn / vnd dunt eyn jnnbruch / wann sie went // Vil bystum / kyrchen sint geschent / Jetz grifft er an Apuliam // Dar noch gar bald Siciliam // Jtalia die stosst dar an // So würt er dann an Rom ouch gan // An Lonbardy / vnd welsche landt // Den vyndt den hant wir an der handt // Vnd went doch schloffend / sterben all." (99.50–61)

[66] Der wolff ist worlich jnn dem stall (99.62).

[67] "Vnd gschicht vns / als den ochsen gschah // Do eyner dem andern zu sach // Biss das der wolff sie all zerreiss" (99.75–77).

[68] "Die porten Europe offen syndt // Zu allen sitten ist der vyndt // Der nit schloffen noch ruwen dut // Jn dürst allein / noch Christen blut" (99.91–94).

[69] "Well got / das du ouch grossest dich" (99.111).

[70] "Der tütschen lob was hochgeert // Vnd hatt erworben durch solch rum // Das man jnn gab das keyserthum" (99.140–142).

[71] "Jr herren / künig / land – Wellent dem Romschen rich zu stan / So mag das schiff noch vff recht gan" (99.151, 153–54).

> The noble Maximilian, / He merits well the Roman crown. / They'll surely come into his hand, / The holy Earth, the Promised Land. / He'll undertake it any day / If he can trust in you and may.[72]

Much Christian land has been lost, however there is still much left, there is enough of it to subjugate the whole world if only all stand together, says Brant in his exhortation, again invoking the image of the ship:

> You rule the land and every place / Awake, renounce all black disgrace, / Be not the sailor in the deep / Who midst his duty fall asleep / While the storm clouds gathered dark; / Or like a dog that does not bark, / Or like a guard that watches ne'er / And shirking duty shows no care. / Arise and end your dream and see: / The axe is truly in the tree. / O God, give all our rulers sense / To seek Thy honor so immense / And not their own avail and greed.[73]

The image in Pseudo-Methodius of the last emperor to be awakened from his sleep is, perhaps, implied here. Brant urges all the estates not to behave like an in-fighting crew:

> Who disagree and battle too / When they are out upon the deep / And wind and storm the sailcloth sweep. / Ere on a course they can agree / Their worthy ship a wreck may be. / If you have ears then list to me; / Our ship is swaying frightfully.

And Christ is, at this point, directly connected to the image of the ship: "If Christ does not watch o'er us right / We soon will be in the darkest night."[74] Princes, chosen by God to lead, must be careful not to be tainted by shame if they do not do what's right for their rank – "The frivolous who pay no heed / I'll give a fool's cap. That's their meed."[75] The attitude is double, simultaneously appealing to the princes and hoping for support from God and

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[72] "Der edel fürst Maximilian // Wol würdig ist der Romschen kron / Dem kumbt on zwifwl jnn sin handt / Die heilig erd / vnd das globte landt // Vnd wurt sin anfang thun all tag // Wann er alleyn üch trüwen mag" (99.159.164).

[73] "Jr sind regyerer doch der land // Wachen 7 vnd dunt von üch all schand // Das man üch nit dem schiffman glich // Der vff dem mer flisst schliffes sich // So das er das vngewetter sicht // Oder eym hund der bollet nicht / Oder eym wachter der nit wacht // Vnd vff syn hutt hatt gantz keyn acht / Stont vff / vnd wachen von dem troum // Worlich / die axt stat an dem boum // Ach gott gib vbsern houbtern jn // Das sie suv´chen die ere dyn // Vnd nit yeder syn nutz alleyn" (99.175–187).

[74] "Die vneynss sint / vnd hant eyn stritt // Wann sie sint mitten vff dem mer // Jnn wynd /vnd vngewitter ser // Vnd ee sie werden eyns der fur // So nymbt die Galee eynb gruntrur // Wer oren hab / derr merck vnd hor // Das schifflin schwancket vff dem mer // Wann Christus yetz nit selber wacht / Es it bald worden vmb vns nacht" (99.194–200, 201–202).

[75] "Vnd wer nit an myn wort gedenck // Die narren kappen / ich jm schenck" (99.213–214).

from Christ.[76] The song (98) on the decline of faith and first and first and foremost the next song (99) on the relation between the Turks and Europe, between Islam and Christianity, are crucial to the overall thematic structure of *The Ship of Fools*.

Despite its apparently loose structure, it can, following concepts of classical rhetoric, be construed as providing, until song 67, a kind of *narratio*, being in this case a presentation of a number of examples, followed by a *probatio* (67–97), a sort of corroboration or assertion of the major themes, at the background of the previous songs. Here, then, is the song about the decline of faith as well as the song that provides an extensive account of the situation of Europe and the advancing Turkish forces – an overall historical view, whereas the previous songs primarily focused on individual weaknesses and follies. The account of the relation to the Turks is fundamental; it is the focal point for an appreciation of not only past but also future history. The tale is no longer about individual follies; it's about the fate of Europe. The theme of folly encompasses each and every prince and any ruler who does not mantle his historic mission, he will get the fools cape. On the religious level, too, this section is crucial, not only because it is about a religious confrontation, but mainly because it ultimately is an appeal to and an expression of hope in Christ. The rest of the work will largely revolve around the relation between wisdom and faith, a kind of *peroratio*, especially the song 108, as discussed above.[77] Also, the structure of the song 99 as such can be read in the light of rhetorical norms. Piccolomini's speech *Constantinopolitana clades* at the Diet of Frankfurt in 1454 begins stating the justice (*iustitia*) of war, goes on to affirm its usefulness (*utilitas*) and to a consideration of the conditions for successful warfare (*facilitas*).[78] Brant in a similar way first (17–55) observes how the Turks have deprived Christianity and then Europe of so many areas – herein lies the *justice* of going to war against the Turks; it is *useful* to prevent further conquests (56–70), and finally he argues the *feasibility* of war (71–150); yet here he differs from Piccolomini, who in *Constantinopolitana clades* did mention the disagreement between the princes, but did not, like

[76] In Matthew 14.24–33 the disciples are in a boat, far out on the lake Genezareth ("tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary," cf. Brant: "Das Schifflein schwanket auf dem Meere"), during the night Jesus comes to their help, walking on water. The association of a ship, a wavy sea and the help of Christ is one of the major sources of the Christian theological elaboration of the image of the ship, extensively discussed by Skrine 1969, 581ff.

[77] Concerning the rhetorical sequence, Skrine 1969, 586 & 592, refers to Gaier 1966, for whom "das Narrenschiff [erscheint] als eine grosse bruchlose Einheit, als Einheit im grossen Entwurfe geplant und mit Genauigkeit ausgeführt" (Skrine cit. 586). Müller 2010 articulates a certain scepticism regarding Geier's position, 30, note 3.

[78] Cotta-Schönberg 2015. On Piccolomini (as Pope: Pius II): Bisaha 2004 and Cotta-Schönberg 2016.

Brant, embark on a lengthy display of those problems, a kind of castigatory sermon, before coming up with the solution.

Brant's vision of history was probably related to Petrarch's idea, that a renewed Roman Empire, i.e. a Christian Roman Empire, would bring those areas back to Europe that were at his time (as well as at Brant's own time) under Muslim rule, including the liberation of Jerusalem (then under Mamluk rule). As Petrarch wrote in *De vita solitaria*:

> Oh, would it [the Roman Empire] be there today too! Then the entire Africa would not be under the delusion, or Persia, Syria, Egypt, nearly the whole of Asia, and, even worse, most of Europe. For that Roman Empire of the Antiquity was only, as respected authors affirm, lacking a small part of the Orient, whereas, painfully, we are lacking all except a modest part of the Occident.[79]

Evoking a passage from Augustine that underscored the presence of the Christian sacrament "in all the populated countries", Petrarch exclaims: "This short sentence brings us to tears, and it can easily bring the enormity of our turpitude to mind." (179) Similarly, Piccolomini, in his speech about the fall of Constantinople, underscores the nexus of geography, religion and power, when he enumerates the defeats of Christianity, pointing out that

> Often our forefathers experienced setbacks in Asia and Africa, that is to say in other regions, but we, today, have been smitten and struck in Europe itself, in our fatherland, in our own home and seat.[80]

Sebastian Brant is in line with both Petrarch and Piccolomini when he, in the last part of his *De origine,* cry out: "The unbridled Turks, the inhospitable reign of the Sultan and the Scythian and Tartar dogs surround us", followed by a payer:

> Almighty Creator, if you are moved by any prayers, look upon us, and if only we deserve your mercy, then help us and free us from all of this. I ensure you, supreme Father, that I have just written these things shedding tears and with wet cheeks.[81]

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[79] Petrarca 2004. Petrarch wrote the first version in 1346, working on the text until 1366, and adding a supplement in 1371.

[80] Cotta-Schönberg's translation 24; Latin text ibid. 23: "Retroactis namque temporibus in Asia atque in Africa, hoc est in alienis terris, vulnerati fuimus: nunc vero in Europa, id est in patria, in domo propria, in sede nostra percussi caesique sumus."

[81] "Hinc Thurci infreni cingunt et inhospita regna Soldani atque Scytae Tartareusque canis. […] Omnipotens genitor, precibus si flecteris ullis, aspice nos, hoc tantum et si pietate meremur. Da deinde auxilium pater atque haec omnia leva. Testor enim te summe pater, nos nuper abortis scripsisse haec lacrymis, cum madisque genis." Cit. Niederberger 2005, 188–189.

Tears and crying are not only an outcome of individual inner emotional states and their external manifestation. As in Brant's formulations, tears are in the Bible at numerous occasions intimately related to prayer.[82] In apocalyptical terms, The Revelation provides an answer to the numerous tearful lamentations in the Old Testament: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes" (21.4). Revelation is here echoing Isaiah's prophecy: "He will swallow up death forever; Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces" (25.8). Brant's approach to contemporary history is colored by apocalyptic visions as well as articulations of experiences of loss, not least of Constantinople, yet also of Jerusalem. His tears are most likely also related to Old Testament lamentations of the loss of Jerusalem as his vision is related to Old Testament prophecies as well as to New Testament visions of the last days. The loss of Jerusalem – and other areas listed in *Ship of Fools* – is imaginarily compensated by an apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem and the defeat of the satanic forces, which in Brant's version corresponds to the imminent defeat of the Turks by Christian forces under Maximilian's command.

The accounts of Turkish oppression during the conquest of Constantinople recall the description of the miseries of Jerusalem in *Lamentations*, where the city "cries and cries at night with tears on the cheeks." (1.1–2) Virgins and young men are taken away as prisoners (1.18), priests killed in the "sanctuary of the Lord" (2:20):

> Women have been ravished in Zion, and virgins in the towns of Judah.
> Princes have been hung up by their hands; elders are shown no respect.
> Young men toil at the millstones; boys stagger under loads of wood.
> (5.11–13).

Brant's articulations of the experience of the current Turkish threat are based not only on an apocalyptic version of the tradition of *translatio imperii* that takes Austria as the contemporary stage of the Roman Empire and Maximilian as incarnating the Last Emperor but also on an appropriation of the biblical tradition of the duality of lament and hope as well as on the recurrent Old Testament theme of torment as the Lord's scourge for the shortcomings of the tormented. To Brant the Turks are thus agents in the unfolding of a history of salvation with a view of an apocalyptic turn in the battle between Christians and Turks, yet nonetheless it is experienced as a history of loss. It is at the background of this biblical setting the introduction to section 99 of *The Ship of Fools* as quoted above should be understood – and that goes for his entire *œuvre*:

[82] Cf. Lutz 1999, 43–45, and Friis Hvidberg 1962.

When I regard neglect and shame/ Which everywhere appears the same / Of prince and lord, of city, land, / No wonder then the tears do stand / In these mine eyes and flow so free / That one should see disgracefully / The Faith of Christians ebb, recede.[83]

[83] "Wann ich gedenck sümniss / vnd schand // So man yetz spurt / jn allem land // Von fürsten / herren / landen / stett // Wer wunder nit / ob ich schon hett // Myn ougen gantz der zahern voll // Dass man so schmachlich sehen soll // Den krysten glouben nemen ab".

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Saracens and Turks in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*:

Sheer Imagination or Allusions to Reality?

By Pia Schwarz Lausten

Ariosto critics usually underscored a positive and respectful rendition of the Muslim enemy, interpreting Orlando Furioso *as representing an openminded and modern attitude towards Islam and Muslims in general, yet the presentation in the poem of the conflicts between Christians and Muslims does articulate a critical, albeit nuanced attitude towards Muslims. Interpretations should take the context into account: Italy's geo-political situation vis-à-vis the Ottoman expansion – particularly in the Balkans, historical events and the huge amount of humanistic and historiographical writings from the first decades of the 16th century in which we find a similar complexity in the attitude towards the Turks.*

Are the Saracens a "fantastic entity without references to any historical or geographical reality" in the *Orlando Furioso*, and "represented at the same level as the Christians concerning their value and civilization" as Italo Calvino claimed in his retelling of the *Furioso*?[1] Or should the depiction of the Saracens rather be viewed in light of the contemporary historical, religious and intellectual contexts, in particular in light of the Turkish threat to the European states? Calvino, who considered Ariosto 'his' poet, also wrote:

> To be of 'different faiths' doesn't mean much more in the *Furioso* than the different colours on a chessboard. The crusading era, in which the narrative cycle of the knights had assumed a symbolic value of battle for life and death between Islam and Christendom, is far away.[2]

Calvino belongs to a dominating tradition among Ariosto scholars who tend to idealise the positive and equalising rendition of the Saracens in *Orlando Furioso* beginning with De Sanctis who did not consider Agramante's war a

[1] Calvino 1970, XXVI: "un'entità fantastica per la quale non vale alcun riferimento storico o geografico"; "sono rappresentati su un piano di parità con i Cristiani per quel che riguarda il valore e la civiltà".

[2] Calvino 1970, XXIII: "L'essere 'di fè diversi' non significa molto di più, nel *Furioso*, che il diverso colore dei pezzi in una scacchiera. I tempi delle Crociate in cui il ciclo dei Paladini aveva assunto un valore simbolico di lotta per la vita e per la morte tra la Cristianità e l'Islam, sono lontani."

religious or political matter, but something "external and mechanical" in the poem.[3] William Comfort claimed that the Saracens are just as "noble and high-minded as the Christians" and that the difference between Christians and Saracens is a "conventional division" maintained only because it has some poetical advantages for Ariosto writing in a period in which "the strong crusade feeling which had bred these distinctions had entirely disappeared from a worldly and sophisticated public."[4] Comfort found a "general absence of any reference to Italy's participation in the defense of her soil against the Infidels."[5] Joseph Donnelly wrote that "the poems reveal no prejudice based on a sense of the superiority of western culture over oriental civilization […] these epics have no trace of a sense of European racial superiority over Turks and Arabs."[6] In another, more recent article it is claimed that

> in the epic texts of Italian Renaissance the rigid dividing line between Christians and pagans/Saracens, characteristic of literature from the Carolingian period, undergoes an extreme attenuation, if not a partial cancellation.[7]

According to the authors of this article, we might have seen a reopening of the cultural conflict between the Christian and Muslim worlds in light of the Turkish peril, but this, they claim, did not happen,[8] a fact that is interpreted as a sign of the "accentuated modernity" of the poems.[9] Also Maria Pavlova argues in line with this tradition, that the Saracen knights are portrayed as magnanimous knights and "superb warriors and worthy opponents for the most celebrated Christian knights",[10] and she claims that none of the Saracen characters is depicted as evil, "even if some of them occasionally violate the chivalric code."[11] Some of these interpretations will be discussed later in this article.

Most Ariosto scholars who have analyzed the representation of the Saracens in the *Furioso* seem to agree on two aspects: First, the respectful and positive rendition of the Saracens in Ariosto's epic poem compared to the more negative one of *Chanson de Roland*; and, second, the absence of references to contemporary conflicts with the new Islamic world power of Ariosto's own time, the Ottomans. As exceptions to this tendency we find,

[3] De Sanctis 1991, 317 and 329.
[4] Comfort 1944, 901–902.
[5] Ibid., 909.
[6] Donnelly 1977, 163.
[7] Pagliardini & Fuchs 2006, 579. My translation.
[8] Ibid., 580.
[9] Ibid., 587.
[10] Pavlova 2014, 473.
[11] Ibid., 472.

for example, Roger Baillet, Peter Marinelli, Jason D. Jacobs, Paul Larivaille, and most importantly JoAnn Cavallo's excellent book, *The World beyound Europe in the Epic Romance of Boiardo and Ariosto*.[12] Cavallo shows how Boiardo and Ariosto relate to the geopolitical realities of their day,[13] and, in opposition to several other scholars, she highlights the ideological differences between the two Ferrarese poets: Her thesis is that Boiardo's poem represents an "international cosmopolitism" while Ariosto's work expresses "a more restrictive outlook that brings to bear the crusading ideology characteristic of Carolingian epic."[14] According to Cavallo, Ariosto did not share Boiardo's detached position, the two poets were "worlds apart", and her study accounts for these ideological differences through a contextualized comparison of the world beyond Christian Europe envisioned by the two poets.

Thus, "Ariosto's portrayal of Saracens and Islam have reached contradictory conclusions",[15] as Maria Pavlova states and she rightly sums up that

> there is no unanimity of opinion as to whether Ariosto was influenced by contemporary perceptions of Muslims in general and the Turks in particular. Most scholars who believe that Ariosto does not distinguish between Christians and Saracens tend to avoid this question. By contrast, those who take the opposite view often attempt to read the poem in light of the Turkish menace.[16]

The present contribution not only claims that the *Orlando Furioso* does reflect European antagonism towards the Turks, but also underscores the complexity of Ariosto's way of dealing with this *topos*.[17] In the following pages, I will reject the assumption about the absence of references to contemporary history, and I will problematise the abovementioned theses regarding the positive rendition of the Saracens: In spite of some equalising and sympathising elements in the description of the medieval Saracen heroes, the *Furioso* expresses a negative evaluation of Muslims including those of

[12] Baillet 1977, Marinelli 1987, Jacobs 2006, Larivaille 2011, Cavallo 2013.
[13] Lausten 2014, 2016.
[14] Cavallo 2013, 3.
[15] Pavlova 2014, 476.
[16] Ibid., 477.
[17] I would like to thank both the editor of the volume and the anonymous peer reviewer for comments and advices. Since I submitted the first version of this article in 2012 (which for various reasons remained unpublished), important contributions to the field have been published, in particular JoAnn Cavallo's groundbreaking book *The World beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto.* Thanks to its innovative geographical and geopolitical approach that unfolds a range of analyses of the representation of religious, cultural and political matters in the two poems, Cavallo has provided details and examples that have confirmed my interpretation of the poem based on a much smaller selection of examples.

Ariosto's own time, the Ottoman Turks. By direct references and indirect allusions and parallels the narrator reminds his readers of various historical conflicts with Muslims – with Arabs in Jerusalem and in Sicily at the time of the Crusades, and with Ottomans at the Balkans in the Renaissance period. In doing so, he points to the similarities between the times of Charlemagne (early ninth century) and those of Charles V (sixteenth century),[18] and in particular he points to the common threat to their civilizations, indirectly urging the Estensi rulers, especially cardinal Ippolito d'Este, to whom the poem is a tribute (cf. *Orlando Furioso* song I, 3), to engage in the struggles against the Turks. The image of Turks and Saracens in the *Furioso* should be taken as part of the discourse about the Turkish menace in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and as a consequence it might also be interpreted as a contribution to the very idea of Europe understood as a Christian unity. Like contemporary humanists Ariosto thus in his poem contains elements of a 'crusade ideology' though not in terms of liberation of the Holy land, but rather understood broadly as an appeal to liberation of Constantinople and in general from the Turks. It is my claim that the *Furioso* must be read in the light of the so-called humanist "crusade literature",[19] and in this respect my argument differs from not only Calvino's and the like but also aspects of more recent contributions.

Until recently, the image of Saracens and Turks was overlooked by contemporary research on the *Furioso*. It is not unusual for different generations to be aware of different aspects of the past, and indeed, the last two decades have seen a series of new studies both on the history of the Ottoman Empire and on Western views of the Islamic world in early modern Europe. These works have led to a new understanding of the central role of Islamic culture for the advent of Renaissance Europe and Italy. It makes sense to refer to a 'global turn' within Renaissance studies since the middle of the 1990's, which, according to Francesca Trivellato can be seen as the most innovative perspective on Renaissance studies today.[20]

After a short presentation of text and contexts, I will refer to three kinds of examples: The references to the Ottomans in the present time frame of the poem, the image of the Saracens in relation to the medieval past, and elements from the medieval time frame alluding to contemporary reality.

[18] As already emphasized by Marinelli 1987, 83–102.

[19] Hankins 1995.

[20] Cf. Trivellato 2010, 132. As to the specific case of the relationship between the Islamic world and Italian culture, a series of works have been published since 2001 among which we find: Ricci 2002, 2008 and 2011; Meier 2010; Pedani 2010; Formica 2012; Eslami 2014.

Text, structure, motifs

The *Furioso* is a continuation of the popular poem *Inamoramento de Orlando* left unfinished by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–1494) at his death. Like his predecessor (and his successor Torquato Tasso), Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) was closely related to the flourishing Este court at Ferrara in the north-east of the Italian peninsula. The *Furioso* is presented as eulogy of Este family and as legitimising its power ambitions (see especially songs III, XIII and XXXIII). The Estensi were among the oldest and most prestigious rulers of Italy, with links to Spain, Naples, Hungary, Milan, Mantua, Rome and Urbino. They were culturally allied with France and politically with both the Church and the Empire.[21] The court was famous for its apparently paradoxical enthusiasm for the classical learning of the humanists as well as for French chivalric romances in the vernacular. Ariosto was an official at court serving cardinal Ippolito d'Este from 1503 and thereafter his brother prince Alfonso I from 1518, when Ariosto refused to follow Ippolito to Hungary. He was appointed to solve practical, administrative jobs and was responsible for the organisation of theatrical performances. The court of Ferrara was among the very first to perform modern comedies in the classical mode.

Ariosto, who worked on the *Furioso* until his death, started writing it in 1504. The first edition consisting of 40 songs was published in 1516. The second edition (1521) was corrected linguistically according to the Tuscan language norms of Pietro Bembo with whom Ariosto, after having entered to service at the Este court, was in close contact.[22] The *Furioso* reached beyond the regional court culture to a much larger audience and became an important component of the creation of a national literary culture. The third and last edition was published in 1532 and was amplified with six new songs resulting in a total of 46.[23] *Orlando Furioso* became a bestseller and one of the most studied and influential poems in European Renaissance literature: In sixteenth-century Italy 25,000 copies were printed; in 1545 it was translated into French; in 1549 three Spanish translations appeared; in 1591 it was translated into English.

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[21] Marinelli 1987, 88.

[22] Bembo began to write his influential work, *Prose della volgar lingua* in 1501–152 (published in 1525) during his stays at the Este court in Ferrara between 1497 and 1504, cf. Marrone (ed.), 2007, 81. Ariosto's poem was "riveduta nella lingua e nello stile, nell'intento di sopprimere i residui dialettali e le dissonanze e durezze di costrutto, con l'occhio fisso a quell'ideale di toscanità letteraria, che il Bembo andava proprio in quegli anni costituendo e propugnando", Sapegno 1962.

[23] The new material added to the 1532 edition are to be found in songs IX, X and XI, in songs XXXII–XXXIII, and XXXVII, and – which is most important to my argument – in the final songs ILIV, ILV, and ILVI treating the episodes about Roger and Leone in Belgrade.

The knights in the *Furioso* are constantly moving from one place to another across a huge geographical area from France, England and Scotland to Asia, Africa and to the moon! Different themes run through the text, intertwining with each other the main narrative threads representing, briefly: 1) The fictionalised war among Christians and Saracens at the time of emperor Charlemagne in the early ninth century, especially the African king Agramante attacking France and the subsequent Christian attack and destruction of his territories in North Africa, Bizerta; 2) Orlando's love for the Saracen Angelica culminating with his madness when he discovers that she is in love with another man, a mere Saracen soldier, but ending with Orlando regaining his reason and killing king Agramante; 3) the complicated love-story of the Saracen knight Ruggiero (Roger) and the Christian female warrior Bradamante, resolved in the final songs when the knight becomes a Christian, and they can finally unite in marriage, thus founding the Este dynasty. It was Boiardo who first wrote about Roger as ancestor of the Este family and as of Troyan origin, one of Ariosto's primary intentions was to continue this theme; Roger's story thus introduces and closes Ariosto's poem and marks the *Furioso* as a dynastic poem.

Together with the fabulous, magical, and allegorical episodes, in which the whole reservoir of the chivalric romance tradition unfolds with well-known legends, books, enchanted castles, winged horses and invincible swords, the poem contains many references to historical events as well from antiquity, as from the medieval past and Ariosto's present time: The destiny of dynasties, historical characters, wars, diplomatic negotiations and court conversations are described and commented on throughout the narration. This expansion of the plot creates an open and dynamic structure characterised as "polycentric",[24] oxymoronic and contradictory – also ideologically speaking, as expressing a pluralistic vision of the earthly reality.[25]

Historical context

Ariosto scholars have traditionally focused on three fields regarding the structure and style of the *Furioso*: The intertextual aspects of the poem (related to Vergil, Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Boiardo and the popular French *chansons de geste*); the intratextual connections between the different songs of the poem; and the variations between the different editions. As already pointed out, scholars have only recently paid attention to the representation of Turks and Saracens in Ariosto's poem, and whenever

[24] Bologna 1993, 219. My translation.
[25] Ceserani & De Federicis 1983, 1023; 1051; Cf. also Ascoli 2001, 487–522.

discussed they are often considered ahistorical entities.[26] According to Peter Marinelli, the 'romantic' line in Italian Ariosto criticism was dominant from De Sanctis and Rajna in the nineteenth and early twentieth century through the 1980s, the critics ignoring that:

> Ariosto lived at the center of the great events of his time, and he observed them unflinchingly with a clear sense of both their meaning and their mutability. The *Furioso* contains the fruit of that observation, transfigured; which is […] not to say that he wrote historical allegory but rather to say that he addressed the events of history by incorporating them into the fictions of dynastic romance.[27]

Indeed, several prologues in the *Furioso* comment on ethical and political aspects, and many digressions touch critically upon historical events, mainly the pressure on the Italian peninsula stemming from the European nation states, beginning with that of Charles VIII in 1494 (continuing with the Spaniards (1503) and the Germans (1509)), and the pressure on Ferrara arising from the Pope and the Empire. The ruthless mass killings of these invasions may have influenced the *Furioso*'s battle scenes and overall outlook.[28] Some of the substantial differences between the second and the more disillusioned third edition of the poem bear witness to increasing impact of contemporary socio-political events in Italy and in Europe.

The Italian wars among the great European powers, mainly Francis I and Charles V, may have worried the Italians more than the Turkish expansion, since these local conflicts had more visible consequences in daily life. Nevertheless, the larger global political context certainly explains why the medieval wars among Saracens and Christians became such a popular topic in the Renaissance court epics. Ariosto's poem was written in the decades following the fall of Constantinople and the Ottomans' conquest of most of the Balkans: Greece, Albania, parts of Hungary. Italy itself was invaded by the Ottomans from the east and the south: Venice and Genoa lost several possessions in the Egean Sea (Negroponte in 1470), the Turks made raids in Friuli (1477) and even occupied Otranto in Southern Italy for one year, before the Christians realized a symbolic *reconquista* (1480–1481). The second edition of the *Furioso* was actually published in the year of the fall of Belgrade (1521), one year before the siege of Rhodes (1522), and the third and final edition was written during the years in which Suleiman the Magnificent won the battle of Mohaçs (1526) and threatened Vienna (1529).

[26] For an historical approach to *Orlando Furioso* cf. e.g.: Marsh 1981, Marinelli 1987, Murrin 1988, Murrin 1995, Ascoli 2001, Villa 2011, Casadei 2016.

[27] Marinelli 1987, 83.

[28] Cavallo 2013, 258.

The victory at Mohaçs in particular demonstrated how the Ottomans had penetrated into Europe. Every pope attempted to promote the cause of crusade, which "still enjoyed prominence as a cultural icon, a religious concept, and a political concern in the fifteenth century",[29] even if the popes did not succeed with their purpose because of internal conflicts and hesitation of the Christian nations. In spite of the fall of Byzantium and news that Mehmet II was attacking Serbia and Hungary, Pope Pius II (1458–1464) did not successfully unite the Italian states: The prince of Ferrara (Borso d'Este) and Naples refused. Like most European countries they had important trade relations with the Ottomans that also granted them access to Central Asian trade routes.[30]

Ariosto lived in Ferrara, a city far away from the frontline of the Turks. It was a "backline", as suggested by Giovanni Ricci,[31] and it never experienced the threat from the Turks as directly as Venice, Friuli or Otranto: Turks did not reach Ferrara as conquerors, but as inoffensive converts, refugees or chained slaves. But even if Ferrara was not a place that determined the great politics towards the Turks, the city "experienced intensively this politics against the Turks interacting continuously with the centres of the Christian headquarters"[32] and it represented "a microcosm at the intersection of global history and local contingencies".[33] The state was closely connected to the Papal state in Rome, having immediate access to the most important news, and the dynastic relations with the Aragons in Naples made sometimes the Turks seem closer to Ferrara: In 1483, the liberator of Otranto, Alfonso duke of Calabria, son of the king of Naples and brother of Ercole d'Estes's bride, had arrived in Ferrara – and was welcomed as a hero – bringing five hundred Turkish slaves as a present to the Este prince.[34] Furthermore, Ferrara still remembered the church council held in the city (and in Florence) in 1438–1439, which (unsuccessfully) aimed at uniting the oriental and occidental Christian churches. Although one cannot speak of *one* oriental 'Other' in this

[29] Bisaha 1999, 186.

[30] Europe had a taste for the East: spices, coffee, silk, textiles and other luxuries as well as ideas in medicine, cartography, navigation and philosophy flow from East to West, and Mehmet II invited Italian artists, architects and scholars to the city, such as the Greek humanist George of Trebizond, who left the Pope for Mehmet; the painter Constanzo da Ferrara arrived in Istanbul in 1478, where he produced portraits of Mehmet, and in 1482 the Florentine humanist Berlinghieri dedicated his version of Ptolemy's "Geography" to the Ottoman prince. In Ferrara, one may trace a certain oriental influence of the architecture and art, such as a cupola found on a building, turbans and Persian carpets in paintings, cf. Ricci 2002, 25–28.

[31] Ibidem.

[32] Ibid., 9.

[33] Ibid., 9.

[34] Ibid., 35–36.

period, since some of the Muslim states were allies of the Christian princes,[35] and although great internal conflicts among Italian city-states dominated the picture as well, the Ottoman Empire was indeed a huge threat to the European states and it influenced Italy directly on several occasions.

Intellectual context

The fear of further Turkish advances in Italy and in Europe after 1453 is reflected in the huge amount of anti-Turkish writings during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, known as "humanist crusade literature":

> The humanists wrote far more often and at far greater length about the Turkish menace and the need for crusade than they did about such better-known humanist themes as true nobility, liberal education, the dignity of man, or the immortality of the soul.[36]

Even if humanist ideas were in many ways in opposition to medieval crusade ideology, many humanists approached the Turks in condemning, moral and religious terms using crusade rhetoric against Islam. This crusade rhetoric included images of the Turk as anti-Christ, as God's scourge or punishment against the sinful Christians as well as articulations of a more pragmatic need to unite the Christian forces.[37] In eyewitness accounts, historiographic treatises, propaganda pamphlets, letters or poems, humanists such as Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–64, from 1458 Pope Pius II), Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472) or Marin Barleti (1450–1513), to mention just a few, implored the Christian princes to combat the Turks and thus contributed to the construction of the very idea of Europe as *unitas Christiana.*[38] In their writings the humanists were inspired by classical Greek and Roman authors and referred to a series of antique sources and methods, thereby creating a common discursive field. Of course, neither Christianity nor Islam existed in the classical world, yet the classical texts represented a cultural context in which the humanists so to speak situated themselves and the Ottoman Turks. They found useful cultural and political concepts of East and West, Barbary and civilisation in classical Greek and Roman authors.

[35] Meserve 2008, 11.

[36] Cf. Hankins 1995, 112. He listed four hundred manuscripts on the Turks written by more than fifty humanists during the years 1451–1481. See also the fundamental contributions to this field of studies by Bisaha 2004 and Meserve 2008.

[37] Höfert 2000, 55–56.

[38] Bisaha 2004, 84–85. Höfert (2000, 49) too interprets the Turkish menace as the generator of the very idea in the fifteenth century of Europe as a homogenous, Christian unit highlighting that: "it was only after the fall of the ideologically important Constantinople, that Europe was identified as the last, now threatened, bastion of Christianity, despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire had already existed within the geographic borders of Europe for some considerable time".

With the fall of Constantinople and the ensuing destruction of books, art and architecture, the notion of the Turks as a threat to learning and high culture became widespread, and the fate of Constantinople was compared with the pagans' destruction of ancient Rome. The Turks were depicted as Europe's new barbarians similar to the Persians, the Germans, the Vikings and the Mongols and as such not only considered as enemies of the faith but of the very civilization.[39] The humanists used the behaviour of the Turks as an opportunity to strengthen their own relation to classical culture,[40] but they did, as argued by Nancy Bisaha, relate to the medieval chivalric universe and its religious understanding of Islam as well. The discourse on the Turks did, as mentioned above, incorporate elements of crusade rhetoric, that is, the Turk as anti-Christ, God's scourge and a punishment for the sinful Christians, as well as knowledge and strategic considerations motivated by a more pragmatic need to unite the Christian forces.[41]

In historical and ethnographic works from the early sixteenth century, in the works of for example Paolo Giovio and Giovan Antonio Menavino (Genovese prisoner at the sultan's court from 1504–1514),[42] we find examples of a new empirical curiosity towards the Turks: These works contain elements of admiration for the strength, organisation and discipline of the Ottomans, presented as a model for, as well as a warning against the Christians. However, in spite of the laudatory elements, these works are all born from the desire to understand and then better combat the huge Ottoman enemy. Furthermore, although these historiographic and ethnographic works do represent a more objective, systematic and pluralistic approach to the Ottomans than seen before, religion remains a central and distinctive element. The anthropologist Almut Höfert claims that the importance of the image of the cruel and dangerous Turkish 'Other' cannot be overestimated and that the construction of this discourse may even have influenced the contemporary development of typography,[43] the discovery of America and the evolution of ethnographic science (knowledge of self and other).

Direct references to the Ottoman Turks in the Furioso

Ariosto seems to participate in this discourse on the Turks. Already in song XVII, which was part of the first edition of the *Furioso* published in 1516,

[39] Bisaha 2004, 62.
[40] Ibid., 71.
[41] Höfert 2000, 55–56.
[42] For references see Lausten 2019.
[43] The invention of typography supported the spreading of pamphlets and propaganda against the Turks, and it might not be a coincidence that the first printed text from Gutenberg's printing house was the anti-Turkish "Mahnung der Christenheit wider die Türken" (1455).

Ariosto refers directly and unequivocally to the Ottoman Turks, contributing to the creation of images and myths about the Turks and thus offering his readers a key for understanding the Saracen motif.[44] The preamble states that bad leadership is one of God's punishments for the sinful living of a nation:

> When our sins have passed the bounds of forgiveness, God, in His justice, to show equity on a par with His mercy, often gives power to unspeakable tyrants, to utter monsters, and endows them with the compulsion and the cunning to work evil. […] He gave Italy in prey to the Huns, Goths, and Lombards […] to plague and torment us, after we had strayed too long from the path of virtue (XVII, 1–2).[45]

This is the case also today, he continues: "Not only in ages past but in our own day we have clear evidence of this, when to guard us, unprofitable and ill-born flock, He has appointed vicious wolves for keepers […]" (XVII, 3).[46] Ariosto alludes to Pope Julius II (1503–1513), who helped Swiss mercenaries getting into Italy after the battle at Ravenna (in 1512), and as a consequence the barbarian invasions mentioned above.[47] Yet, the narrator continues hopefully, now in the future tense and thus with a double meaning: "The time will come when we shall go to ravage their shores, if ever we grow better, and their sins reach the point of moving the Eternal Goodness to anger" (XVII, 5).[48] Thus, the narrator does sanction war, provided it is intended to combat enemies of Italy or Christianity. Then moving back to the attack of king Agramante on France, at the medieval plot level, it follows that: "The Christians' excesses must have vexed the serene face of the Almighty, for the Turks and Moors had overrun all their lands, committing rape and murder, pillage and outrage" (XVII, 6).[49] The anachronistic use of "il Turco" is interesting since Turks normally do not appear at the medieval plot-level of the poem. The two temporal levels of the poem are juxtaposed: The wars

[44] In the following I quote from the English translation of *Orlando Furioso* by Guido Waldman. In the footnotes I insert the original quotations in Italian from Ariosto 1976.

[45] "Il giusto Dio, quando i peccati nostri/hanno di remission passato il segno,/acciò che la giustizia sua dimostri/uguale alla pietà, spesso dà regno/ a tiranni atrocissimi et a mostri,/e dà lor forza e di mal fare ingegno./ […]// […] e diede Italia a tempi men remoti/ in preda agli Unni, ai Longobardi, ai Goti."

[46] "Di questo abbiàn non pur al tempo antiquo,/ma ancora al nostro, chiaro esperimento,/quando a noi, greggi inutili e mal nati,/ha dato per guardian lupi arrabbiati […]".

[47] Cf. the note by Cesare Segre in Ariosto: *Orlando furioso*, vol. II, p. 1326.

[48] "Tempo verrà ch'a depredar loro liti/andremo noi, se mai saren migliori,/e che i peccati loro giungano al segno,/che l'eterna Bontà muovano a sdegno".

[49] "Doveano allora aver gli eccessi loro/di Dio turbata la serena fronte,/ che scòrse ogni lor luogo il Turco e 'l Moro/con stupri, uccisïon, rapine et onte […]".

against the Muslims at the time of Charlemagne are associated with those of Ariosto's era in the early sixteenth century.

The continuation of song XVII reinforces the impression of what is at stake: We move to Damaskus to follow another knight and after a long description of the city's beauties, and an account of a huge, mythological monster, the narrator gets back to the contemporary subject of his preamble with a powerful political speech in which he directly compares his present time with the (preferable) era of the Crusades when the French protected the Holy Sepulchre: The French "settled there as rulers of the holy places where Almighty God dwelt in human flesh. Nowadays to their shame, Christians, the arrogant wretches, leave these places in the hands of dogs" (XVII, 73).[50] The Christians "ought to be setting their lances for the greater spread of our Faith; instead, they are running each other through the breast or belly and wreaking destruction on the few who already belong to the Faith" (XVII, 74).[51] He then continues almost deliriously to blame the European nations for their internal fights instead of standing together and fighting their common enemy:

> You men of Spain, you Frenchmen, you Swiss and Germans, turn your steps elsewhere, make worthier conquests: what you covet here is already Christ's. If you wish to be called Most Christian, if you wish to be called Catholic, why do you kill Christ's men? Why despoil them of their possessions? Why do you not retake Jerusalem, seized from you by renegades? Why is Constantinople and the better part of the world occupied by unclean Turks? (XVII, 74–75)[52]

According to the narrator, Spain ought to continue the Reconquista into Northern Africa: "Spain, have you not Africa for neighbour – Africa, who has done far worse to you than Italy? And yet to bring suffering on our wretched

[50] [i Francisi] "che quivi allor reggean la sacra stanza/dove in carne abitò Dio onnipotente;/ch'ora i superbi e miseri cristiani,/con biasmi lor, lasciano in man de' cani". Comparing the Turks with dogs was a typical rhetorical move among the humanists of the time. Furthermore, Trivellato (2010, 150 and n. 65) notices that the use of the word 'dog' about Muslims reflects the tendency to associate Muslims and illicit sexuality since 'dog' both refers to sodomites and infidels.

[51] "Dove abbassar dovrebbono la lancia/in augmento de la santa fede,/tra lor si dan nel petto e ne la pancia/a destruzion del poco che si crede".

[52] "Voi, gente ispana, e voi, gente di Francia,/volgete altrove, e voi, Svizzeri, il piede,/e voi Tedeschi, a far più degno acquisto;/che quanto qui cercate è già di Cristo.//Se Cristianissimi esser voi volete,/e voi altri Catolici nomati,/perché di Cristo gli uomini uccidete?/perché de' beni lor son dispogliati?/Perché Ierusalem non riavete,/che tolto è stato a voi da' rinegati?/Perché Costantinopoli e del mondo/ la miglior parte occupa il Turco immondo?"

country you abandon the fine enterprise you started so well" (XVII, 76).[53] The narrator continues by telling the Swiss mercenaries to seek "the riches of the Turk" (instead of those of the Italians):

> You Swiss, if it is fear of starving to death in your lairs which tempts you down to Lombardy, […] the riches of the Turks are not far to seek – drive them out of Europe, or at least dislodge them from Greece. Thus you shall be able to escape hunger or at any rate meet a more meritorious end in those regions. (XVII, 77)[54]

He tells the Germans too to go east where the rivers are full of gold: "What I say to you, I say also to your German neighbours: that is where the wealth is that Constantine brought from Rome – thither he took the best, giving away what remained" (XVII, 78).[55] Finally, he addresses Pope Leo X, who should protect Italy, like a shepherd his flocks, instead of abusing his power. From this passage it is clear that Italy's problems are considered closely related to the Turkish threat. Ariosto echoes a widespread tendency among intellectuals of that period: When cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was elected as a pope and became Leo X in 1513, it was said that: "The Turkish problem had mounted the throne with him".[56] Indeed, his most immediate challenge was to make the European leaders agree in order to combat the Turks. Many intellectuals throughout Europe thus implored the pope to lead a crusade against the Turks and dedicated their works to him.[57]

The rhetoric used in the passage from the seventeenth song quoted above brings to mind how Petrarch on several occasions called for crusade and constructed an image of 'us and them', i.e., of the superiority of Europeans vs. the backward Muslims.[58] Ariosto's rhetoric is also in line with the formulas found in the writings of the Italian humanists mentioned above. When Ariosto claims that the Christians "ought to be setting their lances for the greater spread of our Faith" instead of "running each other through the breast or belly and wreaking destruction on the few who already belong to the

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[53] "Non hai tu, Spagna, l'Africa vicina,/che t'ha via più di questa Italia offesa?/ E pur, per dar travaglio alla meschina,/lasci la prima tua sì bella impresa".

[54] "Se 'l dubbio di morir ne le tue tane,/Svizzer, di fame, in Lombardia ti guida,/[…] le richezze del Turco hai non lontane:/caccial d'Europa, o almen di Grecia snida:/così potrai o del digiuno trarti,/o cader con più merto in quelle parti."

[55] "Quel ch'a te dico, io dico al tuo vicino/tedesco ancor: là le richezze sono,/che vi portò da Roma Constantino:/ portonne il meglio, e fe' del resto dono".

[56] Setton 1969, 369.

[57] This was also the case of authors like Spandugino and Menavino, cf Lausten 2019.

[58] Cf. Bisaha 1999, 189. As Tobias Gregory has said, quoted in Cavallo (2013, 175): "Ariosto employs the same line of exhortation used by Urban II in preaching the First Crusade: for God's sake, leaders of Christian nations, stop attacking each other and go attack Muslims".

Faith" (XVII, 74),[59] he repeats a recurring *topos* in both medieval and renaissance literature that cannot be ignored in analysis of the *Furioso*. As mentioned above, this perspective seems to have been overlooked by previous research. Most critics focus on thematic analysis of representations of medieval Saracens, examining whether they are depicted in a positive or negative way, whether they act according to the chivalric code or not, neglecting the direct references to the contemporary Turks in the poem as well as the allusions to Ariosto's own days.[60]

Crusade rhetoric or noble Saracens?

When it comes to the representations of Saracens, the relationship between Christians and Saracens is indeed in some passages characterised by solidarity and equality. We see alliances and friendships across religious boundaries among individual knights,[61] and occasionally Ariosto does express a non-judgmental interest in some cultural and religious aspects of Islam as when he is describing the use of similar religious rituals among Saracens and Christians: Before a duel between the Saracen Roger and the Christian Rinaldo, they both stand at the battle field with their armies and their kings (Agramante and Charlemagne) to support them, and each of them followed by a priest with a holy book. After the knights' selection of weapons, the priests step forward, one with the Bible and the other with the Koran: "Then two priests stepped forth, one from either sect, book in hand. The book our priest held contained the unblemished life of Christ; the other's book was the Koran (XXXVIII, 81)."[62] King Agramante and King Charlemagne step forward next to them and pray at the altar: Charlemagne raises his hands to the sky and asks God to witness his promise that he will pay a certain amount of money to Agramante if his knight loses and that he will also accept a truce (XXXVIII, 84). Agramante similarly promises to withdraw his armies back over the sea if his knight loses the battle and that he too accepts a truce in that case: "Similarly, calling Mahomet to witness in no uncertain voice, he

[59] See n. 51 for Italian version.

[60] Also Pavlova (2014: 475) mentions only briefly the "passionate speech" of song XVII, without attempting to interpret it.

[61] The most famous example is the episode of two great soldiers fighting over Angelica in the first song; when she escapes, they make peace with each other and decide to follow her on the same horse: "Great was the goodness of the knights of old! Here they were, rivals, of different faiths, and they still ached all over from the cruel and vicious blows they had dealt each other; still, off they went together in mutual trust, through the dark woods and crooked paths" (I, 22). The episode expresses an idealised image of the knights, who show mutual respect towards each other and towards the private, sentimental reasons behind their actions.

[62] "duo sacerdoti, l'un de l'una setta,/ l'altra de l'altra, uscîr coi libri in mano./ In quel del nostro è la vita pefetta/ scritta di Cristo; e l'altro è l'Alcorano."

promised on the book held by his Imam to observe all he had said. Then the two sovereigns quickly strode off the field and rejoined each his own ranks" (XXXVIII, 86).[63] The narrator highlights the similarity of the cultural and religious aspects of the rituals prior to the duel without stressing the superiority of Christendom using negative adjectives about Islam.[64]

Similar episodes prompted Ariosto scholars to claim that the only barrier to friendship and love between Saracens and Christians is their social status and not the ethnic-religious belonging of the knights.[65] However, this description seems to contrast with the abovementioned treatment of the Turks of Ariosto's day. Furthermore, as I will illustrate in the following, the noble Saracens are not as worthy as the Christian heroes in Ariosto's poem: we find several examples of a different and negative picture of the Saracens who are generally characterised as more cruel and unfair and less worthy than the Christians, while the Christian knights are helpful and humane towards their enemies.[66] The Saracen leaders are presented as cruel and despotic towards their own soldiers, while the Christian leaders, as Paul Larivaille has noted, never kill or abandon their own armies.[67] In her comparison between Boiardo and Ariosto, Cavallo shows how "Ariosto subjects Boiardo's East Asian and North African protagonists to a process of degradation"[68] and she presents examples of Saracen knights acting unchivalric and being characterised as threats to Christian Europe. This applies to the case of the African king Agramante who "comes to represent an enemy of the Christian faith who must

[63] "E similmente con parlar non basso,/chiamando in testimonio il gran Maumette,/sul libro ch'in man tiene il suo papasso,/ciò che detto ha, tutto osservar promette./Poi del campo si partono a gran passo,/e tra i suoi l'uno e l'altro si rimette (…)."

[64] According to Pavlova (2014: 476): "some occasional references to Islamic culture suggest that the poet had at least some knowledge of it". However, she also says that "Ariosto does not offer a realistic depiction of Islam and Islamic culture". Ariosto's lack of knowledge about Islam, or his deliberately medieval representation of it, is manifest when he refers to Islam as a religion that worships three gods, Muhammed, Trivigant and Apollo (also known from the *Chansons de Roland*), as in song XII when Ferrau gets furious when Angelica escapes him: "She vanished, as I say, before his eyes, as a phantasm at the moment of waking. He searched amid the trees but there was not another glimpse of her to assuage his doleful eyes. Cursing Mahomet and Trivigant and their creed and every sage who taught it, Ferrau returned towards the spring […]". Since the early medieval period many Christians thought that the Muslims worshipped three gods.

[65] See e.g. Pagliardini & Fuchs 2006, 583.

[66] This interpretation is in opposition to Pavlova's reading that underscores the chivalric values of the Saracen knights, see Pavlova 2013.

[67] See Larivaille 2011, 8 and 11. As further examples, Larivaille mentions King Agramante who breaks his deal shortly after having sworn at the Coran (XXXIX, 6) and Sobrino who wounds the horse of his rival which is considered a cowardly move (Larivaille 2011, 7).

[68] Cavallo 2013, 4.

be converted or annihilated",[69] and the Algerian king Rodomonte who is characterized more negatively than in Boiardo, being cruel against Christians and wishing to burn down Paris and Rome.[70]

Turning our attention to the Christian knights, the poem presents several examples of Christian crusade ideology and of the superiority of Christian religion. The motivation of Charlemagne's troops is clear from the beginning: "All of them ready to die for the honour of Christ".[71] Both Orlando and Astolfo "take on the role of religious as well as military leaders",[72] and Charlemagne often seeks and gets divine aid in prayers, sometimes directly evoking the context and the rhetoric of the crusades as in the song XIV in which he asks for God's help: He warns against the Muslims whose "false law of Babel will drive you out and suppress your religion" and – anachronistically – presents his knights as the liberators of the Holy Sepulchre: "Defend your faithful then; they are the ones who have cleansed your sepulchre and purged it of brutish dogs; many a time have they defended your holy Church and her vicars."[73]

Also, as argued by Cavallo, the figure of Astolfo has a crucial role in what she calls the ideological shift from Boiardo's detached "marvels" to Ariosto's "new emphasis on religion" and "greater realistic detail".[74] Astolfo travels to places of religious importance such as Jerusalem and Egypt, and throughout these episodes crusades and pilgrimage are continuously emphasized.[75] He is depicted as a true paladin of Christ: He visits the site in which the apostle Thomas was martyred for his faith and the episode's mentioning of this early missionary "calls to mind the spread of Christianity across the globe".[76] Moreover, he and his knights purify themselves spiritually before entering the holy temples:

> They purged their sins in a monastery fragrant with the odour of good example, and, contemplating the mysteries of Christ's passion, they

[69] Ibid., 197.

[70] On Ariosto's Rodomonte see Cavallo 2013, 118–121. Further examples of unchivalric and cruel Saracens is found in e.g. Cavallo 2013, 43 (Gradasso), 66–69 (Mandricardo), 176 (Norandino).

[71] "per Christo e pel suo honor a morir pronti" (XIV, 102).

[72] Cavallo 2013, 195.

[73] "Difendi queste genti, che son quelle/ch'el tuo sepulchro hanno purgato e mondo/da' brutti cani" (XIV, 71). See Cavallo (2013, 197–207) for further examples of Ariosto's more religious and aggressive attitude compared to Boiardo. See above n. 50 for interpretation of the use of 'dogs' for Muslims.

[74] Cavallo 2013, 197–199.

[75] See the analysis of Cavallo 2013, 158–164, 167–171.

[76] Cavallo 2013, 161. See her chapters 11–13 for further details on the Christian knights' travels to Jerusalem, Egypt and Damaskus.

> visited every shrine – Christian shrines now, to their eternal shame and degradation, usurped by the impious Moors.[77]

When Ariosto concludes the stanza with: "Europe is in arms and aches to do battle everywhere, except where battle is needed", he clearly alludes to his own contemporary world lamenting, like many others before him, the internal strife among European nations that prevented them from organizing a common attack against the Turks. With Astolfo's encounter with Prester John, focusing on his religious faith, Ariosto also, according to Cavallo, "renders concrete one of the most persistent fantasies of Christian Europe: A military victory over Muslims with the help of a Christian sovereign residing in Africa."[78]

In the last songs of the *Furioso* we find an increased emphasis on holy war and on religious matters both in terms of greater ferocity among the Christian troops and in terms of religious symbolism. During the final battle of Biserta the Christian knights take prisoners, they plunder and destroy the city, and meanwhile they order collective prayers and fasting. Cavallo compares this "combination of religious piety and uncontrolled rapaciousness" to accounts of the First Crusade such as William of Tyre's.[79]

As far as a broader contextualization of the call for crusade in the *Furioso* is concerned, Cavallo is surprisingly skeptical towards a reading of the poem in light of the historical and intellectual context of the Turkish threat: The poem's crusade rhetoric is "not dictated by current events since (…) this period was one of decreased danger from the Turks", she claims,[80] and she doubts that Ariosto did subscribe to the crusading ideology.[81] She seems to ignore that even though Italy was not attacked by the Ottomans at the beginning of sixteenth century, this period is definitely not characterized by a diminishing of the Turkish peril in Europe. As mentioned above, pope Leo X was expected to realize a crusade not to liberate the Holy Land but to liberate Europe from the Turks, and then, as formulated in one of the appeals

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[77] "Purgati de lor colpe a un monasterio/che dava di sé odor di buoni esempii,/de la passion di Cristo ogni misterio/contemplando n'andâr per tutti i tempii/ch'or con eterno obbrobio e vituperio/agli cristiani usurpano i Mori empii." (XV, 99).

[78] Cavallo 2013, 204. Also: "Ariosto's poem thus brings to fruition Christian Europe's great wish-fulfilment fantasy of finding a powerful ally in the heart of Africa to help defeat the Muslims. In the end, Astolfo's haphazard arrival in Ethiopia, initially fashioned as an isolated romance narrative, becomes the catalyst for the total destruction of Biserta." (Ibid., 196). Astolfo's travel to the moon is also linked to Prester John, according to Cavallo, since his realm was told to be found "upon a mountain high enough to approach the moon's circuit". (Ibid., 194).

[79] Cavallo 2013, 202.

[80] Cavallo 2013, 175.

[81] Ibid., 204.

to the pope, all Christian princes would "accept the terms of a peace or truce and turn their arms against the impious enemies" of the Christian faith.[82] If the Christian princes came together in a single army "neither the Turkish sultans nor even the whole world could possibly oppose such a force", and when the Turks were defeated, a new order would arise on earth, "and papal power, to which God had subjected mankind, could extend Christianity to the far reaches of Asia and Africa."[83]

Finally, even though it might not be the *primary* intention of the poem to defend the Christian religion, I would like to underscore how the poem very clearly pays a fundamental tribute to Christianity at the expense of Islam. Central to this point is the fact that the Saracens' religion is not an indifferent or insignificant matter, but always considered a barrier to their final recognition by the Christians: A worthy Saracen must either die or convert. It was a common attitude among many humanist intellectuals too that only his faith was a barrier for a Turk to be considered part of a great people.[84] This argument has been used as a 'proof' of Ariosto's open-mindedness, but on the contrary I believe that this argument reflects how the religious element maintains great importance. Even Donnelly, whose interpretation of Ariosto's poem differs from the one I present here, could not fail to note that "the joy our poets take in securing their conversion again suggests a religious basis of their attitude toward Moslems."[85] The more secular approach to the Muslims seen among humanists did not imply a less critical judgment towards Islam.

In the *Furioso*, six Saracens choose to become Christians, among them Roger and Marfisa, while the cruelest Saracen, Rodomonte, king of Algier, whom the Christians fear the most, remains a Muslim, "enemy of our faith" (XIV, 26), until his death at the end of the poem, killed by the newly converted Roger (XXXXVI, 139–140). "Ariosto's poem ends with the orthodox teaching that those who will not be saved shall be damned", as Comfort said.[86] The motif of conversion is important to the interpretation of the view of the Saracens. Through the story of two of the conversions in particular, Roger's and Marfisa's, Ariosto indirectly expresses his view not only of the Saracens' religion, but also of the Muslims of his day, the Turks: Roger fights on the Saracens' side, until he realizes that he and Marfisa are

[82] This *Libellus ad Leonem Decimum* was written by two Camaldulensian monks, Paolo Giustinian and Pietro Querini, and concerned "papal power, ecclesiastical reform, the geographical extension of Latin Christianity, and the crusade against the Turks." Cf. Setton 1969, 371.

[83] Ibid., 372. It is striking that the authors of this appeal not only talked about defending themselves but also dreamt of expanding the territory.

[84] Cardini 1999. 213.

[85] Donnelly 1977, 166.

[86] Comfort 1944, 902.

twins, that their mother died in childbirth and their father was killed by the Saracens (actually by Agramante's father and grandfather) before their birth. The wizard Atlas took care of them until Marfisa, at the age of seven, was kidnapped by Arabs and sold as a slave to the king of Persia. They are actually of Christian origin, and they are descendants of Hector, who fled from Troy and ended up in Sicily where he ruled over Messina. Among Roger's descendants there are many great Christian personalities – we are told – such as Constantine, the great Norman kings including Roger I (1031–1101), who conquered Sicily from the Arabs and his son Roger II (1095–1154), a powerful king who conquered parts of Africa's coast and attempted an attack on Constantinople during the second crusade (1147–1148).[87] When Marfisa learns about all this, she immediately declares that she wants to convert to Christianity (XXXVI, 77–78). The next day she tells Charlemagne about her future plans:

> She wished to become a Christian, she continued. Then, after dispatching Agramant, she proposed, if Charlemagne agreed, to go back to her Eastern kingdom and baptize it. This done, she would make war against any part of the world where Mahomet and Trivigant were worshipped: her every conquest, she promised, would be a gain for the Holy Roman Empire and for the Christian Faith (XXXVIII, 18).[88]

This must have been sweet music to the ears of Christian readers in 1532: One of the strong female Saracen warriors not only converting but also planning to use her energy – both spiritually and soldierly – to serve the Christian cause around the world!

Roger is baptised in song XXXXI by a Christian hermit. He is shipwrecked on the coast of Africa,[89] where he is welcomed by the old hermit, who has lived there for forty years in harmony with nature and next to a small church. Roger is taught that "God does not deny Christ to those who seek him"[90] and: "He learns all the great mysteries of our Faith and the next day the old man baptized him in the pure spring" (X, 59).[91] Roger wishes to convert both

[87] The relevance of the link between the poem's Roger and the two historical Norman kings has not gone unnoticed as Cavallo claims (Cavallo 2013, 292 n.3) since both Marinelli and Jacobs discuss the matter and use it in their interpretations of the poem.

[88] "E seguitò, voler cristiana farsi,/E dopo ch'avrà estinto il re Agramante/Voler, piacendo a Carlo, ritornarsi/A battezzare il suo regno in Levante;/Et indi contra tutto il mondo armarsi,/Ove Macon s'adori e Trivigante;/E con promissïon, ch'ogni suo acquisto/ Sia de l'Imperio e de la fé di Cristo."

[89] Almost drowning he prays to God and promises to become Christian – "di core e di fede" ('by heart and faith') – if he survives, and never again to combat against the Christians.

[90] "non niega il cielo/ tardi o per tempo Cristo a chi gliel chiede".

[91] "Imparò poi più ad agio in questo loco/De nostra fede i gran misterii tutti;/Et alla pura fonte ebbe battesmo/Il dì seguente dal vecchio medesmo".

because of his love for Bradamante and because he now knows that his father was a Christian too (XXII, 35). Through Roger's story, the poem confirms the superiority of the Christian faith, rather than presenting Roger as an example of "ethnic and religious hybridity".[92] There have been differing interpretations of this episode and of the significance of Roger's character in general. Jacobs has argued that it is in a certain sense Roger's Sicilian background that makes it possible to overcome the obstacle of the apparently different religions of Roger and Bradamante.[93] Pavlova claims that Roger only converts to Christianity to save his own life.[94] In her analysis of the figures of Rodomonte and Roger she states that chivalric honor is the "main value" (valore principe) of Ariosto's narrative of Rodomonte and Ruggiero, and that religion does not count as much as chivalry does.[95] She claims that the final songs of the *Furioso* rather represent the "indifference of God towards the destiny of his followers".[96] My reading leads to the opposite result: After the conversion of Roger, the *Furioso* is full of symbolic moments that confirm the superiority of Christian religion. In the final songs God intervenes with three miracles,[97] and God is given an active role in the final Christian victory.

Inspired by Roger, other knights seek the monk to get their wounds healed: "Oh, the power Christ gives to those who believe in him! He cured the knight of all pain and so restored his foot that it was even sounder than before" (XXXXIII, 192), the narrator says with an ironic undertone.[98] However, when the Saracen Sobrino witnesses how his friend is freed from illness,[99] he too wishes to become a Christian:

> On seeing the clearly miraculous cure wrought by the holy man, he decided to renounce Mahomet and confess Christ, living and powerful. His heart touched with faith, he asked to be initiated in our sacred rite, so the man of God baptized him and, with a prayer, also restored his health too him (XXXXIII, 193–194).[100]

[92] Pagliardini & Fuchs 2006, 585.
[93] Jacobs 2006, 183.
[94] Cavallo 2013, 175.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Pavlova 2013, 176.
[97] Two of the miracles recall biblical episodes associated with Moses and Jesus. Cf Cavallo 2014, 199–200.
[98] "Oh virtù che dà Cristo a chi gli crede!/Cacciò dal cavalliero ogni passion."
[99] "liberato e franco/ del perigliososo mal".
[100] "si dispon di lasciar Macon da solo,/e Cristo confessar vivo e potente:/e domanda con cor di fede attrito,/d'inicïarsi al nostro sacro rito./ Così l'uom giusto lo battezza, et anco/ gli rende, orando, ogni vigor primiero".

This passage clearly demonstrates how Ariosto, in spite of the soft irony, linguistically juxtaposes two semantic fields – disease and religion – inciting association in the reader's mind: He equates unequivocally pain and disease with Islam, and healing and liberation from pain with Christianity. According to Cavallo there is no irony at all in this description: "within the fiction of the poem they underscore God's participation in a Christian victory that is anything but funny",[101] and furthermore she points to the fact that the healing "evokes religious precedents, in this case the many instances of healing in the Gospels and hagiographic literature".[102]

Allusions to the contemporary wars against the Turks

My last examples deal with Roger who is foretold to found the Este house with Bradamante. In telling his story, Ariosto alludes to the contemporary wars against the Turks. As seen above, through the genealogy of Roger and Marfisa Ariosto relates these two figures to major defenders of Christianity, in particular to the Norman leaders Roger I and Roger II. Moreover, Ariosto treats the contemporary conflicts among Christians and Ottomans indirectly through the symbolic value of certain geographical areas that are normally rare in chivalric epics: In song XXXXIV Roger goes to Belgrade. Here he runs into a conflict that was real during Charlemagne's time and in the following centuries, when Belgrade was the subject of conflicts between rivalling Byzantium, Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria, and changed hands eight times between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. In the poem Bradamante's father has betrothed her to the son of the Byzantine emperor, Constantin, mainly because Roger doesn't have his own reign. Roger decides to kill the rival and his father (XLIV, 56) and he finds them in Belgrade where they have besieged and are about to conquer the city (XLIV, 78). When Roger, for personal reasons, enters the fray on the Bulgarian side and struggles with superhuman powers, the Bulgarians win and Roger becomes their king (XLIV, 97–98). The episode is yet another example of how Ariosto associates historical periods. Roger has run into a historical conflict, but the contemporary reader cannot have failed to associate the above-mentioned episode with the more recent battles to conquer the city: In 1440 and 1456 Ottoman sultan Mehmed II had tried to take Belgrade, but he was met with strong resistance from Hungarian captain Janos Hunyadi (c. 1407–1456). Hungarians defended the city until 1521, when sultan Suleiman the Magnificent finally managed to conquer it. It cannot be a coincidence that

Pavlova claims that "it cannot be denied that Ariosto's voice is tinged with irony when he describes the favours that the Christian God showers on his faithful" (Pavlova 2014, 478).

[101] Cavallo 2013, 200.

[102] Ibid., 204.

Ariosto decides to add these three final songs to the third version of his poem written between 1521 and the 1532.

It has been discussed why Roger, who had decided to become Christian at this point of the narrative, would attack other Christians (the Greeks) in Belgrade. Could it be a 'greeting' to the 'treacherous' Byzantines?[103] Or does the Byzantine Constantin in the poem represent the *Turkish* Constantinople rather than the Byzantin one, as it is argued in Jacobs' dissertation?[104] Compared to the historical reality of Ariosto's days, the roles seem in some way to be redistributed in the poem, since the city ends in the Christian hands of Roger. The episode may represent an example of wishful thinking just like the conversions of the Saracen heroes.[105]

Furthermore, it is no coincidence that Mathias Corvinus (1443–1490), king of Hungary and one of the greatest defenders of Christianity, is mentioned shortly after the Roger episode (XLV, 3): In the prologue of song XLV, Corvinus is used as one of the examples of great men whose luck can change in a short time. Corvinus was the son of the aforementioned John Hunyadi and in 1476 he married into the Este family with Ippolito's aunt, Beatrice of Naples. (It is by the intervention of Corvinus that Ippolito becomes bishop in Hungary, Ariosto refusing to follow him). In this way, Corvinus represents still another link between the wars against the Turks of Ariosto's time and the medieval plot of the poem.

These parallels between the poem's past and contemporary levels, between the historical Ippolito d'Este and the fictional Roger are further reinforced by the presence of a tapestry that adorns Roger and Bradamante's wedding tent. It is described in detail in the last song of the *Furioso*. The tapestry is brought from Constantinople to Paris and is decorated with embroideries foretelling in a virgilian way the life of Ippolito d'Este in images. Among other things we learn about Ippolito's stay in Hungary at the court of the King "[…] where the People flock to see him and worship him as a god" (XLVI, 87),[106] and about his friendship with Corvinus:

> The child is portrayed forever at his uncle's side, whether in the palace or the camp – if the powerful king makes expeditions against the Turks

[103] Since the medieval period the Byzantines were considered as sweep and unfair (cf Cardini 1999, 212). See also Jacobs 2006 who refers to interpretations by Marsh 1981 and Marinelli 1987.

[104] Jacobs 2006.

[105] Marinelli suggests that Roger's Christian attack on the city alludes to the reality of Ariosto's days when the Christian European nations were fighting against each other (Marinelli 1987, 93).

[106] "ove la gente/corre a vederlo, e come un dio l'adora".

> or against the Germans, Hippolytus is always beside him, intent on performing noble feats and learning valour (XLVI, 88).[107]

In this allusive way, Ariosto encourages Ippolito d'Este to fight against the Turks, just like Corvinus, just like his fictional ancestor Roger, who went to the same area to fight the Greeks, and just like another of Ippolito's ancestors, the historically real Roger I, who conquered Sicily from the Arabs.

Roger's and Bradamante's descendants – and as a consequence the Este family's descendants – are presented as defenders of the Empire and protectors of the Christian Church. And their struggle for love, overcoming passions and temptations, can thus be seen as

> a mirror for their descendants in the here and now of the sixteenth century. For the present is clearly no less full of stresses and trials than the past: No less than the Empire of Charlemagne, the Christian world of Ariosto's day is threatened with dissolution by internal dissension and by external infidel fury.[108]

'Every cruel, inhuman deed ever practised by Tartar, Turk or Moor'

As I hope to have demonstrated, Ariosto's poem is not indifferent towards the Saracens and the Turks, and, contrary to the view of Calvino and many others, the Saracens are not just fantastic entities detached from historical reality; several episodes in the medieval time frame contain allusions to historical events and places associated with the Ottomans. Ariosto did not provide historical allegory, though, he responded, I believe, to the invasions of the Turks – to "every cruel, inhuman deed ever practised by Tartar, Turk, or Moor" (XXXVI, 3)[109] – by in varying ways incorporating historical events into his final edition of the *Furioso* (1532).

I disagree with the longstanding 'romantic' tradition of idealising the image of the Saracens as well as with the similar tendency of interpreting Ariosto's poem as built on a set of (anachronistic) modern, relativistic and 'filo-Islamic' values. Instead, I sympathize with those (like Marinelli, Jacobs and Cavallo) who read the poem in light of the historical and political contexts, mainly in light of the Turkish threat. I do not consider the *Furioso* a piece of crusade propaganda *tout court*, but as a complex poem including many direct and, mainly, indirect elements of the current anti-Turkish discourse of his days – that is 'crusade propaganda' in the broad sense. As a supplement to the historicizing interpretations I would like to underscore the

[107] "Sempre il fanciullo se gli vede a' panni,/sia nel palagio, sia nel padiglione:/ o contra Turchi, o contra gli Alemanni/ quel re possente faccia espedizione,/ Ippolito gli è appresso, e fiso attende/a' magnanimi gesti, e virtù apprende."

[108] Marinelli 1987, 84–85.

[109] "Tutti gli atti crudeli ed inumani, ch'usasse mai Tartaro o Turco o Moro".

alignment between Ariosto and the majority of Italian humanists who in their texts continuously appealed to popes and princes in order to make them stand together and fight back the Turks. In Ariosto (as well as in the Renaissance humanists) the image of the Muslims is complex and serves different functions: We find respect and admiration as well as fear and repulsion towards the Muslims; we find a secular, political and military evaluation of the Saracens' vices and virtues as well as religious crusade stereotypes about infidels or heretics.[110] The image of Saracens functions as a mirror in which the Christians can recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. And it functions as a warning.

Why has Ariosto's portrayal of Saracens and Islam reached such "contradictory conclusions"?[111] One reason might be found in the reception history of Ariosto: Many scholars have treated the epics of Boiardo and Ariosto in opposition to Tasso's much more explicitly religiously connoted crusade poem. Compared to Boiardo, the crusade ideology is more central in Ariosto, where as compared to Tasso, Ariosto seems less interested in religious matters. Initially, Ariosto's contemporary readers and critics did not consider the Saracen question to be central to the poem: According to Pavlova "early critics did not demonise Ariosto's Saracens" and "did not consider it to be a piece of crusade propaganda".[112] I disagree. First, I believe that Ariosto's contemporaries were surrounded by the discourse of the Turkish threat to the extent that they did not consider it to be worth mentioning. Attention was payed to the Ottoman threat all over Europe, it was discussed in all courts and in a huge amount of humanist texts. Among contemporary critics, there might thus not have been felt any need to stress the superiority of the Christians in Ariosto's poem. Second, critics in general seemed interested in other issues such as differences and similarities between medieval romance and classical epic, like in the case of Pigna or Giraldi Cinzio, who debated the poem's style and structure rather than its thematical contents including its representation of Saracens and Turks. Pigna, who is mentioned by Pavlova as an example of early critics, was the Este court historian and, just as his teacher and rival Giraldi, he compared the new romance of Ariosto with the epic of antiquity – the question of Turks and Saracens was not considered central to this particular project.[113]

[110] See Bisaha 2004, Meserve 2008.

[111] Pavlova 2014, 476.

[112] Ibid., 478.

[113] Pigna argued in his *Romanzi* (1554) that chivalric romances like Ariosto's were a modern form of poetry equal to those considered by Aristotle's *Poetics*. Tasso and others were critical towards this interpretation. The question of the role of the Saracens in this debate could be the object of a future piece of research.

Ariosto's often indirect approach to the Turkish matter does not mean that the subject was not of interest to him or his audience, it might also have to do with genre restrictions: His assignment was to entertain at court and keep political reality at a distance; the function of an epic romance was different from that of historical treatises, travel accounts and ethnographic works as well as the popular *cantari in ottava rima* produced during Ariosto's time. All these genres were fed by "everyday reality and current events",[114] they discussed political arguments or lamented contemporary events, whereas the romance poems had to narrate episodes from a distant past, to talk about love and not war, and they had to be evasive:

> Under the lash of the events, all literature in Italy searched for shelter and rest, where history, changing luck and tyranny of arms did not reach. If there was not peace on earth, at least one could find peace and stability and harmony in the fiction of art,[115]

as Carlo Dionisotti has explained. Not by chance, the summer residence of the Este family was called *Palazzo Schifanoia* ('schivare la noia' meaning to avoid boredom). However, the chivalric material can also be seen as having "a sort of false purpose, an excuse to act with absolute freedom making it totally clear (maybe helped by direct comments of the author) that one speaks about 'other things'",[116] and through invention to talk about reality, or to offer imaginary solutions to real anxieties. This seems to be the case of Ariosto, who, even if he is writing in the popular genre of the romance, cannot hold back from commenting directly upon the Ottomans in his poem.

In the image of the Ottoman Turks that appears in the narrator's comments, we find a more unequivocally negative evaluation, and Ariosto's approach to this issue is in line with contemporary humanistic writings: Thanks to their studies of the ancient texts they treat the Ottomans from a secular and political perspective, yet they also build on the medieval tradition and do not question the superiority of the Christian religion. Even if the historical crusade era is in the distant past for Ariosto, the idea of a crusade in a larger sense, understood as war against the Muslims, in particular the Turks, is certainly present in Ariosto's poem. The *Furioso* is not detached from historical reality, the poem rather partakes in the dominating discourse about the Turkish menace, reminding its readers about historical moments of conflict with the Muslims – with the Arabs in Jerusalem and in Sicily and with the Ottomans at the Balkans. The historical and the fictional levels are both part of a vision

[114] Dionisotti 1967, 173. My translation.
[115] Ibid., 171. My translation.
[116] Ceserani & De Federicis 1983, 1024. My translation.

not only of vices and virtues of the Renaissance man, but also of the political world of the Renaissance.

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GLOBAL TURK:

The Muslim as the Familiar Unknown in the Global Epics of the Renaissance

By Tue Andersen Nexø

"Global Turk" examines the representation of Muslim figures in Luis Vaz de Camões' Os Lusiadas *and Torquato Tasso's* Gerusalemme Liberata. *In these works, Muslims are not represented as unfamiliar and alien, but rather as well-known, almost familiar antagonists – they are instances of the supposedly well-known Other. The article argues that this happens for historical reasons – both Camões and Tasso wrote in a period where the Ottoman Empire loomed large in the European imagination – but also for reasons of genre. In these two late-renaissance epics, Muslim Others are modelled after the narrative conventions of the classical (and pagan) epic tradition, leading to strange, hybrid figures especially in* Gerusalemme Liberata. *The article also argues that the figure of the Muslim becomes a way of familiarizing the descriptions of otherwise strange and unfamiliar parts of the globe – the details of Indian society in* Os Lusiadas, *for instance.*

Luis Vaz de Camões' *Os Lusiadas* from 1572, which historically has been considered the national epic of Portugal, traces the story of Vasco da Gama and his crew, who in 1498 became the first Europeans to reach Asia following the southern coast of Africa. In the seventh canto of the epic, they finally reach their destination, India, whose spices they intend to buy in order to increase the wealth of Portugal. The ships cast anchor outside of the South Indian city of Calicut – a city that has served as the heart of the spice trade since Antiquity. An envoy thus sets out to introduce himself at the court of the local ruler:

> As the fleet anchored off this rich domain,/ One of the Portuguese was dispatched/ To make known to the Hindu king/ Their arrival from such distant shores./ He left the estuary for the river,/ Where the like never having been witnessed,/ His pale skin, his garments, and strange air/ Brought crowds of people hurrying to stare.
>
> Among those who came running to see him/ Was a Mohammedan born in Barbary,/ That region where in ancient times/ The giant Antaeus held sway./ Either he knew it as a neighbour,/ Or was already marked by its swords,/ But Portugal he knew at all events/ Though fate had exiled him a long way thence.

> Catching sight of the envoy, he exclaimed/ In delight, and in fluent Castilian/ – 'Who brought you to this other world/ So far from your native Portugal?'/ – 'Exploring,' he replied, 'the vast ocean/ Where no human being ever sailed;/ We come in search of the River Indus;/ To spread the faith of Christ is our purpose.'[1]

In a sense, the quoted passage pulls in two directions. On the one hand, it highlights the difference between European Portugal and Asian India. The envoy, with his pale skin and peculiar clothing, is something wholly new to the natives, and India is referred to as "this other world". On the other hand, the first person to speak to the envoy is precisely not a foreigner, but a Muslim from the southern Mediterranean coast. Monsayeed, as his name is revealed to be, speaks and understands Castilian, and for the rest of *Os Lusiadas*, he becomes the assistant of the Portuguese expedition in the foreign land. In the penultimate canto of the epic, he converts to Christianity. In the midst of the unknown, a familiar figure appears, but so does a familiar conflict: Christians against Muslims. This specific instance of the conflict is resolved through Monsayeed's conversion, but Camões spends the rest of *Os Lusiadas* showcasing a much more violent struggle between Europe and Islam.

Presenting the unknown as something at once familiar and new occurs in other parts of *Os Lusiadas*, and also in the Italian writer Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* from 1581, the other major successful attempt from the Late Renaissance at updating the classical genre of the epic. In both works, the Muslim serves a twofold purpose, being at once the antithesis of the Christian hero and the figure that makes the unknown familiar.

This is in part due to the two writers' choice of genre. On the one hand, the understanding of the epic that we find in the Late Renaissance demands that the works be historically accurate. For Camões especially, this meant that *Os Lusiadas* had to be constructed on a matrix of historical sources and events that had a decidedly non-epic flavour. On the other hand, the texts inscribe their historical material in a cosmic order and a narrative structure – the opposition of epic hero and adversary, the existence of divine beings aiding

[1] Camões: *The Lusiads* 1997, canto VII, stanzas 23–25. "Chegada a frota ao rico senhorio,/ Um Português, mandado, logo parte/ A fazer sabedor o Rei gentío/ Da vinda sua a tão remota parte./ Entrando o mensageiro pelo rio/ Que ali nas ondas entra, a não vista arte,/ A cor, o gesto estranho, o trajo novo,/ Fez concorrer a vêlo todo o povo.// Entre a gente que a vê-lo concorria,/ Se chega um Mahometa, que nascido/ Fora na região da Berberia,/ Lá onde fora Anteu obedecido./ (Ou, pela vezinhança, já teria/ O Reino Lusitano conhecido,/ Ou foi já assinalado de seu ferro;/ Fortuna o trouxe a tão longo desterro).// Em vendo o mensageiro, com jocundo/ Rosto, como quem sabe a língua Hispana,/ Lhe disse: – "Quem te trouxe a estoutro mundo,/ Tão longe da tua patria Lusitana?"/ – "Abrondo (lhe responde) o mar profundo/ Por onde nunca veio gente humana;/ Vimos buscar do Indo a grão corrente,/ Por onde a Lei divina se acrescente."" (Camões 1972, canto VII, stanzas 23–25).

in turn the hero and his adversary – both of which were shaped by the tradition of the classical epic and could be used, although not without some consequence, in the portrayal of the struggle between Christians and Muslims. Finally, this unique presentation of the exotic as something at once unknown and familiar is due in part to the fact that the understanding of the world in these epic works is viewed through what late 16th century Europe perceived as the greatest global conflict: the struggle between Muslims and Christians. If one is to understand not just how these works present the Muslim as the adversary of the Christian, but also how they use him as the structuring principle in the portrayal of a non-European world, all of these factors (genre, historical sources, ideology) will have to be taken into account.

Epic and history

As a genre, the epic has always been filled with exotic travels and strange creatures. Odysseus traversed a simultaneously mythical and historical Mediterranean Sea, Aeneas travelled from the Near East along the southern coast of the Mediterranean and through the underworld in order to reach Rome, where he would lay the founding stones of a future empire. It therefore comes as no surprise that the attempts at reviving the ancient epic found in the Renaissance abound with traveling heroes and foreign cultures. At the same time, however, the tradition branches out. In the first offshoot, which we find in attempts from the late 15th and early 16th century at turning medieval chivalric romances into epic poetry (most famously with Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516/1532)), a playful, ironic and not entirely realistic depiction of the world is developed.

In Ariosto's branching and digressive narrative, the siege of Paris carried out by the Moors can be seen as the story's missing centre, but in most parts of the tale he lets his wandering knights travel to Japan, India, Ethiopia – even the moon! – with the aid of wizards, flying ships and, in one case, a Pegasus. The journey from one place to another is almost completely hassle-free, as if traveling from one end of the world to the other posed no practical problem whatsoever. Strangely, the knights encounter the same things everywhere they go: other knights, giants, wizards, sorceresses, a whole gallery of faces from the chivalric romances. The outside world in these texts appears purely as decoration. Realistically speaking, there is little difference between here and there.

The other, later offshoot arises from the 16th century's somewhat selective reception of Aristotle's *Poetics*[2]. Following the conquest of Byzantium by the

[2] This claim is based on Werner 1977; Dionisotti 1967, especially the chapter "La letteratura italiana nell'età del concilio di Trento".

Ottoman Empire in 1453, a group of scholars versed in Greek fled to Italy. In their possession were transcripts of the original Greek of the *Poetics*, which until then had only been known in Europe through Latin translations of Averroes' Arabian retelling. In Italy, the first translation into Latin was printed in 1498. Inspired by the *Poetics* a group of predominantly Italian critics and poets started accusing Ariosto and his chivalric romances for being unrealistic and incoherent. His works might have amused their audience, but they failed to live up to the ideals of the epic form. More accurately, they lived up neither to the ideal of credible presentation of historical events, which was inferred from Aristotle's idea of *mimesis*, nor to the ideal of unity of story that was transposed from his discussions of the tragedy into the ideals of the epic form of the day. The ideal epic poem – that which could elevate works written in the vernaculars to (or possibly even surpass) the level of Homer and Virgil – should be written in the high style, should live up to the demand for a coherent narrative, and should live up to an idea of probability, which in this case also meant that the works should treat documentable events, preferably related to war and the fate of the political community. The works of both Tasso and Camões belong to this latter historical branch of the epic of the Renaissance.

The change in focus from the adventures of the wandering knight to epic tales of fateful historical events – anachronistically: from a private to a public story – naturally led to an increased focus in the second half of the 16th century on the battle against Muslims. For Catholic Europe, the second half of the 16th century was dominated by two historical events: The Counter-Reformation and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire to the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. The Battle of Lepanto in 1571 brought with it a certain hope that the Christian rulers would be able to resist the threat from the East, if only they could stand together – indeed it is no coincidence that both *Os Lusiadas* and *Gerusalemme Liberata* encourage the rulers of the day to cease warring with each other and instead fight the Turk. Even if it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the differences between Christians and Muslims did not exist in the early knightly epics, there is still a considerable distance from the introduction to Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (1495), wherein Christian and Saracen knights sit side by side at the court of Carl the Great, to the epics of Tasso and Camões, where the focus is directed towards a global conflict between Christians and Muslims – a conflict that, especially in the writings of Tasso, grows to cosmic proportions. In both his and Camões' writings, the Muslim is repeatedly cast as the other – not in the sense of the culturally different, but as the antagonist, the epic adversary, the enemy of the Christian kingdoms and heroes.

Camões – the transformation of India

However, the demands required by the post-classical epic often pulled in different directions. Often, there was a considerable gap between the principal demands of the epic in the Late Renaissance: the models and typical scenes that were inherited, so to speak, from the epics of Antiquity; the characters and narratives found in the historical material; and the notions and events from the works' own time, which they of course also drew on and related to. In *Os Lusiadas* especially, we see clearly the tensions between the demands of the genre and the historical material.

On the one hand, Camões sticks rather closely to the sequence of events that is laid out in all the available sources on the travels of Vasco da Gama. Just as Camões recounts, da Gama set out from Portugal along a somewhat familiar route following the African west coast, veered out into the Atlantic so as to not meet the headwind when sailing towards the southern tip of Africa, followed in the footsteps of the old explorer Bartolomeu Dias around the Cape of Good Hope and from there on sailed up along the eastern coast of Africa, where he repeatedly came into conflict with the local Muslim rulers. Camões also tells us that da Gama was prescient enough to have with him fluent speakers of Arabic, just as it is clear that he, during the final part of his voyage from East Africa to India, was aided by a presumably Indian guide. Put briefly, the epic shows that Vasco da Gama was the first to sail from Europe south of Africa to India, and that only 7 weeks out of the 10 months the voyage took was spent in unknown waters. Finally, we see in the work that da Gama's time in India was in fact relatively short and could only be considered a minor success, since he failed to establish diplomatic agreements and bring home the trade samples, which were the stated goals of the journey.

On the other hand, we find a number of displacements. A series of less heroic events, detailed in the diary or travelogue titled *Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama*, written by one of the members of da Gama's crew, are conspicuously missing in *Os Lusiadas*, such as when da Gama tortures a Muslim guide for mistaking an island for the African mainland; when da Gama blackmails the ruler of Malindi by holding a Muslim merchant hostage; when da Gama is humiliated for not bringing impressive enough gifts for the ruler of Calicut; or when a large part of the ship's crew die from scurvy on their way home from India. Instead, da Gama's voyage is inserted explicitly into a framework in which any kind of resistance or opposition is met with a kind of double explanation. Within the workings of the epic, the (according to stories passed down from Antiquity) Indian-born Bacchus opposes the Christians' journey of discovery. Conversely, we see Venus playing the role of aid to and defender of the Portuguese. From time to time, the two members

of the Greek pantheon ally themselves with other figures from the Greco-Roman mythology. The entire world in *Os Lusiadas* is structured by an epic order inherited from the classical tradition – one which Camões himself nevertheless pulls the rug out from under in the last cantos of his epic. On a different (primarily political and historical) level, any kind of resistance is explained away as Muslim conspiracies against the invading Christians, just as da Gama's voyage is painted exclusively as part of the Christian conquest of the world. Paradoxically, this results not just in increasing the distance between da Gama and the foreigners, but also in a familiarisation of the latter that is without historical basis. In short, they cease appearing as exotic aliens and rather come to be cast as helpers or adversaries of the epic hero.

Let us return to the scene from *Os Lusiadas* where the Portuguese envoy encounters a Castilian-speaking Muslim in Calicut. This scene is modelled on a passage from *Roteiro*. The first envoy of the Portuguese is directed to two Muslims, perhaps because the locals believe him to be a Muslim as well:

> And he was taken to a place where there were two Moors from Tunis, who knew how to speak Castilian and Genoese. And the first greeting that they gave him was the following: – The Devil take you! What brought you here? And they asked him what he had come to seek from so far; and he replied: – We came to seek Christians and spices. And they said to him: – Why do the King of Castile and the King of France and the Seignory of Venice not send men here? And he replied that the King of Portugal did not permit them to do so. And they said that he did well. Then they welcomed him and gave him wheaten bread with honey, and when he had eaten, he came back to the ship. And one of those Moors came back with him, who as soon as he entered the ships, began to say these words: – *Buena ventura, buena ventura*! Many rubies, many emeralds! You should give many thanks to God for having brought you to a land where there are such riches![3]

The differences between these two takes on the same scene are worth noting. As the historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam notes in *The Career and Legend of*

[3] The English translation is quoted from Subrahmanyam 1997, 129. "[…] e aquelles com que elle hia levarano honde estavam dous mouros de Tunez que sabiam fallar castellano e januês, e a primeira salva que lhe deram foy esta que se ao diante segue: – Al diabro que te doo: quem te traxo aquà? E preguntaram-lhe que vinhamos buscar tam lonje, e elle lhe rrespondeo: – vimos buscar christãos e esperciaria. – Elles lhe disseram: – porque nom manda quà elrey de Castella e elrey de França e a senhoria de Veneza? – e elle lhe rrespondeu que elrey de Portugall nom queria consenter que elles quà mandasem, e elles diseram que fazia bem. Emtam o agasalharam e deramlhe de comer pam triguo com mell, e depois que comeo vêose pera os navios e vêo com elle huum daquelles mouros, o quall tanto que foy em os navios começou de dizer estas palavras: – boena vemtura, boena vemtura: muitos rrobis, muitas esmeraldas: muitas graças devês de dar a Deus por vos trazer a terra honde ha tanta rriquesa." (*Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama* 1861, 51).

Vasco da Gama, this and numerous other passages from *Roteiro* showcase how the reception of European travellers in India and Africa were determined by complex and ever-shifting alliances between the non-European peoples. For example, the two Muslims seem to regard the Christians neither as infidels nor as competing merchants, but rather as people who, as opposed to the alien, local population, come from home and therefore should be aided and treated with hospitality. The final remark by one of the Muslims – "You should give many thanks to God" – seems to negate any conflict between Muslims and Christians altogether.

The statement "We come to seek Christians and spices" spoken by the envoy points to the two primary motives of the Portuguese seafarers. By directing an expedition south of Africa, the Portuguese King Manuel I desired to locate an alternative trade route to the familiar, which ran via Venice through the Middle East to India and were problematic for the European kings. At the same time, there was a desire to uncover a Christian kingdom, one which was supposed lie far to the east and which would be an important ally in the war against Muslims. The goal, then, was not so much to act as missionaries or to uncover an unknown world, but to (re)locate the connections between the different Christian nations spread across the globe. One of the aspects of da Gama's voyage that seems oddest to contemporary eyes is thus how he and his crew believed the population of Calicut to be Christian. When in *Roteiro* we later hear of the conflicts between da Gama and the Muslim merchants in Calicut, we frequently see the Portuguese threatening to seek protection under the wing of the Christian ruler of Calicut – who was in fact Hindu[4].

Events are portrayed differently in *Os Lusiadas*. Though the epic work clearly states that the goal of the voyage was to establish a new trade route, Camões repeatedly reminds us that da Gama's journey should be seen as a key moment in the Christian conquest of the world. According to Camões this conquest began with the *reconquista* of Spain and Portugal, seamlessly continued with the Portuguese raids in North Africa and culminated in the establishment in the 16th century of Portugal's maritime, Asian empire. We see this, among other places, in the retrospective view on the history of Portugal found in cantos three to five, which in fact urges Christian Portugal to regard the explorations as the continuation of the battles fought on the Iberian Peninsula. The shifts towards a more aggressive, mission-like and imperial mentality are also evident in a comparative reading of the encounter in Calicut as Camões portrays it and the version found in the logbook. In the quote from da Gama's logbook, the envoy is *led* to the Muslims, while in

[4] *Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama*, 1861, 70–71. See also Rubiès 2000, 164cc.

Camões' version, it appears as if he accidentally bumps into Monsayeed while finding the way to the ruler of Calicut *on his own*. In a similar fashion, he stresses in his greeting how the expedition has braved unknown waters "Where no human being ever sailed" in order to reach India. On a more general note, Camões tends to downplay how India was not exactly familiar, but on the other hand not a completely unknown land in 15th century Europe – how else could a plan to sail to Calicut in order to buy spices and other goods have been conceived?[5]

The notion of India as an unknown land infected with well-known Muslims is present in several parts of *Os Lusiadas*. In the anonymously authored, handed down *Roteiro*, it appears clearly how da Gama as a foreigner attempts to find his place within an established and complex economic and diplomatic system in India – according to the logbook, the primary conflict of the Portuguese in Calicut occurred when they refused paying taxes for the trading goods in the cargo of their ships. At the same time, the logbook is clear about India and especially West Africa being located in the remotest regions of the known world – difficult places to locate, difficult to navigate inside of once located, and full of strange customs. In the writings of Camões seventy years later, da Gama's journey is painted as an orderly quest of discovery and conquest, opposed in vain by Bacchus and his Muslim henchmen – and yet (and in heroic fashion) da Gama discovers the way to an unknown continent[6]. Here, it is the Muslim advisers and merchants (and behind them, at the level of the epic scheme, Bacchus) that makes the ruler of Calicut turn against da Gama, rather than his own lack of discretion. Finally, Camões recounts how the Portuguese leave without having achieved anything:

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[5] Joan-Pau Rubiés details a series of eye-witness accounts from India including ones from before 1500, authoritatively concluding: "Southern India, especially the Malabar coast and the kingdom of Vijayanagara, received many European visitors during the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times" (Rubiès 2000, x). In all likelihood, the Portuguese king had already before the voyage of Vasco da Gama received information about India by Pêro da Covilhã, an Arabian-speaking, Portuguese explorer who in 1487 was dispatched to Asia and Africa to locate "Prester John", the mythical Christian king who was rumored to live in a kingdom to the east or south, and who might become an important ally in the battle against the Muslims. Covilhã traveled to both Calicut and Goa, where he discovered that, theoretically, it was possible to sail south of Africa. Later, he traveled to Mecca, arrived at the court of the Ethiopian king – a Coptic Christian – in 1492, and was kept there in captivity until his death in 1530. See Disney 2009, vol. 2, 43–44.

[6] Timothy Hampton (Hampton 2009) examines the formal demands of the epic concerning its hero: "Camões poem depicts an epic journey that may or may not also be a diplomatic embassy. Or, we can reverse the formulation and say that it depicts a diplomatic embassy that may or may not also be an epic journey. But how can one write an epic poem whose hero is a diplomat?" (p. 102) – going on to demonstrate how Camões consequently downplays the diplomatic failures of the real Vasco da Gama.

> He had laboured in vain for a treaty/ Of friendship with the Hindu king,/
> To guarantee peace and commerce;/ But at least those lands stretching/
> To the dawn were now known to the world.[7]

Thus, we see da Gama presented as someone who makes an unknown world familiar – not as the discoverer of a new trade route to a known, albeit strange part of the world. In *Os Lusiadas*, however, there is little doubt that the residents of Calicut are not Christians, but rather the diametric opposite of the Christians: Muslims and Hindus.

Inner tensions

However, the accounts that we find in *Os Lusiadas* of non-European people and places are marked by a confusing ambiguity. In fact, the alien other is presented rather consequently in two different modes. On the one hand, Muslims, Hindus and African populations are placed within the conception of a mytho-historical past based on the stories from European Antiquity. In this regard, it is emphasised how these people were vanquished in the past and will be vanquished in the future. In some passages, however, the imperial tone is overruled by an inquisitive, almost scientific curiosity regarding natural phenomena, the appearances of foreigners, clothes and customs. Oftentimes, we find descriptions in Camões' writing focusing entirely on concrete and observable – in a sense superficial – details, rarely possessing a historical depth or other kind of deeper contemplation[8].

The voice of the epic narrator in the beginning of the seventh canto thus declares India a poly-religious continent: "It is ruled by different kings/ Of various faiths; some follow Mohammed,/ Some worship Idols in their strange tongue,/ Some even the animals they live upon."[9] Later, the now converted Monsayeed informs Vasco da Gama of the national caste system and of the Brahmins who are disciples of the teachings of Pythagoras and who refuse to kill any living thing (canto VII, stanzas 37–40). However, when da Gama subsequently heads through the city in the company of its ruler Samorin, they stop at a temple where unknown Hindu deities are described only to be compared to known figures from Greek mythology. And on the outer wall of the castle of the local ruler, da Gama finds a depiction of the history of India

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[7] Camões 1997, canto IX, verse 13. "[…] em vão co'o Rei gentio travalhava/ Em querer dele paz, a qual pretende/ Por firmar o comércio que tratava./ Mas como aquela terra, que se estende/ Pela Aurora, sabide já deixava." (Camões: *Os Lusiadas* 1972).

[8] Raman 2002, 29 cc., suggests that Camões' epic depicts the world based on the antique notion of the cosmos, as well as on the early modern idea of the world as a homogenous and essentially empty space for the individual explorer to uncover.

[9] Camões 1997, canto VII, stanza 17, verses 5–8. "Jugo de Reis diversos o constrange/ A várias leis: alguns o vicioso/ Mahoma, alguns os Idolos adoram,/ Alguns os animais que entre eles moram." (Camões 1972).

(canto VII, stanzas 51–54). As it turns out, it consists of three conquest expeditions from the West: The original conquest of India by Bacchus; the army of the Assyrian queen Semiramis, also believed to have conquered India; and the conquest of India by Alexander the Great. A blank part of the frieze suggests, as the herald of the local king explains, that a new conquest – by the Portuguese – is imminent:

> Other conquests are fast approaching/ To eclipse these you are looking on;/ Fresh legends will be carved here/ By strange peoples yet to appear./ For so the pattern of the coming years/ Has been deciphered by our wisest seers.
>
> And their mystic science declares/ Further, that no human resistance/ Can prevail against such forces,/ For man is powerless before destiny;/ But the newcomers' sheer excellence/ In war and peace will be such, they say,/ Even the vanquished will feel no disgrace,/ Having been overcome by such a race.[10]

The myths of Antiquity foretell the imperial ambition of Portugal. The Portuguese repeat and carry out a conquest of the world in an echo of their ancient predecessors – da Gama simultaneously repeats and surpasses the travels of Odysseus, Aeneas and the Argonauts – just as Camões both imitates and outdoes the epics of Virgil and Homer.

If we hear another voice in *Os Lusiadas* than this epic tone of imperialism, it would be wrong to try to attribute it to those of the characters in the work who actively resist the imperialist ideology, such as it has been suggested by David Quint in his important book *Epic and Empire*. As Quint himself points out, there is a long-standing tradition within the epics of Antiquity of the "adversaries" making themselves heard, cursing their victorious enemies or engaging in lengthy speeches explaining their motives[11]. Neither should the opposite of the epic voice be connected, as is also done by Quint, to the digressive, non-teleological narrative strategies of the chivalric romance. While scenes inspired by this tradition can be found in a few places in *Os Lusiadas*, such as in the tale of the twelve Portuguese knights (canto VI, stanzas 42–69) and the Portuguese sailors' final reward on the bewitched island of Venus, these scenes rather serve as light-hearted celebrations of the

[10] Camões 1997, canto VII, stanzas 55–56. "Tempo cedo virá que autras vitórias/ Estas que agora olhais abaterão./ Aqui se escreverão novas histórias/ Por gentes estrangeiras que virão;/ Que os nossos sábios magos o alcançaram/ Quando o tempo future especularam.// E diz-lhe mais a mágica ciencia/ Que, para se evitar força tamanha,/ Não valerá dos homens resistência,/ Que contra o céu não val da gente manha;/ Mas também diz que a bélica excelência,/ Nas armas e na paz, da gente estranha/ Será tal, que sera no mundo ouvido/ O vencedor por glória do vencido." (Camões 1972).

[11] Quint 1993, 106 ff; see also Meihuizen 2007, 82.

valour and achievements of the Portuguese. On the contrary, opposing voice should be located in those passages in *Os Lusiadas* which, if only momentarily, become preoccupied with concrete details.

One example is found in the first canto. da Gama and his crew reach Mozambique, encountering three foreign ships. Historically, this marks the moment where da Gama comes into contact with the trade routes of the Indian Ocean, but the focus is directed elsewhere. The epic narrator declares:

> Our people were overjoyed and could only/ Stare in excitement at this wonder./ – 'Who are these people?' they kept exclaiming/ 'What customs? What beliefs? Who is their king?'
>
> Their craft, as we could see, were built/ For speed, being long and narrow;/ Their sails were made of a canvas/ Skillfully fashioned from palm leaves.[12]

No symbolism or deeper meaning should be read into these sails woven from palm leaves. One should not attempt to place them in relation to the myths of Antiquity, and they do not confer upon the natives some unique position – superior or inferior, as adversaries or helpers – in relation to the travellers from Europe. Soon they are replaced by descriptions of coloured clothing and striped loincloths (canto I, stanza 47), odd musical instruments (canto II, stanza 96), a tornado over the sea and women riding on cattle (canto V, stanzas 61–64). Phenomena such as these are mentioned without solidifying into a unified sense of a world, that is to say, without being placed in a more general conception of how the world is connected historically, culturally and geographically. They are present in the text because they simply were there when the journeys to India were undertaken.

This ability to register and maintain such simple observations can be seen as a result of the influence of the Portuguese empirical humanism on Camões[13]. It might also be caused by Camões himself having travelled from Portugal to India, where he stayed from 1553 until the late 1560s, thus being the first canonised European author to take up residence outside of Europe for an extended period of time. In any case, these are but brief glimpses.

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[12] Camões 1997, canto I, stanzas 45–46. "A gente se alvoroça e, de alegria,/ Não sabe mais que olhar a cause dela./ Que genta sera esta? em si diziam/ Que costumes, que Lei, que Rei teriam?"As embarcações eram na maneira/ Mui velozes, esteritas e compridas;/ As velas com que vem eram de esteira,/ Dumas folhas de palma, bem tecidas." (Camões 1972).

[13] Disney 2009, 165; see also Klein 2011. As Klein points out, the description of da Gama's voyage by Camões begins and ends with presentations of a cartographical view in which Europe is seen from above. The voyage itself, however, is described in a different mode (p. 245): "The global expanse triumphantly mapped in the final canto thus only comes into existence as an effect of the ship's transit through that very expanse; it is a hard won, physically exhausting space, the result of tireless experiment and risky improvisation."

Tellingly, it does not take long for Bacchus in the first canto to convince the local ruler to try and kill the Portuguese, giving the Europeans an opportunity to demonstrate their superior methods of warfare. Such is the general pattern in *Os Lusiadas*. The focus of the historical sources on the existing trade routes and diplomatic entanglements are replaced by a presentation where the encounters with the unknown might begin as an inquisitive gathering of data from exotic continents, but ends up being embedded in a easily recognisable narrative about the Christian discovery of a new world: the familiar epic tale of exploration, resistance and conquest in which the Muslims time and again are cast as adversaries.

Another important tension in *Os Lusiadas* occurs between how the epic work praises the expansion of Christianity and how, in its epic form, it naturally inherits classical, which is to say heathen, notions and characters. The most obvious (and somewhat comic) example of this duality is exhibited in the way the Muslims in *Os Lusiadas* might be the enemies of the Portuguese Christians, but are coaxed on by the ancient god Bacchus. The establishing of an epic machinery filled with heathen divinities, as well as the numerous references in *Os Lusiadas* to antique epics and ancient mythology, leads to a kind of rift between a cosmic and a historical plane in the work.

This rift is recognised within *Os Lusiadas*, which contains two separate explanations of the use of classical mythology. In canto IX, stanza 91, the epic narrator declares the mythical figures and gods of Antiquity to be human beings, who, because of their heroic actions, have become immortalised. And in canto X, stanza 82, verses 3–4, Thetis declares both herself and the antique gods to be "mere fables/ Dreamt by mankind in its blindness". However, the establishing and subsequent "unveiling" of an epic machinery is not without consequences for the portrayal of Christianity and Islam. The conflict between the two is confined largely to the level of secular history, with the battle against Islam being presented as a political and (modern) historical conflict. This is especially clear in da Gama's retelling of the history of Portugal, which we find in cantos III and IV.

Conversely, the work is almost completely devoid of any references to Christian theology, myths or eschatological notions. Put differently, the presentation of Christianity is surprisingly secular – not in the sense that a confrontation with the Christian faith takes place, but rather in how the view on Christianity pertains largely to this world. The idea of a Christian supremacy is tied not to Rome or Jerusalem, for instance, but to the way in which Christian rulers expand their power, in particular the king of Portugal. The Christian duty to act as missionary is mentioned briefly, such as in the quote at the beginning of this article, but it is soon drowned amid the noises of battle for political and territorial power. In a similar fashion, the battle for

Christianity tends to transform into a praise of the history of Portugal and its glorious future: the reclaiming of the Iberian Peninsula; the expansion into North Africa; the prophecy of a future empire. Tellingly, Camões' vision of a cosmic order climaxes with a prophecy enumerating the places in India Portugal will conquer. Camões takes advantage of the fact that the work takes place in 1498 (the prophecy is given by the nymph Tethis to da Gama in that year), but that the epic is written in the second half of the 16th century. In other words, he has access to the future of the past, allowing Tethis to prophesise with uncanny precision.

The consequence, then, is that the Christian conquest of the world tells a story and takes place in a geographical framework, both of which are only vaguely related to a Christian cosmos. Or, as the epic narrator declares, in one of those moments where he is clearly speaking from the 1570s and not 1498, complaining that the divide between Catholics and Protestants makes it impossible for the rulers of Europe to battle the threat from the Ottoman Empire:

> But while in your blind, insane frenzy/ You thirst for your brothers' blood in Christ,/ There will be no lack of Christian daring/ In this little house of Portugal./ In Africa, they have coastal bases,/ In Asia, no one disputes their power;/ The New World already feels their ploughshare,/ And if fresh worlds are found, they will be there.[14]

It is not that *Os Lusiadas* is not a Christian work – it is – but that Camões' way of administering the epic genre results in a secularisation of Christianity. It is used as a political marker, indicating which side different actors belong to in a global conflict. But this also makes way for a representation of the conflict with Islam that focuses exclusively on the material world. And it ends up presenting the world as a more or less homogeneous space of continents, now available for (Christian) Portugal to discover and conquer. In this work, one finds no visions of the Apocalypse or any Christian miracles, no Christian *Heilsgeschichte* illuminating the world.

Jerusalem, the centre of the world

Therein lies perhaps the greatest difference between *Os Lusiadas* and the Italian writer Torquato Tasso's epic work *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581), the other major example of the Late Renaissance attempting to revive the antique epic genre. In Tasso's work, the epic machinery and the material world are

[14] Camões 1997, canto VII, stanza 14. "Mas, entanto que cegos e sedentos/ Andais de vosso sangue, ó gente insane,/ Não faltaram Cristãos atrevimentos/ Nesta pequena casa Lusitana./ De Africa tem marítimos assentos;/ E na Asia mais que todas soberanas;/ Na quarta parte nova os campos ara;/ E, se mais mundo hougera, lá chegara." (Camões 1972).

not so rigorously divided, and it shows the battle between Muslims and Christians taking place in a geographical space that is permeated by Christian ideas. Here we find characters conquering Jerusalem rather than evangelising in India, and their actions are defined as Christian actions rather than Portuguese, French, German or Italian. On the whole, however, the two works have more than a few features in common. Both try consciously to revive and modernise the epic genre by engaging with events which they perceived as defining for the history of modern Europe. Both portray the struggle between Christianity and Islam as a global conflict. And both complain audibly of the way in which divisions within Europe weakens the battle against the real enemy, the Ottoman Empire.

Unlike Camões, Tasso succeeds in forging a surprisingly homogeneous work from the rather diverse demands for his epic work. Beneath the surface, however, the legacy of the Christian tradition, the chivalric romances, the classical epics and the historical material coalesce in startling ways. The siege and conquest of Jerusalem during the first crusade in 1099 might readily be understood as a metaphor for the conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Tasso's own time, but the event had to be reworked and manipulated thoroughly in order to provide material enough with which to fill an entire epic[15]. The divine machinery of the classical epic is replaced by the battle between God and Satan, who nevertheless possess character traits and narrative purposes similar to those attributed to the gods of Antiquity in the writings of Homer and Virgil[16]. For instance, God and Satan pay great attention to and intervene directly in the events taking place in Jerusalem. The wandering knights and courtly love from knightly poetry is integrated here as a way of tempting the heroes; love is a destiny of which they must free themselves before Jerusalem can be conquered. Similarly, the necessity of a united Christianity is mirrored in the epic events: In Tasso's retelling, the decisive challenge for the Christian leader Goffredo is not the battle against the Muslims, but keeping his own army together.

In a couple of highly successful books and essays, the Italian literary historian Sergio Zatti has argued *Gerusalemme Liberata* is structured by an opposition between a Christian unity, which is associated with discipline and control of the self, and a Muslim, or perhaps heathen, multitude who remain at the mercy of passion, sensuality and a labyrinthine world[17]. Furthermore, Zatti believes the opposition to be determined by the epoch – linking the Christian unity to the Christian re-armament during the Counter-Reformation and the passionate multitude to the supposed individualism and worldliness

[15] Murrin 1994, 103 cc.
[16] See Gregory 2002; Nexø 2002.
[17] Zatti 1983; 1996; 1998.

of the Renaissance – as well as by genre, or at least to be tied to the way in which Tasso assimilates aspects of chivalric romance and subjects them to the demands of epic poetry. Finally, he argues that it is possible in the "heathen moments" of the work, such as when Satan gives a speech to his devils in canto IV, to trace a counter-current beneath the more general, ideological aim of presenting history as a teleological realisation of divine justice and, more tangibly, letting the rulers of the late 16th century see themselves mirrored in the first crusade, thus uniting them to combat the Ottoman Empire.

However inspiring it might be, Zatti's reading applies more convincingly to the internal conflicts of the Christian army than it does to the depiction of the Muslim warriors found in *Gerusalemme Liberata*. In fact, the portrayal of the epic adversary found here is characterised more by local allusions than any global, ideological structure, making it more complex, even contradictory, than Zatti's interpretation lets on. These allusions are not just, in fact not even primarily, related to Ariosto's reworking of chivalric romance, but to a Greco-Roman literary legacy. In this case, a more prominent feature, it might be noted, is the lack of connection between the Muslim heroes and any higher powers. While they are aided by Satan, they are done so only in secret: whereas the Christian knights seem permeated by God, their adversaries remain rooted in this world. When Soliman, the Muslim ruler of Jerusalem, overlooks the final battle, he does not see the actions of divine providence, but rather the instability of secular history: "As on a stage or tourney-ground, he saw/ the bitter tragedy of human life/ horrors of death, attack, retreat, advance,/ and the great game of Destiny and Chance."[18]

One episode from the final canto can both illustrate this secularisation of the Muslim and show how the battle against the Muslims in *Gerusalemme Liberata* is used to homogenise the representation of the non-European world in its entirety. The Christian army already having conquered most of Jerusalem, an army of infidels, led by the ruler of Egypt, nevertheless come to the aid of the Muslims of Jerusalem. Before the armies collide, Goffredo gives a speech to his men:

> He halted where the mightiest/ and noblest squads were gathered, peer on peer,/ and standing on a great height he addressed/ the host, while rapture seized on every ear./ As in great torrents from an alpine crest/ the melted snows rush down, so swift and clear/ poured from his lips, loud and magnificent,/ the words of his resounding argument:

[18] Tasso 2009, canto XX, stanza 73. "mirò, quasi in teatro od in agone,/ l'aspra tragedia de lo stato umano;/ i vari assalti e 'l fero orror di morte,/ e i gran giochi del caso e de la sorte." (Tasso 1983).

> 'O Scourge of Jesus' enemies! O you,/ my army, tamers of the East! Behold!/ The final day is here, the goal in view/ That all of you so long yearned for of old./ Now Providence permits His rebels to/ Unite against us in a single fold./ Here all our foes are gathered and we go/ To finish many wars with one great blow.'[19]

The speech given by Goffredo is permeated by a religious vocabulary: what unites the army is the battle against the enemies of Christianity without any reference to the nationalities of the Christians. Furthermore, the passage points rather explicitly towards a Christian eschatology, with the final moment in the battle described in religious colours. Finally, the speech shows how the global conflict is gathered into one point, and that this point, so to speak, is illuminated from above: Goffredo is elevated above his troops, his words descending to them. The last point is underscored by the light falling on Goffredo in the following stanzas appearing as a kind of halo around his forehead (canto XX, song 20). And not just in his case, but in *Gerusalemme Liberata* in general, all light seems to shine on Jerusalem. While the rest of the world is registered, it appears in a sort of half-gloom. Countries and cities of Europe are mentioned only insofar as the Christian knights pass through them, and Asian and Africa are defined predominantly as the places of origin of their enemies. Reclaiming Jerusalem from the Muslims, then, is presented as the equivalent of conquering the entire world.

When Jerusalem comes to appear as the centre of the world, it is in part because the Egyptian army literally encompasses all of the (non-European) people of the old world. As the Christian spy Vafrin exclaims upon seeing the army: "All Africa is here, and every race/ of Asia has converged upon this place."[20] Not just Egyptians are present here, but Syrians, Persians and the kings of India with their men too, along with black people from Ethiopia. The leader of this army, the renegade Emiren, addresses his troops before the battle as well. He does not speak to them from high above, though, and not as a whole, but rides about addressing them individually:

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[19] Tasso 2009, canto XX, stanzas 13–14. "Al fin colà fermossi ove le prime/ e più nobili squadre erano accolte,/ e cominciò da loco assai sublime/ parlare, ond'è rapito ogn'uom ch'ascolte./ Come in torrenti da l'alpestri cime/ soglion giù deriver le nevi sciolte,/ così correan volubili e veloci/ da la sua bocca le canore voci.// – O de' nemici di Giesù flagella,/ Campo mio, domator de l'Oriënte,/ Ecco l'ultimo giorno, ecco pur quello/ Che già tanto bramaste omai presente./ Né senza alta cagion ch'il suo rubella/ Popolo or si raccolga il Ciel consente:/ Ogni vostro nimico ha qui congiunto/ Per fornir molte guerre in un sol punto." (Tasso 1983).

[20] Tasso 2009, canto XIX, stanza 58, verses 7–8. "Qui l'Africa tutta/ translata viene e qui l'Asia è condutta." (Tasso 1983).

> He says to one: 'Why look so diffident/ my man? Why fear? How can one of these curs/ withstand a hundred? Surely they will fly/ at our mere shadow or our battle-cry.'
>
> To another then: 'Brave fellow, wear that face/ when you reclaim what they have seized in prey!'/ In one man's mind he makes the fancy trace/ his homeland's very shape, who seems to pray,/ a frightened suppliant, for his native race/ and all his kin, in terror and dismay./ 'Think', said he, 'that your Country on her knees/ Pleads with you through my tongue in words like these
>
> Defend my laws, keep safe my temples, and/ let not my blood the holy thresholds douse./ Preserve the virgins from the infidel's hand/ and the ancestral ashes of your house./ Lo! Mourning spent youth, all the old men stand/ and show you their white hairs. Behold! Your spouse/ shows you the cradle, shows the children fed/ by her chaste breast, shows you the nuptial bed.'[21]

One could analyse the varied speech of Emiren through Sergio Zatti's concept of pagan multiplicity – he literally goes from soldier to soldier, adapting his words to each individual. But his words do not in any way connect the non-Christian to sensuality, courtly love or individualism. Rather, Emiren draws upon a patriotic vocabulary modelled on a Roman example – more specifically on a passage from canto VII (stanzas 369–380) of Lucan's republican epic *Pharsalia*. The notions of the laws, the temple, the hearth and the chaste wife all point to the republican tradition of ancient Rome, and perhaps to the revitalisation of this legacy in the Italian Renaissance.[22] At the same time, the continuity of the material world is highlighted. The soldiers are greeted by the previous and the following generation alike.

There is something bizarre about this: the soldiers in Emiren's army do, quite literally, not defend their own homeland, but come to the aid of Jerusalem. The speech, however, makes perfect sense as a kind of antithesis to the one given by Goffredo. Against the divine powers and the holy, Christian knights stands a secular patriotism, gaining its strength from the

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[21] Tasso 2009, canto XX, stanzas 24–26. "Talor dice ad alcun: – Perché dimesso/ mostri, soldato, il volto? e di che temi?/ che pote un contra cento? io mi confido/ sol con l'ombra fugarli e sol co 'l grido. –// Ad altri: – O valoroso, or via con questa/ faccia a ritôr la preda a noi rapita. –/ L'imagine ad alcuno in mente desta,/ glie la figura quasi e glie l'addita,/ de la pregnante patria e de la mesta/ supplica famigliuola sbigottita./ – Credi – dicea – che la tua patria spieghi/ Per la mia lingua in tai parole i preghi:/ "Guarda tu le mie leggi, e i sacri tèmpi/ fa' ch'io del sangue mio non bagni e lavi;/ assecura le vergini da gli empi,/ e i sepolcri e le ceneri de gli avi."/ A te, piangendo i lor passati tempi,/ mostran la bianca chioma i vecchi gravi,/ a te la moglie le mammelle e 'l petto,/ le cune e i figli e 'l marital suo letto." (Tasso 1983).

[22] Viroli 1995, 18cc.

defence of a worldly, political community. And in opposition to the Christian strike from above, we see a world, the contours of which follow a medieval map, but whose primary function here is that of a multitude of non-Christian lands and peoples. The speech, it might be mentioned, resembles other passages in *Gerusalemme Liberata*, where the adversaries of the Christians briefly make themselves heard and where the events portrayed are seen from their perspective. A similar feature can be located in the speech delivered by Satan to his demons in canto IV. This is another speech modelled after an antique example, namely that given by Juno in the first canto of the Aeneid.[23] And there, too, the crusaders are depicted as Christian conquerors of the Orient, with the demons being called upon to defend the established kingdom of Satan on Earth.

If the Muslims are portrayed as secular and modelled after classical role models, they come to appear as not particularly Muslim at all.[24] In fact, Islam seems not to play any real role in *Gerusalemme Liberata.* It is cast as the great foe, while at the same time lacking any characterising description – it is not even described as a heretic deviation from the true faith. We find almost no descriptions of the features of Islamic faith, of minarets or mosques or of Middle-Eastern customs. Tellingly, the cosmic battle in Tasso's work is not between God and Allah, but between God and Satan; the Muslims are depicted as non-Christians, but not as members of a historically specific faith with its own unique features. Here, too, then, the non-European foreigners are represented in a way that casts them as the simultaneously familiar as well as the opposite of the familiar. Contrary to Camões account, however, this does not entail a secularisation at the level of the epic narrative. On the contrary, the world is registered in accordance with a religiously determined topography, that, while bringing a secular world into focus, nevertheless connects the life of the material world, its countries and historico-political universe to the enemies of Christianity.

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In the writings of both Tasso and Camões, the presentation of Muslims is coloured by the historico-ideological horizon within which the works are embedded: The Catholic Counter-Reformation and the war against the Ottomans. However, it is also marked by the attempts of both writers to revive the classical epic. In both of their works, the epic offers a narrative form wherein the Muslims seem to take up a natural position as the adversary of the epic hero. At the same time, the works showcase how the attempt to write

[23] Nexø 2002; Murrin 1994, 206cc.
[24] Godard 1990, 325cc.; 378.

epics based on the conflict between Christians and Muslims is complicated both by the historical material, which only barely allowed itself to be adapted to the demands of the epic genre, as well as by features inherent to the genre itself. The attempts are complicated especially by the epic tradition of having the opposing parties in the epic conflict be supported by a set of deities. In any case, rather than making possible an understanding of the world outside of Europe, the Muslim in both *Gerusalemme Liberata* and *Os Lusiadas* works predominantly as a figure of homogenisation, transforming the exotic and unknown into a familiar foreigner.

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Twisted Turquoiseries:

Emulation and Critique in Miguel de Cervantes' *La gran sultana Catalina de Oviedo*

By Sofie Kluge

Cervantes' only surviving Turkish play, La gran sultana Catalina de Oviedo *(1607/8), narrates the story of a Spanish captive in the Topkapi harem whose beauty conquers the heart of Murad III. Plot and setting allow the author not only to pursue his own fascination with the 'other' of Western Christianity, but also to critically examine the cultural forms of this fascination circulating in Spain at the time. Thus, the play's emulation of popular forms such as captivity tales and Byzantine martyr legends becomes an ambiguous inversion of the ideology that they harbour and even a tongue-in-cheek ideology critique.*

Introduction

Spanish Renaissance authors and intellectuals were deeply interested in Ottoman culture. Writers of different sorts explored the exotic world of the "Gran Turco" in histories (Vicente Roca's *Historia de la origen y guerra que han tenido los turcos*, 1556), Erasmian dialogue (the anonymous *Viaje de Turquía*, mid-16th century), and drama. Among those who recognized the dramatic potential of the Turks was the celebrated novelist and less acknowledged playwright Miguel de Cervantes. Like his detested rival Lope de Vega, the master of Spanish historical drama who allegedly penned 27 plays with a Turkish theme, Cervantes authored a cycle of Turkish plays of which only *La gran sultana*, written 1607/8 and published in *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos* (1615), survives. This play narrates the story of a Spanish captive whose extreme beauty conquers the heart of sultan Murad III. Almost the entire action is set in the harem in Constantinople, and plot and setting thus provide the author with ample opportunity not only to pursue his fascination with the eminent other of Christianity, but also to critically examine the cultural forms of this fascination.

Although he was nicknamed "el manco de Lepanto" ("the one-handed man from Lepanto", Cervantes 2003, vv. 133–138) because of the injury he received in the famous battle against the Turks in 1571, Cervantes' representation of the great adversary of Christian European culture is not exactly resentful. The *Sultana* depicts the Ottoman world in a way that can best be described as playful and form-conscious. Typical of the sophisticated

branch of Spanish Golden Age literature that he would come to epitomize for posterity, Cervantes' take on the Turk is emphatically 'literarizing' in the sense of consciously fantastical and demonstratively stereotypical. What spectators and readers encounter in this play is not a representation that lays claim to anthropological authenticity or historiographical correctness but rather a turcological mosaic which challenges its audience's habitual way of thinking by queerly emulating popular literary forms that revel in the proverbial cruelty of the Turk, including captivity tales and the martyr legends of Byzantine and Western hagiography.

This article examines how, in the *Sultana*, as in many other Cervantine texts, emulation of these forms becomes an ambiguous inversion of the ideology that they more or less explicitly harbour; how it, in other words, becomes a highly complex – tongue-in-cheek – ideology critique. The superordinate framework of this discussion will be Cervantes' subtle exploitation of literary forms to stimulate critical audience reflection on cultural stereotypes and historiographical common places. However, before reaching this level of abstraction at the end of my article, I will examine the play's mosaic poetic focusing on (1) the main character and (2) the plot's as it were 'magical' dénouement: the apparently harmonious falling into place of everything and allegedly happy disentangling of all the threads of the plot with the Sultana's pregnancy.

The Play

Considering the little know nature of the play, a comprehensive annotated resume may be useful. Act 1 introduces the spectator to the dazzling world of Constantinople and the Topkapi palace, providing detailed anthropological information on clothing and props in unusually elaborate scene instructions.[1] Through a framing device – the opening dialogue between the two outsiders Salec and Roberto (a Muslim and a Christian renegade) – the audience is informed of local traditions and customs, religious rites and political ceremony while witnessing the pompous entry of the "Gran Turco" on his way through the city to the Hagia Sophia. Then, through a second framing device – the debate between another pair of outsiders, the palace eunuchs Mamí and Rustán – Cervantes introduces his protagonist, the Spanish captive harem slave Catalina who has been kept away from the sultan's eye for years by the secretly Christian Rustán yet who has now been discovered. The first act ends with the meeting of the two principal characters and Murad's unconditional surrender to the excessively beautiful Catalina whom he,

[1] García Lorenzo 1993, 64. Despite Cervantes' efforts, the play was first staged in 1992 (García Lorenzo 1994).

despite the young woman's fervent protestation of Christian faith, declares to be his sultana.

Act 2 opens with a sort of farcical inversion of the relationship between the Muslim sultan and the Christian girl, underscoring its transgressive nature, as the play's Spanish *gracioso* (clown), the surrogate playwright Madrigal, is carried off by Turkish authorities for fornicating with a Muslim woman.[2] After a brief and rather realistic diplomatic scene depicting the sultan's tough dealings with a Persian ambassador, the play returns to the principal action with various scenes focused on the preparations for the royal wedding. These are, however, interrupted by a scene introducing the characters of the subplot, the Transylvanian captive harem slave Clara and her lover Lamberto who has followed his love into the serail disguised as a woman. The second act ends with the appearance of Catalina's father, another Christian in Constantinople, who in his capacity as a tailor is incidentally appointed to sew the sultana a decent Christian dress. As father and daughter recognize each other in a dramatic moment of anagnorisis, the father severely reproaches Catalina for her choice in marriage upon which the sultana faints.

Act 3 opens with yet another framing device, a dialogue between the two eunuchs referring events happening since the ending of act 2. Then follows a reconciliation scene between father and daughter after which both onstage audience and the audience of Cervantes' play enjoy a kind of play-within-the-play as Madrigal performs a ballad narrating the life of Catalina accompanied by a group of musicians after which the sultana dances erotically. The play seems ready to end in total harmony, yet the knot of the subplot remains unresolved. In a moment of final suspense, the shady Cadi manages to persuade his master to return to his polygamous ways and spread his seed in order to secure an heir. Predictably (the play being a comedy and the Turks being proverbially homoerotic), Murad settles for the cross-dressed Lamberto who only just escapes the sultan's embrace and ensuing wrath by claiming to have been miraculously gender-transformed through conversion to Islam. [3] However, it certainly also helps his case that the sultana at this point intercedes and quite surprisingly announces her pregnancy. The play closes with Madrigal taking off to Spain, where he declares he will write the story

[2] Much has been said about Madrigal's status as surrogate playwright. I will not go very much into his character in this context, but submit to Jurado Santos 1997, 103–149.

[3] The Turks' alleged homoerotic propensity was a Renaissance commonplace and is, e.g., mentioned in the *Topography and General History of Algiers*, an eyewitness account of his years of captivity in Algiers 1577–1581 by Cervantes' fellow captive in Algiers, Antonio de Sosa. See the chapter on renegades or "Turks by profession" (*Topography* 124–127) and elsewhere.

of Catalina, in the midst of the city's celebration of the birth of the sultan's heir.

Mosaic of Forms

On the surface, *La gran sultana Catalina de Oviedo* is a regular three-act Spanish *comedia*,[4] the general Golden Age term for a play, yet for my purposes it is worthwhile to linger at bit more on the question of genre. As the above resume suggests, the *Sultana* can be described in modern terms as a semi-historical romantic comedy, yet its generic status is extremely complex. Cervantes does go to some lengths to paint a convincing portrait of a historical character, the Ottoman sultan Murad III (1546–1595), in his historical habitat and according to Golden Age standards the play would probably qualify as a *comedia histórica* or what we could term a history play.[5] However, its historical veracity has been contested by modern critics and several passages have even be seen to suggest that the author is downright poking fun at the audience's readiness to accept his absurd historical construction.[6] Similarly, despite its undeniable romcom elements – prominence of the *gracioso* figure; marriage and childbirth – the happy ending of the play is quite ambiguous, raising doubts about the sincerity of Cervantes' adherence to the conventions of Lopean new comedy and about the ultimate comicality of the play.[7] Finally, with its tentative casting of the figure of Catalina in the role of a virtuous Christian martyr (or martyr wannabe), the *Sultana* bears resemblance to contemporaneous *comedias*

[4] Whereas the plays included in the *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos* thus conform to the formula of the new Lopean *comedia*, Cervantes' early drama, e.g. the famous *La Numancia* (1585), has five acts.

[5] For a more elaborate discussion of the specific epistemological and historiographical profile of early modern historical drama, see the recent *Staging History: Renaissance Dramatic Historiography* issue of this journal, eds.: Kluge, Kallenbach & Hasberg Zirak-Schmidt. For a more specific discussion of Cervantes and historical drama, see Kluge 2019. According to the standards of early modern historiography the play is quite accurate, even if it – also in accordance with contemporaneous historiography – contains elements which we would today consider blatantly incompatible with a serious historiographical approach, for example the comical scenes. For a survey of Cervantes' potential sources, see Hegyi 1992, 22–42, who highlights the importance of Italian material: "There can be little doubt that Spanish printed sources played little role, if any, as source material for Cervantes. In contrast, the number of comparable Italian publications, coming from over a hundred publishing houses, is overwhelming. Since Cervantes spent considerable time in Italy (1569–75), and Italian publications on Turkish events would have been linguistically accessible to him, they should be considered as probable sources of information" (27). Hegyi mentions Sansovino's compilation *Historia universale dell'Origine e Imperio de Tvrchi*, printed in Venice in 1560.

[6] See Mas 1967, 341–343; Lewis-Smith 1981; Hegyi 1992, 1–43. And see Lewis-Smith 1981 on the *Sultana* as a "practical joke".

[7] See Henry 2013, 91–103.

hagiográficas or *comedias de santos*,[8] yet the play simultaneously seems to challenge the conventions of both these dramatic subgenres suggesting that the protagonist did not resist but actually succumbed to the temptations of the flesh proverbially represented by the Ottoman world.[9] In this sense, the play can even be seen to borrow generic elements – notably the focus on psychomachy – from the *autos sacramentales*, the quintessential form of Spanish Golden Age liturgical drama (bearing some resemblance to the English moralities). All in all, in what regards the question of genre, the impression is of a play whose author juggles consciously and demonstratively with different dramatic conventions, challenging the audience expectations encoded in these conventions in order to create a playful, form-conscious atmosphere.

However, Cervantes not only experiments with dramatic genre. His emulation of history plays, romantic comedy and saints' plays is but the foundation of the *Sultana*'s mosaic of forms. As mentioned in the introduction, the play can be construed as a mosaic of cultural forms relating to the theme of Turks. Thus, in this play, Cervantes once again exploits the model of the captivity tale, a genre congenial to his own life story and one he repeatedly and successfully used in his fiction as well as in his drama.[10] In a Mediterranean marred by corsairs and pirates, seafarers travelled at great risk and historians estimate that there may have been as many as 600.000 Christian captives sold as slaves in Algiers between 1520 and 1660, some of which (such as Cervantes) escaped or were rescued to narrate their stories.[11] In such a situation, captivity tales naturally became highly popular as a kind of Renaissance docusoap. This semi-historiographical and auto-biographical genre, which flourished especially in England and Spain, usually centred on the topic of conversion – from Christianity to Islam; from Protestantism to Catholicism;[12] and from Islam to Christianity (there are also examples of Muslim captivity tales) – and conventionally exploited motives such as the fear of apostacy and escape/rescue as divine intervention on the backdrop of

[8] See Varas' already mentioned article on *El rufián dichoso* as "una comedia de santos diferente" (1991).

[9] See Antonio de Sosa's remarks concerning the "pleasure, [...] the good life of fleshly vice in which the Turks live" (125). I will go more into detail below.

[10] See Garcés 2002. Most famously, of course, Cervantes used the captivity tale in "The Captive's Tale" (*Quijote* I, 37 ff.) and the plays *Los baños de Argel* and *El trato de Argel* (the former issued in the same volume of plays as the *Sultana*), but also in various episodes of *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*.

[11] Grieve 2016, 98 (citing Wolf, *The Barbary Coast: Algiers under the Turks, 1500–1830*).

[12] See Grieve 2016 who discusses various forms of Early Modern captivity accounts, including Antonio de Sosa's *Topography* and Cervantes' own captivity texts – excluding, however, the *Sultana* presumably on the grounds of its non-Algiers setting.

epic schemata of loss, exile and return and superordinate eschatological narratives about the battle between good and evil.[13] Yet, while obviously building on this popular narrative form, the *Sultana* deviates from the black-white cultural logic of the captivity tale, presenting an array of renegade Turks, renegade Christians, and even renegade atheists with all kinds of different motives and all kinds of accommodation strategies.[14] Again, as with his use of dramatic genre, Cervantes can be seen to pick up a discursive form and turn it in the palm of his hand reflectingly, as it were, observing it attentively from all angles in order to transform it through ironic emulation into an ambiguous, hyper-conscious version of itself.[15]

The same can be said of his exploitation of hagiography generally speaking and martyrology more specifically, a genre with strong ties to Byzantium (given the Arab-Byzantine wars).[16] Like their Western counterparts, the more or less legendary accounts of martyrs' lives and deaths in the oriental Middle Ages (330–1453) were generally structured around the opposition between Arab or Ottoman despots, as agents of Evil, and Christian martyrs, as representatives of Good, even if they could also simultaneously cater to other ideological agendas (fighting iconoclasm, for example). In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, legends such as those surrounding the 42 martyrs of Amorium, executed in 845 after refusing to convert to Islam;[17] Saint Laura of Constantinople scalded to death together with 52 sisters of her convent when the Ottomans took the city in 1453;[18] or that of Saint Agnes of Rome who refused to marry a heathen and was condemned by civil authorities to be dragged naked through the streets to a brothel and subsequently burned alive, were considered a good read. As I will subsequently argue, Cervantes'

[13] Ibid., 102–103.

[14] See Grieve 2016, 109: "As a writer who invokes the Mediterranean world, Cervantes magisterially paints a nuanced world where virtue and goodness, or cruelty and evil, can be found anywhere, regardless of religion, race, gender or ethnicity".

[15] The quintessential example of this modus operandi is, of course, the emulation of chivalric romance in the *Quijote*.

[16] Like so many other literary forms, Cervantes also emulated the popular contemporaneous genres of hagiographical legends and saints' lives, once again held up as quintessential to the Catholic Church with the publication of the *Roman Martyrology* in 1583 in connection with Pope Gregory XIII's revision of the calendar. Grieve (2016, 107) briefly mentions Antonio de Sosa's later work, the *Diálogo de los mártires de Algiers* (1612), which – combining martyrology and captivity tales – is perhaps also pertinent in this respect. I have not been able to find any comprehensive study of Cervantes' use of hagiography, though references to hagiographic traditions abound in his work. There are, however, a few studies of Cervantine hagiography in single works, see e.g. Varas (1991) on *El rufián dichoso* as "una comedia de santos diferente" and Sherman (2015) on Cervantes' use of the legend of Saint Leocadia in "La fuerza de la sangre".

[17] Kazhdan 800–801.

[18] De Renzis 1925.

consciously modelled the character of Catalina on this type of legends yet simultaneously seems to challenge their innate dualistic worldview and, more indirectly, to question their veracity.[19] Before turning to the text itself to analyse Cervantes' playful and form-conscious poetics more in depth, I would like to briefly discuss the larger framework of this poetics.

The British Hispanist Malveena KcKendrick has remarked that, even if Cervantes was not as accomplished a dramatist as he was a prosaist, his entire universe is permeated by what she terms a "theatrical imagination".[20] In the *Quijote*, for example, all the characters, from the barber and the priest who dress up as ladies to the university student Sansón Carrasco who performs the part of the Knight of the Mirrors and the entire court of the Duke and the Duchess, go around playing roles all the time, as do the 'shepherds' in the *Galatea*, the '*picaros*' in "La ilustre fregona", and 'Periandro' and 'Auristela' in the *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*.[21] In this sense, the famous novelist can indeed be considered the epitome of the Golden Age worldview examined by Oxford scholar Jonathan Thacker in *Role-Play and the World as Stage in the Comedia* (2002), even if revisionist work clearly remains to be done in order to vindicate Cervantes' oftentimes misunderstood and undervalued dramatic poetics itself.[22]

Although this is not the place to discuss the quality and critical reception of Cervantine theatre,[23] there is one aspect of Cervantes' theatrical

[19] In this, he could have been inspired by the sixteenth-century critical scrutiny of Jacobus de Varagine's medieval bestseller, the *Legenda aurea* or *Legenda sanctorum* (c. 1260) by disciples of Erasmus. The text saw various Spanish editions during Cervantes' lifetime, e.g. in Seville 1580. On the influence of Erasmian thought on Cervantes, see Bataillon 1950, 777–800.

[20] See McKendrick 2002: "[...] both the full-length plays and the interludes not only illustrate his experiments with the theatrical representation of modalities, preoccupations, and ways of seeing present elsewhere in his work, but throw light on the indebtedness of his major prose works to the genre of drama itself. Indeed his interest in the theatre goes a long way to explaining some of the outstanding characteristics of his fiction, for as the commercial outlet of his dramatic aspirations was cut off, his theatrical imagination and instincts found ample expression instead in his prose, above all in the *Quixote* itself" (132).

[21] The *Novelas ejemplares* also abound in examples, among which "La ilustre fregona" arguably stands out.

[22] While I find McKendrick's description of Cervantes' "theatrical imagination" as an effort "to experiment with and render performable the configurations of an existing dramatic habit" (2002, 132) very accurate, I do not agree with her contention that this effort represented a visionless adherence to outdated dramatic forms "rather than a wholehearted engagement with the conditions and demands of a new theatrical world" (ibid.), ultimately responsible for the author's failure as a dramatist. Can it really be true that one of Western literature's greatest spinners of plots and coiners of character, a master of human psychology, should be unable to write a decent play? Or could it be the critics who fail to grasp his idiosyncratic – neither classicist nor Lopean – conception of drama?

[23] I submit to Canavaggio's slightly older but still authoritative study (1977).

imagination (as found both in his drama and in his prose) that I would like to elaborate a bit on here because it has some bearing on *La gran sultana Doña Catalina de Oviedo*: its literarizing quality. In this play, as in Cervantine texts generally, the roles more or less demonstratively performed by the characters do not come out of nowhere; they are not intuitive or arbitrary. They are expressly literary, consciously emulated forms, topoi, clichés, stereotypes, even, or classic examples of what the Russian Formalists would call "literaturnost", literariness.[24] What Cervantes' characters perform are, in other words, fictive roles: pastoral novel shepherds, chivalric novel knights, Byzantine romance pilgrims or captives tales' harem slaves – not real shepherds, knights, pilgrims or harem slaves.[25] In the *Sultana*, this tendency is underscored in scene directions detailing "bizarre" costumes[26] and overflowing with *ante terminem* orientalist props such as taffeta curtains and velvet cushions and carpets.[27]

[24] Bringing up Shklovsky in this contect may seem capricious, but *O teorii prozy* (1925) in fact includes a most interesting and original reading of the *Quijote* along these lines.

[25] Thus, in contradistinction to other prominent Golden Age proponents of "el gran teatro del mundo" (such as notably Calderón), Cervantes take on the pervading reality/illusion theme is – in my view – not ontological but literary. He sees form everywhere. See, however, McKendrick 2002, 156–157: "It was his abiding concern, consequently, that literary illusion and deception should be underwritten by the identification of a recognizable truth, that the realities of human nature and experience should shape and inform the constructions of the imagination. Equally significant, however, for the identity of his drama, as well as his prose, was his counter-intuition that within the workings of the imagination less visible, profounder human realities are already embedded, and it is in his ironic openness to the play of these two perceptions that the distinctive character of his writings for the stage lies."

[26] See especially scene instructions for the sultana's entrances in act 3: "*(Éntranse, y la* SULTANA *se ha de vestir a lo cristiano, lo más bizarramente que pudiere.)*", Cervantes 2005, 73; "*(Entra la* SULTANA*, vestida a lo cristiano, como ya he dicho, lo más ricamente que pudiere; trae al cuello una cruz pequeña de ébano* [...]*)*", ibid., 77. ("[*They exit, and the* SULTANA *must dress in the Christian fashion, as elegantly as possible*]", Cervantes 2010, 148; "[*Enter the* SULTANA, *dressed in the Christian fashion, as I've already said, as richly as possible*]", ibid., 153). For not particularly clear reasons, the English translation renders "lo más bizarramente que pudiere" as "as elegantly as possible" – a choice which suppresses the 'literarizing' qualities that I am highlighting here as an essential element of Cervantes' poetics.

[27] See especially the scene instructions in the first act: "*(Parece el* GRAN TURCO *detrás de unas cortinas de tafetán verde; salen cuatro bajaes ancianos; siéntanse sobre alfombras y almohadas;* [...]*)*", ibid., 38 ("[The TURK appears behind green taffeta curtains; four old PASHAS enter, who sit on carpets and pillows;]" Cervantes 2010, 124). For a discussion of the play's 'orientalism' (and gender trouble), see McCoy (2013) 245–248, using the *Sultana* to critique Saidian theory (e.g., 248: "... Saidian Orientalism, as I have mentioned, relies too heavily on the existence of strict binarization or atomization of identity to solely explain the cultural contact staged in *La gran sultana*") and Butler's concept of gender performativity.

Saint or Sinner?

The various formal schemata exploited by Cervantes in *La gran sultana Catalina de Oviedo* not surprisingly converge in the main character Catalina, devout Catholic captive harem slave in the sultan's palace. Thus, among a bewildering multitude of other possibilities,[28] the *Sultana* can be construed as a character study upon which are imposed all the above-mentioned frames creating the highly complex, mosaic, or indeed contradictory portrait of a woman[29] suggested in the play's oxymoronic title.[30] One common feature of this portrait, however, is its insistent counterposition and juxtaposition of the Spanish Christian sultana and the Turkish Muslim sultan and I will therefore keep a more or less explicit turcological focus in my subsequent examination of four key scenes concerning Catalina's 'triumph' in Constantinople.

The first of these scenes is the initial meeting between the sultan and Catalina (here "vestida a la turquesca" ["dressed in the Turkish fashion"])[31] near the end of act 1, a courtship scene modelled on the Stoic-Christian castle-under-siege *topos* familiar not only from the courtly tradition but especially from hagiographical literature and morality plays, yet also containing elements of both flirtatious coquetry and hard-nose negotiation of marriage terms:

TURCO
Sabe igualar el amor
el vos y la majestad.
De los reinos que poseo,
que casi infinitos son,
toda su juridición
rendida a la tuya veo; [...]
Que seas turca o seas cristiana,

[28] On earlier criticism, see Hegyi 1992, 1–21. For a stimulating examination of the play's reception, see Díez Fernández 2006, 301–322: Further Henry 2013, 91–94, resuming Pedraza Jiménez' (1999) and Díez Fernández' critique of the modern interpretation of the *Sultana* as "un canto a la tolerancia", as exemplified by Castillo 2004 et al.

[29] Cervantes lived large parts of his life surrounded by women and many of his works confirm him to be an acute and sympathetic observer of their lives (See e.g. *Novelas ejemplares* such as "El celoso extremeño", "La ilustre fregona", and "La fuerza de la sangre"; but also the Marcela episode in the *Quijote* I,14). Thus, even if he – as mentioned above – always depicts wives, daughters, princesses, and sheperds through the lens of literature, as literary characters rather than as empirical beings or sociological types, he certainly appears to be the most "feminist" masculine Golden Age writer. For an entertaining and detailed account of Cervantes' life, see McCrory 2005.

[30] As noted by Lottman 1996, "The comedia's language is selfconsciously dense with puns, riddles, oxymorons, soliloquies, private prayers, and asides" (75). The title itself, I may add, with its juxtaposition of "Catalina" (intrinsically Christian name) and "sultana" is the most striking example, recalling other Cervantine titles such as, notably, *El rufián dichoso* and *La ilustre fregona* – or *La española inglesa*.

[31] Cervantes 2005, 14; Cervantes 2010, 106.

a mí no me importa cosa;
esta belleza es mi esposa,
y es de hoy más la Gran Sultana.

SULTANA Cristiana soy, y de suerte,
que de la fe que profeso
no me ha de mudar exceso
de promesa ni aun de muerte. (Cervantes 2005, 29–30)

TURK Love makes you one with majesty. I see all of my kingdoms, which are nearly infinite, delivered to your jurisdiction; now my great dominions, which have made me a great lord, are yours more than mine by justice and by right. [...] I don't care if you're a Muslim or a Christian; this beauty is my wife, and henceforth the Great Sultana.

SULTANA I am a Christian, so much so that I will not change my faith for a million promises, nor the threat of death. (Cervantes 2010, 118)

Performing, all through act 1, the part of Constancy, Catalina will not yield neither to flattery nor is she afraid to die for her faith.[32] However, she is understandably vexed about the whole situation in which she – a base captive, much inferior to her mighty suitor[33] – finds herself most insistently pursued

[32] The implicit presentation of Catalina here as a figure of "constantia" has been carefully prepared by Cervantes in a prior scene showing the deliberation of the protagonist and her ally Rustán prior to the meeting with the sultan:

"SULTANA ¿Es crüel el Gran Señor?/ RUSTÁN Nombre de blando le dan;/ pero, en efecto, es tirano./ SULTANA Con todo, confío en Dios,/ que su poderosa mano/ ha de librar a los dos/ deste temor, que no es vano;/ y si estuvieren cerrados/ los cielos por mis pecados,/ por no oír mi petición,/ dispondré mi corazón/ a casos más desastrados./ No triunfará el inhumano/ del alma; del cuerpo, sí,/ caduco, frágil y vano." (Cervantes 2005, 15–16) ("SULTANA Is the Grand Signor cruel? RUSTÁN They call him gentle, but he's really a tyrant. SULTANA With all this, I trust in God, whose powerful hand will free us both from this justifiable fear. And if the heavens be closed to me because of my sins, and do not hear my request, I shall ready my heart for a more terrible outcome. This inhumane one will not triumph over my soul, only over my body, which is weak, fragile, and vain." [Cervantes 2010, 106–107]).

This expectation communicates perfectly with the sultan's desire which is expressly carnal:

"SULTANA He de ser cristiana./ TURCO Sélo;/ que a tu cuerpo, por agora,/ es el que mi alma adora [...]." (Cervantes 2005, 46) ("SULTANA I shall remain a Christian. TURK Be one. For now, my soul adores your body as if it were its very heaven." [Cervantes 2010, 130]). Indeed, following Friedman's conception of Cervantine drama (1981), Constancy can be said to be the unifying concept of the Sultana.

[33] Throughout the play, Catalina's humbleness compared to the Turk is emphasized. She is very young – barely sixteen (according to Madrigal's ballad [2005, 81; 2010, 155], she

by the madly enamoured Great Turk who swears to obey her every command ("A cuanto quieras querer/ obedezco y no replico", 31 ["I obey and do not dispute whatever you might want", 119]). Thus, she asks for three days to reflect on "no sé qué dudas mías,/ que escrupulosa me han hecho", ibid. ("certain doubts of mine, which have made me hesitant", ibid.) and turns in prayer-monologue to Christ – the good "Gran Señor" as implicitly opposed to the sultan who is also "Gran Señor", but "tirano", 15 ("tyrant", 105) – for spiritual consolation in the dying lines of the first act:

SULTANA ¡A ti me vuelvo, Gran Señor, que alzaste,
a costa de tu sangre y de tu vida,
la mísera de Adán primer caída,
y, adonde él nos perdió, Tú nos cobraste. [...]
a Ti me vuelvo en mi aflición amarga,
y a Ti toca, Señor, el darme ayuda:
que soy cordera de tu aprisco ausente.
y temo que, a carrera corta o larga,
cuando a mi daño tu favor no acuda,
me ha de alcanzar esta infernal serpiente!
(Cervantes 2005, 32)

SULTANA I turn to you, oh Lord, who raised Adam from his miserable first fall with your own life and blood. As he lost us, You redeem us. To You, blessed shepherd, who sought the one small lost sheep out of a hundred, and, finding it pursued by the wolf, threw it over your holy shoulders, to you I turn in my bitter affliction. You must aid me, Lord: for I am a lamb lost from your fold, and I fear that, sooner or later, if you do not come to my aid, this infernal serpent will catch me!
(Cervantes 2010, 119–120)

Drawing on the conventions of the captivity tale, ever concerned with the threat of forced conversion and the fear of apostacy, this monologue exploits imagery from classical Christian tales of temptation and perdition – the lost sheep; the Fall of Adam – in order to thematize the heroine's religious anxiety. So far, the dramatist certainly casts his protagonist as a saintly figure straight out of hagiography, liturgical drama or devotional literature yet also indebted to the profane pseudo-historiographical/auto-biographical genre of

was ten when she came to Constantinople after which have passed six years, as we learn from Mamí in act 1 [2005, 13; 2010, 105]) – and her father is "hidalgo, pero no rico:/ maldición de nuestro siglo", 80 ("He was a gentleman, but not a rich one: that's the curse of our times, for it seems that being poor and being an hidalgo are one and the same thing", 154).

captivity tales, building on the same opposition between vice and virtue, Good and Evil, that structured these accounts.

The second scene that I will discuss confirms this picture. After a short lesson in moral theology, explaining that it is alright to commit a sin if you are forced to do it, the play now introduces the possibility that the sultana could become a martyr:

SULTANA ¿No es grandísimo pecado
el juntarme a un infiel?

RUSTÁN Si pudieras huir dél,
te lo hubiera aconsejado;
mas cuando la fuerza va
contra razón y derecho,
no está e pecado en el hecho,
si en la voluntad no está:
condénanos la intención
o nos salva en cuanto hacemos. [...]

SULTANA Mártir seré si consiento
antes morir que pecar. (Cervantes 2005, 42)

SULTANA Is it not a great sin for me to be joined to an infidel?

RUSTÁN If you could flee from him, that's what I would have advised; but when force trumps reason and right, then there is no sin in the deed if there is none in the intent. Intention saves or damns us in all we do. [...]

SULTANA I shall be a martyr if I consent to die rather than to sin. (Cervantes 2010, 127)

Convenient though it may seem to the youthful Catalina, consumed with religious fervour and understandably fearful of what awaits her in the sultan's bedroom, this proposition is categorically dismissed by Rustán who – acting here and elsewhere as the enforcer of Catholic orthodoxy (and as a shield against Inquisitorial censure) – ponders that it takes more than a forced marriage to make a martyr. Indeed, he says, there is no chance Catalina will be martyred because that would require the sultan to kill her, which he surely will not considering that "sin darle muerte al ganado/podrá gozar de la lana", 43 ("he can shear the wool without killing the sheep", 127):

RUSTÁN Ser mártir se ha de causar
por más alto fundamento,
que es por el perder la vida
por confesión de la fe.

SULTANA Esa ocasión tomaré.

RUSTÁN ¿Quién a ella te convida?
Sultán te quiere cristiana,
y a fuerza, si no de grado,
sin darle muerte al ganado
podrá gozar de la lana.
Muchos santos desearon
ser mártires, y pusieron
los medios que convinieron
para serlo, y no bastaron:
que a ser mártir se requiere
virtud sobresingular,
y es merced particular
que Dios hace a quien Él quiere.

SULTANA Al cielo le pediré,
ya que no merezco tanto,
que a mi propósito santo
de su firmeza le dé; (Cervantes 2005, 42–43)

RUSTÁN Martyrdom is for a loftier reason: losing one's life for confessing one's faith.

SULTANA I shall take that opportunity.

RUSTÁN Who offers it to you? The Sultan loves you as a Christian, and by force, if not willingly, he can shear the wool without killing the sheep. Many saints desired martyrdom, and attempted to achieve it, but that was not enough, for being a martyr requires outstanding virtue. It is an exceptional favor that God grants to whom He wishes.

SULTANA Since I do not deserve so much, I shall beg heaven to grant strength to my holy purpose; I shall do what I can, and in silence, in my apprehension, I shall cry out to the heavens. (Cervantes 2010, 127–128)

In other words, regardless of Catalina's religious scruples, she is and remains the sultan's sex slave and why would he destroy his favourite toy?[34] Both celibacy and martyrdom being thus out of the question, my third key scene then considers a third and rather drastic way of escaping the Turk's embrace: suicide. Backdrop of this scene – showing the emotional reconciliation between father and daughter – is the not so happy first reunion of the sultana

[34] The sultan himself concedes as much, stating that, although he does intend to make a lady out of her, he can in principle do whatever he likes with her ("Como a mi esclava, en un punto/ pudiera gozarte agora;/ mas quiero hacerte señora [...]"), 47 ["As my slave, I could possess you in a minute; but I want to make you my lady, to increase my happiness", 130]).

with her father at the end of act 2 during which he shames her, saying he would rather be sewing her shroud than her wedding dress ("¡Plugiera a Dios que estos lazos/ que tus aseos preparan/ fueran los que te llevaran/ a la fuesa entre mis brazos!", 65; "Would to God that these laces that make up your dress were for carrying you to the grave in my arms!", 143). When they meet again at the beginning of act 3, the tone is more reconciliatory although the father is still the typical severe, Catholic, Spanish "hidalgo" upholding low aristocracy morality without much regard for the welfare of his daughter. Thus, he reproaches her with wilfully rendering herself to a life of sin seduced by the pomp of the palace, accentuating the Counterreformation doctrine of free will:[35]

PADRE
Hija, por más que me arguyas,
no puedo darme a entender
sino que has venido a ser
lo que eres por culpas tuyas;
quiero decir, por tu gusto;
que, a tenerle más cristiano,
no gozara este tirano
de gusto que es tan injusto.
¿Qué señales de cordeles
descubren tus pies y brazos?
¿Qué ataduras o qué lazos
fueron para ti crüeles?
De tu propia voluntad
te has rendido, convencida
desta licenciosa vida,
desta pompa y majestad. (Cervantes 2005, 70)

FATHER
Daughter, despite all your arguments, it still seems to me that you've come to be who you are by your own faults; I mean, by your pleasure; for if you had more Christian leanings, this tyrant would not enjoy something so unjust. What signs of whipping do your feet and arms show? What ties or binds have cruelly held you down? You've surrendered of your own volition, swayed by this licentious life, this pomp and majesty.
(Cervantes 2010, 146–147)

The sultana replies that she has tried everything in her power to cool the sultan's affections, but – in curious accordance with a Western erotological,

[35] Against Lutheran determinism, Counterreformation theologians such as Luis de Molina (*On the Harmony of Free Will with the Gifts of Grace*, 1588) pondered man's free will under the influence of grace (leading man in the right direction, but not impeding his free choice).

Petrarchan, logic – he has only been all the more inflamed by her coldness and rejections ("Con mi celo le encendía,/ con mi desdén le llamaba,/ con mi altivez le acercaba/ a mí cuando más huía", 70–71 ["My zeal excited him, my disdain attracted him, and my haughtiness brought him closer when I fled him the most", 147]). When she finally gave up this strategy and gave in to her suitor it was to avoid forced conversion, not to climb the social ladder and become sultana, she defends herself ("Finalmente, por quedarme/ con el nombre de cristiana,/ antes que por ser sultana,/ medrosa vine a entregarme", 71 ["Finally, to keep a Christian name, rather than that of Sultana, I fearfully gave in", 147]); to which the father – softening up a bit but still in the condemning mood – comments that "que por lo menos estás,/ hija, en pecado mortal", 71 ("You must realize, to your disadvantage, that you are in a state of mortal sin, my daughter", 147).[36]

This is certainly a new perspective. Perhaps the sultana is not so exemplary a Christian after all? Perhaps she freely gave in to the vice and lasciviousness of the Topkapi while claiming to resist? Is her accommodation strategy, in the end, but a moral downfall in disguise? Could she be deceiving herself and everyone else (including the audience)? Faced with these troubling charges, Catalina brings up the solution of suicide: if the Turk will not kill her, then perhaps she should kill herself? Again, the answer to her plan is negative. In a rather preachy manner, the father reminds her that, for the good Christian, suicide is definitely no go:

SULTANA Pues sabrás aconsejarme,
dime, mas es disparate:
¿será justo que me mate
ya que no quieren matarme?
¿Tengo de morir a fuerza
de mí misma? Si no quiere
Él que viva, ¿me requiere
matarme por gusto o fuerza?

PADRE Es la desesperación
pecado tan malo y feo,

[36] Here as elsewhere in the play, Cervantes appears to be toying quite daringly with Catholic sexual morality and the famous Spanish honour code, leaving his audience in doubt about how bad is her fall is. Cf. that the reflexive verb "entregarse" can both mean *to give oneself up*, e.g. to the Sultan's suit for marriage, and *to succumb*, e.g. to a vice, see the *Diccionario de Autoridades* of 1732 (online at the Spanish Academy: http://web.frl.es/DA.html): "ENTREGARSE. Vale tambien darse a alguna cosa, apetecerla y desearla, y en cierto modo entrañarse y emplearse en ella: como entregarse a la oración, al estúdio, *a los vicios y sensualidades*, etc." ([It also means to give oneself over to something, to fancy and desire it, and to absorb and devote oneself to it, e.g. to prayer, study, *vices and sensuality*, etc.] my italics).

que ninguno, según creo,
le hace comparación. (Cervantes 2005, 71)

SULTANA Since you know how to advise me, tell me, though it's nonsense: is it right for me to kill myself, since they won't kill me? Must I die by my own hand? If He does not wish me to live, does He require me to kill myself by choice or by force?

FATHER Desperation is a sin so evil and ugly that no other compares to it, I think. Killing oneself is cowardly and holds back the generous hand of the Sovereign Good that sustains and nourishes us. (Cervantes 2010, 147)

Faced with the deadlock situation, father and daughter finally agree to opt for the classic Stoic-Christian solution: inner resistance and the patience of the righteous; turning the other cheek while awaiting the redemption of the meek; suffering, if not for religion (which she is allowed to keep), then at least for the chastity that she is forced to renounce. In this sense, Catalina can finally and with some right claim her martyrdom, as indeed she does pronouncing herself "mártir en el deseo" ("martyr of desire"),[37] whereas her father formulates himself in less bombastic terms:

SULTANA Mártir soy en el deseo,
y, aunque por agora duerma
la carne frágil y enferma
en este maldito empleo,
espero en la luz que guía
al cielo al más pecador,
que ha de dar su resplandor
en mi tiniebla algún día;
y desta cautividad,
adonde reino ofendida,
me llevará arrepentida
a la eterna libertad.

PADRE Esperar y no temer
es lo que he de aconsejar,
pues no se puede abreviar
de Dios el sumo poder.
En su confianza atino,

[37] The current English translation of this sentence (quoted below) is extremely odd, not only strangely omitting "of desire" ("en el deseo"), but changing the presence indicative "I am" ("soy") to the optative "I would wish to be". This translation not only impedes appreciation of Cervantes' theatrical poetics and corresponding casting of Catalina as a young woman performing the role of the martyr; it also obfuscates the play's essential sinner/saint dialectic (both under examination here).

y no en mal discurso pinto
deste ciego laberinto
a la salida el camino;
pero si fuera por muerte,
no la huyas, está firme. (Cervantes 2005, 71–72)

SULTANA I would wish to be a martyr. Though my fragile and sick flesh may slumber at this cursed task for now, I trust that the light that guides the greatest sinner to heaven shall shine brightly on my darkness one day, and take me, repentant, from this captivity where I reign aggrieved to eternal liberty.

FATHER Hope, not fear, is what I advise, for the highest power of God cannot be reduced. Confidence in Him, I find, is the way out of this maze; but should it be by death instead, don't run from it, be steadfast.
(Cervantes 2010, 147–148)

The third key scene thus essentially resumes the lines of the first two, as the relationship between the sultana and sultan is cast within the black-white religious framework of the captivity tale – expressly referenced in the last quotation ("esta cautividad" ["this captivity"]) – saints' legends and martyrology. According to the underlying eschatological schemata of these literary forms, the pious captive Catalina in the Turkish harem is at one and the same time a semi-historical flesh and blood figure and an allegory of the human soul caught in the bodily prison, awaiting redemption and salvation through divine intervention. However, as we have seen, a nagging doubt is introduced with the father's reproach. Seen from the perspective of the concerned father, the daughter's relations to the Turk is a dangerous dallying with desire. In the end, the hagiographic interpretation of Catalina's character thus seems to hang entirely on her own assertion that she gave in to "el gran Señor" for strictly pious reasons and not because of any kind of lust or social ambition. Yet her motive is essentially blowing in the wind.

On the surface, the fourth and final scene that I will discuss here seems to confirm the image of Catalina painted by the dramatist thus far. From her exchange in act 3 with Zaida/Clara, the Transylvanian harem slave whose cross-dressed lover Zelinda/Lamberto has just been selected for the sultan's pleasure, it appears the sultana could not care less about her husband's presumed infidelity (which would mean an easement of her martyrdom: if he chooses to make love to someone else Catalina is momentarily off the hook while another "martyr of desire" is being 'tortured'):

ZAIDA Mi señora,
no alcanzo cómo te diga

el dolor que en mi alma mora:
Zelinda, aquella mi amiga
que estaba conmigo ahora,
al Gran Señor le han llevado.

SULTANA ¿Pues eso te da cuidado?
¿No va a mejorar ventura? (Cervantes 2005, 92)

ZAIDA My lady, I don't know how to tell you of the pain in my soul: Zelinda, my friend, who was with me just now, has been taken to the Great Signor.

SULTANA That worries you? Isn't she improving her fortune? (Cervantes 2010, 162)

Catalina here coolly presents sexual intercourse with the sultan as a way of improving one's fortune, voicing the very opportunism that she was charged with by her father and fervently denied at that earlier point. Appalling to her then, it is apparently part of her business-like dealings in the harem now. The main plot seems to have come to a shallow end in which the pious Christian martyr of desire has sacrificed her chastity in exchange for keeping her religion and is now facing a humiliating if materially satisfying exercise in futility, waiting for God to rescue and redeem her from her trials while playing her cards as best she can.

Yet, when she learns of the Transylvanian lovers' predicament, the sultana awakes to heroism conceiving a plan that secures both the happy dénouement of the subplot and the 'happy' ending of the hagiographic legend of which she imagines herself to be the main character. She approaches her husband in what appears to be a jealous rage and reveals that she is pregnant, urging him not to go around spreading his seed anymore. Thus, she not only saves the two captive lovers but also, finally, consummates her longed-for martyrdom with a definitive, official goodbye to chastity – motherhood:

SULTANA ¡Cuán fácilmente y cuán presto
has hecho con esta prueba
tu tibio amor manifiesto!
¡Cuán presto el gusto te lleva
tras el que es más descompuesto! [...]

TURCO Más precio verte celosa,
que mandar a todo el mundo,
si es que son los celos hijos
del Amor, según es fama,
y, cuando no son prolijos,
aumentan de amor la llama,
la gloria y los regocijos.

SULTANA Si por dejar herederos
este y otros desafueros
haces, bien podré afirmar
que yo te los he de dar,
y que han de ser los primeros,
pues tres faltas tengo ya
de la ordinario dolencia
que a las mujeres les da. (Cervantes 2005, 96–97)

SULTANA How quickly and easily you've shown your lukewarm love through this trial! How soon your fancy leads you after the most immoderate desire! [...].

TURK I'd rather see you jealous than command the entire world, if it's true that jealousy is the offspring of Love, as they say. When it is not excessive, it feeds the flame of love, its glory and gladness.

SULTANA If you commit this and other outrages in order to produce heirs, I can assure you that I shall give them to you, and that they will be the first, for I have already missed three times the usual trouble that women get.
(Cervantes 2010, 164)

From her initial cold reaction to Zaida's story, the audience could suppose that Catalina is merely playing the role of the jealous wife here, and perhaps she is.[38] Yet who can know the secrets of the heart? Though the audience is given various leads to interpret the sultana's actions and motivations, among which her youthful idea of being a martyr (if only a "martyr of desire") surely stands out as the most prominent, her character essentially remains an enigma. In the end, the dramatist leaves it to the spectator to decide whether Catalina is in fact a saintly martyr-like figure enduring – and masochistically enjoying – her suffering; or a sinful woman "attracted by pleasure, by the good life of fleshly vice in which the Turks live" (Sosa 125); or an intelligent woman pragmatically accommodating herself to adverse circumstances (in the manner of the famous Roxolana or Hürrem and Safiye, the historical sultana of Murad III, both foreigners in the Topkapi);[39] or indeed a romantic figure

[38] See Henry 2013, 98–99: "The Sultana's jealousy, however, has no substance".

[39] See Pinto-Muñoz 2011 for an examination of the Roxolana figure in Spanish Golden Age literature (Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Juan Boscán, Garcilaso, Francisco de Borja, Bartolomé Leonardo Argensola and Lope de Vega). In a footnote on page 102, editor of the English translation of Cervantes' play Barbara Fuchs (2002) notes that "The "Great Turk" of the play, Sultan Murad III (1546–1595), also called Amurath or Amurates, ruled from 1574 to 1595. He was the son of Selim II, who was vanquished at Lepanto by the Sacred Alliance in 1571, and Nur Banu, the illegitimate daughter of the Venetian Nicol. Venier. The historical Murad fell in love with the Corfiote Christian captive Safidje". Murad III's colourful life,

who actually ends up enamoured of the enemy and happily having his child, incarnating ideals of tolerance and intercultural harmony.[40]

Depending on which of these interpretations of the main character is preferred, the play's ending changes colour dramatically: in the first case, in which the play would essentially be a *comedia hagiográfica*, the ending is happy because it is bad (as indeed it would have to be if Catalina is to be beatified); in the second case, in which we would be dealing with a type of morality play or *auto sacramental*, the ending could on one hand be considered good because it shows how a wicked woman gets what she – a bad *exemplum* – deserves (more of the Turkish vice that destroyed her) yet, on the other hand, it could also be considered bad because it would imply a kind of heretic hedonist inversion of the morality genre in which Evil triumphs over Good; in the third case, in which the *Sultana* would be a semi-historical drama, the ending would have to be considered deeply troubling, seeing that, albeit she manages to adapt, the protagonist is caught in a situation she cannot control: an enforced marriage, with all that it entails, and life as a captive in an environment hostile to her culture and her religion;[41] finally, in the fourth case – which the playwright, superficially at least, would seem to endorse with the ostentatively celebratory ending in which all of

dominated by cupidity, was chronicled by the Ottoman historian Mustafa Âlî (1541–1600) in the last part of his monumental *Essence of History*, 1592–1599. See Fleischer 1986, 293–307.

[40] Thus, there is a considerable tradition for considering *La gran sultana* a play that in a liberal manner celebrates hybridity (Fuchs 2002, 63–86; Mariscal 1994; Weimer 2000; Zimic 1992; Castillo 2004), see Henry's above-mentioned critique of this tradition (2013, 91–94). Instead, Henry proposes a somber, political reading of the play as a "metaphor for disrupted Spanish selfhood" (94), arguing that there "is, as we shall see, sound evidence in the play for reading *La gran sultana* as a play which does not propagate values of tolerance. Notions of harmony and leniency function as an elaborate illusion disguising tensions, conflicts and sinister motives which inform the conduct of the drama's characters. It is, therefore, a much more unsettling and problematic drama than has traditionally been realised; and certainly not the 'comic' play that most critics have mistaken it for" (93).

[41] This interpretation would approximate the play to the anxiety-provoking "La fuerza de la sangre" in which a girl who has been raped is forced by social convention to marry her violator. Like the *Sultana*, this short story ends with childbirth and marriage yet Cervantes exploits diegetic form to shrewdly question whether, for the female protagonist, this ending is in fact happy. Thus, recounting the nuptials that are, in effect, the sanctioning of a rape, the narrator of the text ostensibly steps back (or, rather, says he must step back) for having reservations about the whole thing. See Boruchoff: "The otherwise reserved narrator is conspicuously obtrusive and ironic, for example in stating that it would take a more refined (or perhaps wanton) mind to recount the joy of those present at the wedding of Leocadia and Rodolfo [...] specially as he immediately goes on to describe this allegedly ineffable joy in great and at times surprising detail" (2016, 470).

Constantinople goes wild with joy over the birth of the sultan's child[42] – it is of course the proverbial happy ending of the Lopean type of *comedia*.

As the preceding discussion of the play's characterization of the main character will have suggested, my point is that Cervantes does not definitively prioritize any of these interpretations, but instead piles forms upon forms as so many interpretive frames neither of which are fully able to capture the elusive silhouette of the Christian girl from Oviedo who became the sultana in Constantinople.[43] Taken together these different frames form an ambiguous turcological and characterological mosaic of more or less contradictory elements that forces the audience to think and reflect: should Ottoman-Spanish relations – as embodied in the relationship between sultan and sultana – be conceived in the allegorical terms of hagiography, martyrology and captivity plays as a battle between Good and Evil? in the problem-oriented terms of serious drama as a subtle game of power in which the Ottoman Empire's famous religious tolerance and liberality is but the cloak for more concrete types of political and physical repression? or, finally, in the utopian 'comic' terms of reconciliation and hybridization pertinent to the comic *comedia*?

Cervantes' Idea of a History Play?

Recalling the famous harangue against contemporaneous *comedias históricas* in the *Quijote* I:48, it seems strange that Cervantes should seriously choose to write a semi-historical drama like the *Sultana* which suffers from many, if not all, of the vicissitudes censured by Don Quijote's interlocutor.[44] However,

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[42] See Cervantes 2005: "*(Suenan las chimerías; comienzan a poner luminarias, salen los garzones del* TURCO *por el tablado, corriendo con hachas y hachos encendidos, diciendo a voces:* "¡Viva la gran sultana doña Catalina de Oviedo! ¡Felice parto tenga, tenga parto felice!"*)*"; Cervantes 2010: "*Shawms sound; they begin to place luminaries; enter the* GARZONS *of the* TURK *on the stage, running with lighted torches, crying out: "Long live the Great Sultana Doña Catalina de Oviedo! May she deliver happily!*"" (169).

[43] Hernández Araico makes a similar point, noting that the play thus repetitively "diverts the spectators' perspective" (1994, 157).

[44] See Cervantes 1998: "Y si es que la imitación es lo principal que ha de tener la comedia, ¿cómo es posible que satisfaga a ningún mediano entendimiento que, fingiendo una acción que pasa en tiempo del rey Pepino y Carlomagno, el mismo que en ella hace la persona principal le atribuyan que fue el emperador Heraclio, que entró con la Cruz en Jerusalén, y el que ganó la Casa Santa, como Godofre de Bullón, habiendo infinitos años de lo uno a lo otro; y fundándose la comedia sobre cosa fingida, atribuirle verdades de historia y mezclarle pedazos de otras sucedidas a diferentes personas y tiempos, y esto no con trazas verisímiles, sino con patentes errores, de todo punto inexcusables?" (554). ("And if truth to life is the main thing the drama should keep in view, how is it possible for any average understanding to be satisfied when the action is supposed to pass in the time of King Pepin or Charlemagne, and the principal personage in it they represent to be the Emperor Heraclius who entered Jerusalem with the cross and won the Holy Sepulchre, like Godfrey of Bouillon, there being

to conclude my examination of this interesting play I would like to briefly introduce the hypothesis that, notwithstanding its historiographical inaccuracy and demonstratively literarizing nature, *La gran sultana Catalina de Oviedo* could be seen to epitomize Cervantes' idea of the history play – a dramatic genre whose popularity and prestige grew exponentially with dramatists, theatre audiences and theorists from the last decades of the 16th century. Though Spanish Golden Age historical drama is traditionally seen to culminate with the work of Lope de Vega, who even went so far in his engagement with history as to aspire for the position of royal historiographer,[45] Cervantes was among the first to experiment with the genre in the early 1580s and, judging by his later production, an interest in the problem of historical representation never left him.

Two elements of the *Sultana* are especially pertinent in this respect. For one thing, the striking meta-historiographical aspect of the play – largely (but not exclusively) embodied in Madrigal's performance of the ballad of Catalina's life[46] and his plan to write "la historia de esta niña/ sin discrepar de la verdad un punto", (Cervantes 2005, 100 ["the history of this girl without straying one jot from the truth", Cervantes 2010, 168]) – obviously toys with the idea of the play as a historical play if perhaps primarily in the sense of hagiographic life-writing. Secondly, although the playwright makes sure to emphasize the literarizing or conventional – turcological, rather than Turkish – nature of his Constantinople and Murad III, he does actually introduce quite comprehensive factual knowledge about Turkish rites and customs which would have required some research.[47] Yet, notwithstanding the (form-conscious, reflective) historiographical intention disclosed in both these elements, it is for a different reason that I would highlight the *Sultana* as a model of Cervantine historical imitation: its 'didactic', performative or audience-involving aspect.

In this play, the dramatist clearly and variously aims to stimulate spectators' reflection on cultural stereotypes and historiographical common places creating his very own – very Cervantine – version of the *historia*

years innumerable between the one and the other? or, if the play is based on fiction and historical facts are introduced, or bits of what occurred to different people and at different times mixed up with it, all, not only without any semblance of probability, but with obvious errors that from every point of view are inexcusable?") Cervantes 2004; unpaginated internet text].

[45] Lope de Vega himself said so much in one of his letters (Lope de Vega 1939–1945, vol. III, 45).

[46] Cervantes 2005, 79–82; Cervantes 2010, 154–155.

[47] See, e.g. the quite detailed information conveyed in act 1 about the "salah", the Muslim prayer performed five times daily, about Turkish protocol and office, as well as about the infrastructure of Constantinople.

magistra vitae tradition. In Cervantes' school of history, the magister does not give monological lectures but encourages active student participation, as it were, and he has quite a few cards up his sleeve to awaken the slumbering masses.[48] Besides the massive, thought-provoking literarization identified above in the *Sultana*'s hagiography and captivity tale inspired turcology, his repertoire of what can be termed consciousness enhancing devices includes meta-dramatic takes (such as the performance-within-the-performance in act 3); mixture of empirical persons and places with entirely fictive ones; and the ambiguous recurrence of words and concepts relating to history, historicity and historiography, among other things.[49]

Like the literarizing take examined more in depth in this article, these different devices – which I cannot go further into in the present context but propose for further study – essentially facilitate the transformation of what may at first sight appear to be an absurd fantasy about Spanish political hegemony over the Turks[50] into a subtle critique of this very fantasy; of propagandistic notions about the Ottoman sultan as the great adversary of Western Christianity into tongue-in-cheek ideology critique; and of apparently fantastical and stereotypical turquoiseries into a twisted, critical, turcology. In this sense, the *Sultana* could indeed be seen to provide us with a sophisticated model of historical imitation that is very much in line with the emulative poetics epitomized, of course, by the *Quijote*; and a welcome alternative to unreflective interpretations of historical agents and events of all kinds (as reductionist as they are recurrent).

[48] Thus, although I disagree with Henry's rather grim, political interpretation of the *Sultana*, I find her closing remarks concerning the play's performativity very accurate: "As has already been established in this study, Cervantes makes plain that his theatre refuses to be an instrument of propaganda. As such, this play naturally resists those arguments which insist that the drama promotes a harmonious inclusiveness. Moreover, Cervantes does not make it easy for his spectator to read and interpret the signifying systems at play. The difficulty in peeling back the drama's layers of farce and rigorously determining the motivations which drive the play encourages both discrimination and active participation" (102–103).

[49] See, notably, Rustán's closing remark:

"RUSTÁN Alzad la voz, muchachos; viva a voces/ la gran sultana doña Catalina,/ gran sultana y cristiana [...]/ a quien Dios de tal modo sus deseos/ encamine, por justos y por santos,/ que de su libertad y su memoria/ se haga nueva y verdadera historia." (Cervantes 2005, 102) ("RUSTÁN Raise your voices, lads; may the Great Sultana Doña Catalina be praised – the Great Sultana and a Christian [...]. May God make her desires so just and holy that a new and true history may be written of her liberty and memory." [Cervantes 2010, 169]).

[50] See Williamson 1994.

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Miklós Zrínyi's Hungarian Osmanology

By Amedeo Di Francesco

Towards the mid seventeenth century the prominent politician, military operator, and poet Miklós Zrínyi – with a view of contemporary confrontations with the Ottomans and looking back at the battle at Szigetvár in 1566, where his ancestor, the commander of the castle, and also Suleiman the Magnificent died – authored not only political treatises that were marked by Machiavellian inspiration, but also a heroic epic in the Tassonian mode, Obsidio Szigetiana (in Hungarian), about the deeds of his ancestor. Framed by themes of providence and fate, Zrínyi's exhortation in the poem to national unity and defence against the Ottomans in certain respects includes admiration for Ottoman culture and thus goes against the grain of dominant Hungarian attitudes.

During the winter of 1647–1648 Miklós Zrínyi, then in his late twenties, wrote the epic poem *Obsidio Szigetiana* (*The Siege of Sziget*) in Hungarian.[1] He was born in Csáktornya – or, less likely, in the castle of Ozaly – in 1620, of a noble Croatian family, that again and again was engaged in fighting the Turks. The territory of the Zrínyis – the Muraköz – was a border area that was permanently disputed by the contenders: on one side the Habsburgs, whose policy did not always coincide with the interests of the Hungarian nobility – to which the Zrínyis belonged by rights acquired during the Kingdom of Hungary under Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490), – and on the other side the Turks, whose political and military force, although weakened after the death of Suleiman the Magnificent (1566), was still more than sufficient to be of concern to those who bothered about the defence of the vast territory of Hungary including Transylvania in the east. Thus, two basic components are at the root of the creation of *The Siege of Sziget.* The first being the resolve of Miklós Zrínyi – a poet, a writer, but also a military man and a politician on his way to become the *ban* of Croatia – to draft a concrete plan for the political struggle against the Turks along the lines of modern theories concerning both government and nation, including the establishment of an efficient Hungarian

[1] Zrínyi 2011, *The Siege of Sziget*, translated by László Kőrössy. The quotes in the text are from this edition. Quotes in Hungarian follow the edition by Sándor Iván Kovács (Budapest 2003) as reproduced in Zrínyi 2015, *La Zrinyiade ou Le Péril de Sziget, épopée baroque du* XVIIe *siècle*.

army (at last), as part of strategy for the revival of an independent Kingdom of Hungary, free of the dynastic ambitions of the Habsburgs as well as the expansionist ambitions of the Turks. The second component is Zrínyi's desire to launch this ambitious project via the epic story of the siege of Szigetvár (1566). This battle claimed the life of Miklós' homonymous great-grandfather, who was in command of the fortress; Suleiman the Magnificent also died, the poet erroneously attributing the death of Suleiman to his own ancestor. What, essentially, was required was the transformation of that episode and its main protagonists into a myth. There was no want of sources on which to reconstruct the facts: these – also those that had resonance in Europe – were almost all to be found in the famous "Bibliotheca Zriniana" which would eventually come down to us and demonstrate, that Zrínyi used all historical accounts – in prose and verse, in Hungarian and Croatian as well as in Latin – which in the previous century had informed the whole of Europe of what had happened in that, hitherto almost unknown, Hungarian fortress. In particular, he used the broad historical reconstruction of Miklós Istvánffy (*Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis.* Libri XXXIV, Köln 1622), but in our case it is certainly useful to remember and quote the following Latin couplet affixed by the poet next to the image of his ancestor, reproduced in the collection edited by Jacob Schrenck von Nozing:

> One is the true image of the highest virtue
> Live while you can, fear not to die.[2]

But were things really so? Anyhow, it is our task to dig deeper, in order to rebuild a more truthful picture of the Turk in the collective imagination of the Hungarians and in Zrínyi's heroic poem.

I: Szigetvár 1566: Miklós Zrínyi, a hero by accident?

It was in 1556. Hádım Ali, Pasha of Buda, had laid siege to Szigetvár with the declared intention of seizing control of most of the Great Hungarian Plain and the Danube-traffic, and with the secret hope to keep the Habsburg forces bogged down until the return of Isabella and John Sigismund. To the general surprise, perhaps to its commander Márk Horváth as well, Szigetvár managed to resist the siege for a whole month and would therefore, badly fortified and worse supplied as it was, not have survived long if a raid by Tamás Nádasdy against the stronghold of Babócsa had not for four days diverted the troops of Hádım Ali, who then suddenly returned to Buda. Szigetvár was saved, but some of his valid defenders were taken prisoners, and experienced the prisons of Constantinople – six years later, in a letter to King Ferdinand, they were pleading for their liberation. How did that happen? The letter was written

[2] "Una est et verax summae virtutis imago:/ Vivere cum possis, non timuisse mori."

from within the prison to the king of the hostile side? Here we have to pay attention and look for an explanation.

A wide survey on the subject leads us to believe that the forced residence on the Bosporus was not really that unbearable. [3] Not only. If we really want to talk about imprisonment, various refined tortures and cruelties, then we should take a closer look at the activities taking place in the dungeons of our Hungarian friends. Anyhow, the battle royal between Turks and Hungarians seems to have had also less noble reasons than the defence of Christianity or the conversion to the true faith of Islam, in contrast to the motives stated in the heroic poems and chronicles of both sides. The reasons, the real ones, in fact, are presumably to be found in the need to get hold of the substantial recurring revenue, generated by mutual ransom demands for the release of prisoners, i.e. the most important and wealthy, of course, their life, by the way, never seriously endangered. What about the piles of corpses depicted in the epics? They certainly were there – the poetry does not lie on this point – yet they consisted almost always exclusively of the multitude of less wealthy people.

Hero

Ten years later, in 1566, the second and most important siege of Szigetvár took place, during which Miklós Zrínyi and Suleiman the Magnificent died. The episode, of course, immediately inspired chroniclers and rhymesters, mostly Croats and Hungarians, thus improving the modest level of the epic genre in sixteenth century Hungarian literature – at least the one of classical and western ancestry. Really, there is not much to these early accounts in verse and prose, at least from our contemporary point of view, but they became primary sources of the great baroque vision, the descendant of the hero of Szigetvár unfolded in the winter of 1647–1648, celebrating and magnifying an event of, after all, only relative military importance.[4]

But who was, actually, Miklós Zrínyi senior, who had sworn before God to sacrifice his life with a view of not only saving Hungary politically, but even redeeming the nation morally? Well, the few inhabitants of the fortress and the more numerous peasants from the adjacent countryside knew soon enough of his greed: before long they had to admit that the Turkish despotism was far more endurable than dealing with the measures taken by this fierce

[3] Takács 1907, 415–435 and 518–540.

[4] Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664) wrote this poem during the winter 1645/46 and published it together with pastoral and mythological idylls in Vienna in 1651 under the title *Adriai tengernek Syrenája* ("Siren of the Adriatic Sea"). The work was translated into Croatian with variations by his brother Petar Zrinski and published in Vienna in 1660 entitled *Adrijanskoga mora Sirena* ("Siren of the Adriatic Sea").

Hungarian-Croatian soldier.[5] For sure, his precautions aimed at coping with a state of indisputable emergency, yet they became subject to an investigation commissioned by King Ferdinand. This did not sit well with our man, who reacted with pride and declined to defend Szigetvár. Soon the deployment of the Turkish troops compelled him to take a fresh and more realistic view of the situation and eventually accept battle. Yet Zrínyi did not regain his good moods[6]. As we know from a letter written by Benedek Szalay Bakonoki on August 8, 1566 (two days after the arrival of Suleiman under the ramparts of Szigetvár), he had 50 Turkish prisoners impaled.[7] Nothing exceptional, you might say, all in all a routine case of torture which, together with mutilations, was just one of the most current forms of physical coercion in vogue in those days. Not even as distinguished a humanist as Antal Verancsics, who in 1567, when he was Bishop of Eger, had many hassles and setbacks in these matters of captures and releases for ransom, could, in fact, refrain from applying the second form of coercion. True enough, but it is also true that harshness of torture was applied in direct proportion to the entity under negotiation for release and/or the speed at which the requests for ransom were met. And then, what we celebrate is Verancsics' fine erudition and his diplomatic skills reaching all the way to Constantinople, not his inclination for martyrdom, a motif, which may feed into the Baroque construction of the heroic and Counter-reformist machinery. This was what was done in the case of Zrínyi senior at the hands of the younger Zrínyi. And then, what would be the correct interpretation of *The Siege of Sziget*, particularly considering that, at the time, it was acclaimed as a strong ethical composition?[8] Should we, perhaps, resort to the baroque paradox? Or should we try to establish some order in the contradictory speculation of our author, who in such an eminent way does express and interpret the confusion and disorientation among those who have to act in a mad world, that is considered seriously ill and nefarious?[9] I prefer to take the second road, fully aware of the difficulties of the undertaking. But an attempt must be made, even at the risk of critical heterodoxy.

Martyr

The thought cannot be discarded that Zrínyi, the poet, wished to represent his ancestor as a particular *figura Hungariae*, i.e. the symbol of someone who was driven to a strict moral conversion after having served unscrupulously as

[5] Klaniczay 1964, 12–13.
[6] R. Várkonyi 1985, I, 276.
[7] Takács 1907, op. cit., p. 419.
[8] Di Francesco 1979, 351–369; Király 1989.
[9] Cf. Maravall 1985, 249–287.

a hit man, and having felt no compunction towards the fate of Szigetvár.[10] Hence the idea of turning the ancestor's inevitable death in battle into evidence of voluntary martyrdom, a test, by the way, yearningly invoked and systematically evaded. This interpretation cannot be ruled out, our poet being a particular kind of Catholic who was not insensitive to moral reasons put forward by the pious Protestant side. It is not easy to gauge to what extent his attitude was the result of a healthy realism dictated by the reason of state in the specific confessional situation of Hungary. Here is, undoubtedly, a true element, but it does not exhaust the question, since a careful reading of Zrínyi's texts allows the assumption, that he shared many ideas with Protestants. Those who represented the ideas of reformation did, in fact, not limit themselves to purely religious matters, but broached with ease questions within the scope of a modern existentialism *ante litteram*. In the neo-stoic view, endorsed by the moderate culture of Hungarian Baroque, the theme of fortune has (also in synonymic meanings of destiny, luck and chance) a prominent position. In Zrínyi's heroic poem it is a basic component of the *értékrendszer* [value system]. The relevance of this theme urges Zrínyi to represent the "world upside down", also rhetorically and stylistically, and so, in the Hungarian poem, the problematic attitude of the new ideal man presents a sort of romantic pragmatism, typical of those who must deal with the volatility of the world and of history. These aspects would become manifest in the description of Zrínyi the elder during the episode of Szigetvár. And to this end the poet undertook a careful work of deconstruction and assemblage of texts and narrative episodes from a variety of sources.[11]

Evil and Destiny

Two reference points: the problem of evil and the question of destiny. Two fixed points in Zrínyi's thought: a substantially positive assessment of the Turks and an ingrained negative appraisal of the Hungarians. In his patient and stubborn effort, problematical and contradictory as it is, to re-establish the reputation of his ancestor, Zrínyi found a valuable ally, in terms of literary and ideological intertextuality, in the clever syncretism of an *opusculum* that, effectively celebrating the episode of Szigetvár[12], is not stingy with references to the spirit of Reformation and the indestructible *topos* of unstable fortune. Thus, for example, in the epigrammatic reconstruction of Petrus Albinus, the defender of Szigetvár would have spoken:

[10] Cf. Bessenyei 1994.

[11] Cf. Di Francesco 2000, 301–307.

[12] *De Sigetho Hungariæ propugnaculo, a Turca anno Christi MDLXVI. obsesso et expugnato …*, Collectum opera Petri Albinii Nivemontii, Witenergae, excudebat Mattheus Welack, 1587.

No cruel enemy defeated us, but Mulciber [Vulcan]
sent from hell and fate oppressed Hungary.[13]

"Mulciber, et fatum": it is not unfair to suppose that the poet's grandson would have pondered intensely on these two core themes, turning them into cornerstones of the architecture of his epic. Also because it is difficult to imagine that Zrínyi was not aware of the ruthlessness of his ancestor. Hence the recourse to the expediency of a providential *sors bona,* that had Zrínyi senior converted and transmuted into an instrument of divine grace. Hence the link between the problem of evil and the intervention of Providence. Our poet seems to share the ideas of Gáspár Heltai, this particularly determined, salacious and corrosive Lutheran: destiny and divine mercy wanted Szigetvár to fall into the hands of the Turks and not in the hands of the Habsburgs, i.e. the web of the Inquisition[14]. It was the saving action of the God of the Reform redeeming Hungary and defending it from the, apparently antagonistic but in reality concurrent, endeavours of Islam and Catholic Antichrist – even if this interpretation of Hungarian events was drowned in the clamour of the European eco of the Catholic idea of "*antemurale christianitatis*" – Bulwark of Christianity, and in the arrogant triumphalism of Turkish chronicles.[15]

Thus the need – eighty years after the clash of Szigetvár – also to sing the positive aspects of the imponderables of destiny, especially when referring to Providence on the one hand, and the current "juncture" in the form of concrete political projects on the other (these plans anticipated the election of a national king, primarily as an anti-Habsburg move, and only secondarily and as a necessity envisaged the resumption of the war against the Turks). Zrínyi's approach to the Ottoman Empire is basically full of goodwill beyond any preconceived schematic commonplace. In the poem the repetitive term *jó Zrínyi* (the good, brave Zrínyi), describing the defender of Sziget, is, in the view of his descendant, the obsessive redundancy of an awkward oxymoron. The epithet applies as well to the individual as to the nation, both in need of destiny's intervention – a positive destiny, of, perhaps, vaguely Eastern origin – in order to (re)establish Hungary as a nation forever freed of any form of ethical relativism.

[13] "Non nos hostis atrox vincit, sed missus ab orco/ Mulciber, et fatum quod premit Hungariam" (Petrus Albinus Nivemontius 1587, *In Imaginem Zerinii non armati*, in *De Sigetho Hungariæ propugnaculo*, op. cit., C 3r.).

[14] Cf. Horváth 1957, 382–383; Hopp 1992, 112. Important are the affinities with one of the most well-informed texts on the Hungarian Protestantism, published in Sárvár 1602: I am refering to Magyari 1979.

[15] Fehér 1975.

II: The Turk in the Ideological Structure of *The Siege of Sziget*

Discussing the image of the Turks represented in *The Siege of Sziget* thus leads to the question of the ideological makeup of Zrínyi's poem. The Turk is a most important integral part of that structure. Zrínyi does, in fact, use the image of the Turk freely to broach a number of topics: not only 1) the vagaries of fortune and / or of divine providence, but also 2) transgressive love, almost justified and presented in an atmosphere of lush sensuality; 3) the theme of the military (un)preparedness of the Hungarians, and 4) the "couleur locale" described with empathy. These are topics that could be "embarrassing" if treated with sympathy by a Catholic politician solidly inserted in the ideological context of a Hungary divided, by and large Turkified and still heavily affected by religious struggles and disputes. The strong involvement of the Turkish characters in the elucidation of the ideas of the Hungarian-Croatian poet, stems, in short, also from an understandable need for caution.

Fortuna and Providence

There is an ample literature about the motif of fortune.[16] Some further comments on the issue may, however, be of interest, since the subject – in all its complexity – is expressed in the poem and prose by four interchangeable terms: *szerencse, Fatum, gondviselés, sors* (luck, destiny, providence, fate or chance). The large number of occurrences of these terms and their synonyms justifies the assumption that Zrínyi attempted a nearly full examination of the relationship of man to the unstable nature of the world and of history. Zrínyi tries to construct a practical philosophical discussion of the term in question. By mixing the main term either with the concept of destiny or of divine transcendence, the text, however, often creates significant, unresolved contradictions. The terms mentioned above are used in a rather messy way, following a muddled positing of the problem. If destiny is assumed or already established, then fate represents the imponderable. In other words, destiny is rigid and fate is fluid.

Fortune, then, as a literary motif – for example in Balassi Bálint (1554–1594) – eventually rises to the level of a higher and looming entity against which only neo-stoic virtue – as it had been in János Rimay (c. 1570–1631) and István Illésházy (1541–1609) – or heroic activism as conceived by Zrínyi might be a remedy. The Hungarian literature of this period is – also due to historical changes arising from meeting and clashing with the Turks – characterized by a conceptual and lexical evolution of the notion of reality's precariousness, so omnipresent in these three poets and handled in so variegated ways. Not intending to provide a more detailed discussion of this

[16] On fortune in Zrínyi: Klaniczay 1964, 460–467; Perjés 2002, 250–263.

issue, I wish, nevertheless, to point out that the eventual solution to Zrínyi's contradiction actually depends on the assumption of a sort of doubling, which our poet had to apply again and again. Zrínyi's conception of fortune is spelled out on two levels: 1) it acts directly or indirectly by divine will upon the individual actions of men; 2) or it is determined prior to human life itself, as a kind of predestination, no longer controllable even by God, who willed it. The terminology used by the poet confirms this: fortune is *szerencse* (luck), in the first sense, and *Fatum* or *Isten akaratja* (divine will), in the second.

Heroic Virtue and Divine Will

Zrínyi's heroic activism, therefore, is embedded in an ethical conception based on the following argument: the Hungarians are punished by God because they are lazy and immoral; to redeem themselves, they must first of all be virtuous heroes (*vitéz*), i.e. they must show those individual skills and the heroism, which alone can defeat idleness (*henyélés*) and debauchery (*feslett erkölcs*); but heroic virtue (*vitézség*) alone is not sufficient to redeem man, since – in the words of Zrínyi – "heroism (*vitézség*) without luck (*szerencse*) is nothing."[17] But luck is nothing more than divine will or its instrument: thus, in order to benefit from it, man must be *vitéz*, but he must be fulfilling morally positive actions, always endeavoring to contribute to a just cause (*igaz ügy*).

This framework surely summarizes Zrínyi's way of thinking, however it is far from covering the vast area of uncertainties and doubts that so often crop up in his reflection on the problem of luck. In a sense, our poet's religiosity manifests itself in offering a solid architecture that clearly assigns the domains pertaining to the human and the divine, but at the same time leaving a gray area between the two domains in shadowy darkness. The situation gets rather indistinct, when examining how fortune bestowed by divine will is performed – and not always to the benefit of the righteous, as Zrínyi concludes. Structurally based on this thought-pattern, *The Siege of Sziget* is the poem in which Zrínyi's philosophical and speculative ideas are fully unfolded at the foundation of coincidence of a positive divine intervention and availability of a hero to receive it. Nevertheless, we are left in an area of dimness, when the poet rails against fortune as divine instrument, which is felt and reproved as cursed and cruel. Yet I do not think that this stems from incoherence, or a sudden afterthought adjusting the discourse to the general structure. In fact, if we pay attention to the various passages, where the poet locates such outbursts against adverse fortune, these are, clearly, the result of musings and meditations on a human level, in no way compromising God's

[17] Zrínyi 2003, 285: "vitézség semmi szerencse nélkül".

greater plan. It is difficult to imagine an inconsistency between the poem's framework in which the central role is assigned to the inscrutable divine plan – which in its ultimate goal is always regarded as positive – and the emotional proclamation of the paucity of the human condition, which may be negatively affected by the same divine will, but only in an ephemeral way, in its practical effects and merely at the human level.

Turks and Providence

In Zrínyi's epic depiction, what is then the role assigned to the Turks? With the Hungarians they share the existential doubts that have always tormented the human condition; however, whereas the military defeat of the Christians is, actually, a victory, the Muslim's success is just the beginning of their political demise. And Sziget is the place chosen by providence or by luck for the realization of this paradox:

> Be not afraid, for lo! I have said I will be beside you;
> The holy Mahomet also guides your hand.
> And then also, dear son, the heroic man
> Must cede some things to fortune. (I, 43)[18]

Suleiman, in short, had been warned: he would capture Szigetvár, but also die. One of the most significant components of baroque mentality is presented by the re-enactment of an historical episode from the previous century. "In the seventeenth century fortune is the rhetorical image of the mutability of the world. Fortune is conceived as motor of change and cause of the movement that stirs up the sphere of men."[19] It is the triumph of ambiguity, if the human experience cannot express clear ideas differentiating providence from destiny. It is therefore inaccurate to assign an excessive importance to contradictions (which do exist) in the thought of Zrínyi. The contradictions spring from the distress of the disability to find certainty in a historical period full of declarations of the need for certainty.[20] Words like "fortune, chance, transience, caducity and ruin loom large in an existential vocabulary, while linguistic and representational strategies try to weaken their most challenging significance."[21] Man is anxiously looking for ways to keep history in check, he wants to control or at least understand what is happening, but does not succeed. Suleiman is a tragic hero, representing man's perpetual contradictory nature at this particular historical moment. In Zrínyi's baroque vision, Suleiman is the symmetrical counterpart to the hero of Sziget; he

[18] "Ne félj, mert lám, mondom, én leszek melletted,/ Az szent Mahomet is vezeti kezedet./ Osztán, édes fiam, az vitéz embernek/ Kell valamit engedni az szerencsének."
[19] Maravall 1985, 312.
[20] Cf. Bouwsma 2003, 247 ff.
[21] Campa 2001, 226.

shares with him the tragic destiny, the dependence on history willed by God and by man, the desperate search for an answer to the many absurdities of life. Not only Zrínyi, but also Suleiman lives in the presence of God.[22] Suleiman dies on the day of his victory, Zrínyi dies on the day of his defeat. A seventeenth-century poet and thinker could not miss such a parallelism – and antinomy as well.

The Human Condition

The second part of the poem opens two different perspectives on Zrínyi's idea of fortune. *The first* expresses the idea of fortune's dependence on God:

> Ahead of the sultan, two miles distant, go
> Sixty-three hodjas who scatter money on all sides
> To all the poor, so that these from God
> May incur favor for the sultan by their pleading. (II, 43)[23]

This image – duplicated in XI, 52 – clearly stems from certainty or merely hope of a top-down process of fortune "from on high", the only dimension, where intimate, personal concerns of inner uncertainty could find a place. And the Turk is, importantly, in both episodes the interpreter of this idea of the relation between God and luck. Here as elsewhere, when Zrínyi speaks of the human condition, he does not differentiate between Christians and Turks, for both are sharing his few certainties and many doubts. I think it is for fear of the Inquisition Zrínyi has the Turks in the poem speaking about destiny, because he – as Machiavelli – tends to have no faith in Providence or at least to have his doubts about it.

The second perspective (i.e. the fluidity of fate) is based on the baroque vision of the world. Here the motif of fortune represents the dynamic mutability of everything, and expresses the sum total of reality's imponderables. More specifically, evidence of military good or bad luck will distinguish the figure of the ideal leader, who is "by wisdom, valor, and all virtues good."[24] In this context too, Suleiman certainly is the most convincing character:

> Fortune did not toy with him, as with others:
> If she wanted to scare him with a blow,
> Or with defeat in battle, or with other harm,
> He was always prepared, with his intelligence;

[22] Sík 1989, 291.

[23] "Megyen császár előtt messzi két mérfölddel/ Hozsa hatvanhárom, pénzt osztnak mind széllel/ Minden nyomorultnak, hogy ezek Istennél/ Szerezzenek szerencsét könyörgésekkel."

[24] Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered* XVII, 6: "ne l'arti regie e militari esperto."

> He did not bend, like a twig, but like a boulder stood
> Amidst the waves of the sea, steeled himself;
> So, if fortune gave him something good,
> He became not proud, nor boastful. (II, 48–49)[25]

And here we cannot avoid noticing the strong analogy with Seneca's *Oedipus*:

> As lofty peaks do ever catch the blasts, and as the cliff, which with its jutting rocks cleaves the vast deep, is beaten by the waves of even a quiet sea, so does exalted empire lie exposed to fate.[26]

It could be that this is simply a *topos*, thus excluding any presumption of intertextual relationship. Nevertheless, this image occurs so often in *The Siege of Sziget,* showing – as it is also evidenced by the quotes in the prose works – how well acquainted Zrínyi was with the works of Seneca and the tragedies of the Roman philosopher, which were proudly displayed in his library.[27] In short, with its strong neo-stoical influence, a novelty in the history of Hungarian literature, Zrínyi's treatment of the problems of destiny and fortune differs clearly from earlier conceptions. To paraphrase the title of a famous work of Bauman,[28] we can say that Zrínyi acts within an early and unstable modernity, immediately following the first stable modernity represented by the Renaissance, which slowly and progressively transfers and bequeaths its crisis on to the Baroque, but not before testing the possibilities offered by neo-stoicism.

Transgressive Love

"I wrote about love too, but quietly",[29] but is it really so? It is unlikely, if we read the passionate transport with which love is represented correctly. The vanity of glory and virtues finds a tangible reward in an invitation to the most irrational of loves. Rationality collides with its opposite, irrationality, but the latter triumphs in a blaze of passion, making the XII canto of the poem one of the most beautiful passages of Hungarian literature. It is not accurate to say that only this chant embodies the romantic theme. Already at the start of the narrative action the impossible love story of the two Turkish protagonists is

[25] "Szerencse űvéle nem játszott, mint mással:/ Ha ijeszteni is akarta csapással,/ Vagy had veszésével, vagy más kárvallással,/ Mindenkor állandó volt okosságával;// Nem hajlott, mint az ág, mint kőszikla állott/ Tenger habjai közt, mert magában szállott,/ Ha szerencse neki valami jót adott,/ Nem bizta el magát, föl nem fuvalkodott."

[26] "ut alta uentos semper excipiunt iuga/ rupemque saxis uasta dirimentem freta/ quamuis quieti uerberat fluctus maris,/ imperia sic excelsa Fortunae obiacent." Seneca 1938 (vv. 8–11)

[27] Cf. Klaniczay 1991, 274–275.

[28] Cf. Bauman 2000.

[29] Zrínyi 2003, 10: "Irtam szerelemrül is, de csendessen".

enacted and acquires threatening forms parallel to the unfolding of military events:

> They say: That Deliman, when many nations
> He had wandered to see famed cities,
> In Galata he saw beautiful Cumilla,
> Cumilla the beautiful, Suleiman's daughter.
>
> Cumilla's fine hair entwined the heart
> Of youthful Deliman, and all his desire;
> One look stole all his strength
> So that without her, he wishes not to live. (I, 71–72)[30]

Cumilla is a true symbol of the beloved woman, conceived as the mental place of the impossible, the unachievable and the elusive. It is simultaneously near and distant; it is the proper image of a pipe dream, expressing perfectly the dimension of the inaccessible. It is the evanescent palpability of dreams; the symbol of the sincerest desire opposed to the reality of awakening; the spasmodic search for what is denied to us always and forever. Zrínyi's seemingly calm considerations is actually the din of the storm of passions; repressed passions closeted in by the condition of man, damned to suffer limitless desires in the intimate sphere of privacy's narrow margins. Love, perhaps, only represents metaphorically this condition, the most visible sign of man's incompleteness, which condemns him to find within these boundaries the meaning of his own existence and endurance:

> Which god moves now my thoughts,
> That I should love him, who has killed my husband?
> But unhappy me, I love my destroyer,
> Or perhaps Deliman hates me, too.
>
> Perhaps he hates me because I was Rushtan's partner,
> And I love him, because he freed me
> By his noble hand. Ah, Deliman, my heart!
> I, too, was bored by pagan Rushtan. (XII, 26–27)[31]

For the length of an entire canto, Zrínyi bestows upon a Turkish location the atmosphere, so rich in lyricism and sensuality of the episodes of Tasso's

[30] "Azt mondják: Delimán, mikor országokat/ Járt vólna látásért hires városokat,/ Galatában megláta az szép Cumillát,/ Cumillát az szépet, Szulimán leányát.// Cumilla szép haja megkötözé szüvét/ Ifiu Delimánnak, és minden kedvét,/ Egy tekéntet vévé el minden erejét/ Ugy, hogy nála nélkül nem kivánja éltét."

[31] "Mely isten forgatja most az én elmémet,/ Hogy azt szeressem, ki megölte férjemet?/ De boldogtalan én, szeretem vesztőmet;/ Avagy szintén Delimán gyülöl engemet.// Talán azért gyülöl, Rustán társa voltam,/ S én azért szeretem, hogy szabadittattam/ Vitéz keze által. Ah, szüvem Delimán!/ Előttem is unalmas volt pogány Rustán."

Jerusalem Delivered, in which love triumphs in all its varied phenomenology. And the thoughts and anxieties are relived, reconstructed and reinterpreted more amply in terms of solitude, regarded as the most eloquent representation of human condition. And solitude is always meant to be overcome only fleetingly, briefly, apparently, even where the encounter and the embrace are poetically fully realized, in quite a new way in the history of Hungarian literature:

> What shall I say about their union:
> Romantic youth's many romances?
> They redouble their kisses around each others' mouths,
> Their hearts rejoice over Venus's victory parade.
>
> As ivy enwraps a tree
> As a snake winds about a pillar,
> As Bacchus's vine leans on a post,
> In so many ways did the two phoenixes, entangled, sway. (XII, 50–51)[32]

The finitude of man consists precisely in a sort of inevitable sentencing to the condition of isolation, incommunicability, of defective dialogue. Perhaps it is not accidental that Zrínyi's Turkish characters are always so proficient in acting out the role's human dimension, so strongly marked by its flawed nature. The zrínyian discourse on love is completely different from the manners of the Petrarchan mould, which were so successful in Hungary through the poetry of Bálint Balassi (1554–1594). The spiritual sense of the so-called torments of love is replaced by a very sensual connotation, more suited to the crass humanity of the characters belonging to the Turkish world. Hence the insistence on the *bujdosó* motif (the lonely, roaming warrior), which aims to highlight the hopelessly insane nature of human feelings and the robust use of a rhetorical-stylistic device, enhances the poetic quality of the motif. As the asyndeton in XII, 42 serves to create a concentrated expression of sentimental impulses requiring the space of discourse and the time of the acoustic reception. Or in XII, 46 alliteration and antithesis show the complexity of Zrínyi's composition. As if to demonstrate once again that canto XII as a whole is the essentially lyrical part of the poem, disrupting not only the epic narrative, but also the dominance of the previously dominant, traditional formulaic style.

[32] "Mit mondjak ezeknek öszvejüvésérűl,/ Szerelmes ifiaknak sok szerelmérül?/ Duplázzák csókokat egymás szája körül,/ Venus triumfusán kedves szüvök örül.// Mint borostyán fával öszvekapcsolódik,/ Mint kigyó oszlopra reá tekereszik,/ Bachus levele is fára támaszkodik,/ Ennyi mód két phoenix öszvecsingolódik."

Warfare

Zrínyi's criticism of the severely disorganized Hungarian military asserts explicitly that the Hungarians must learn from the Turks. In fact, *The Siege of Sziget* is also a small treatise in verse on the art of war.[33] Numerous descriptive parts focus on so many details that they allow us to enjoy the charm of Zrínyi's military culture. The historical memory of the battle of 1566 is also a reminder of questions of warfare and shows the way to eliminate or at least reduce inefficiency and ostentation on the Hungarian side. Hence the insistence on the huge military competence of the Turks and the ideal dimensions of the figure of Suleiman:

On the tenth day of St. Iván's season
Suleiman departed from Constantinople
With that tremendous army: waters draining,
Great mountains leveling, cities destroying.

A black Saracen horse was beneath him,
But one could not draw a finer one on canvas;
You would not think that his slim feet ever touch the earth,
So beautifully does he smoothly and silently trot.

His great bloody eyes bulge,
His sleek head is topped with a well-placed tuft,
Out his nostrils fiery breezes blow,
His mouth spews foam, as like an ocean god's.

He bows his head under his high-arching neck,
The wind blows his short, shaggy mane,
With his wide chest, an elephant he resembles,
In claws, sleek sinews, a buck he surpasses.

Gracefully, quietly under the emperor he trod,
But should another have wanted to touch him –
Like a swift falcon, when alighting on wings,
Or like a fleet squirrel jumping from tree to tree.

On the saddle, dignified, the emperor sat,
A thin white cloth on his head,
Two sheaves of heron feathers line the width of his cap,
His beard is sheer white, his appearance is pale.

His fine golden tunic hangs from his shoulders,
His dolman is of the same material,
A mighty Misrian sword hangs down his side,
Which Sultan Musa won from the Greek emperor.

[33] Cf. Perjés 2002, 146–174; 164.

With terrible majesty he glances to either side,
One could easily tell that he carries weighty thoughts;
These carry in his heart flame and sword,
These are a great threat to the Christian world. (II, 31–38)[34]

Anaphoras in the last two verses and alliterations focused on the fricative sound "v" in the Hungarian original, underlines the measured solemnity of the advance, as a challenge to time's inexorable passing. Suleiman seems to be the absolute master of time, he is in no hurry whatsoever, since the destiny of Sziget is already sealed. This exceptional, smart and ruthless genius is here represented in strong colours. In a perfect backdrop for interaction of "pictura" and "poïesis," the epical writing manages to surpass the boundaries of Hungarian nationalism in order to serve historical truth. Art and political thought are needed to encourage the Hungarians to imitate the exemplary model of the Turks. Zrínyi creates a gallery of portraits, articulating his osmanology, but in an unusual way, avoiding the trite and useless topical prejudices: he goes straight to the heart of the matter. Whenever he speaks of the Turks, passion does not hinder his intent of objectivity. Suleiman thus becomes his hero too[35], not relegated at a mythical distance, but evoked as participating in historic events shared by an entire geo-political area.

It is difficult to say whether Zrínyi, in the description of Suleiman, had a certain picture in mind. It is also hard to say whether he knew the Turkish miniatures depicting the Sultan in the Battle of Mohács (1526). He might, possibly, have recalled the dynamism of other knights in battle, because the Turkish portraiture offers a very static, almost hieratic, scene:

[34] "Szent Iván havának tizedik napián/ Konstantinápolybul megindúlt Szulimán,/ Aval az sok haddal vizeket szárasztván,/ Nagy hegyeket bontván, városokat rontván.// Egy fekete szerecsen ló volt alatta,/ De képiró falra szebbet nem irhatna;/ Nem vélnéd, hogy éri földet száraz lába,/ Oly szépen egyeránt s halkal változtatja.// Véres nagy szemei ugyan kidültenek,/ Szaráz fejecskéjén van helye üstöknek,/ Az orra likjain lángos szellők mennek,/ Szája tajtékot vér, mint vizi istennek.// Magassan költ nyakán fejét alá hajtja,/ Szálos rövid serényét szél hajtogatja,/ Széles mellyel elefántot hasomlitja,/ Körmmel, száraz innal szarvast mekhaladja.// Jamburúl csendeszen császár alatt jára,/ De hogyha az ember fogdosni akará,/ Mint az sebes sólyom, mikor kél szárnyára,/ Vagy ha könyü evét ugrik fárul fára.// Ül vala merevén nagy császár nyeregben,/ Féjer vékony patyolat vagyon fejében,/ Két csoport kócsagtoll alá áll széltében,/ Szakálla merő ősz, halvány személyében.// Szép arany hazdia függ alá vállárol,/ Az dolmánnya is szintén ollyan kaftánbol,/ Kemény misziri kard függ le óldalárol,/ Mellyet szultán Musa nyert görög császártol.// Szörnyü méltósággal kétfelé tekinget,/ Könnyen esmerhetni, hogy nagy gondja lehet;/ Ez viszen nagy szüvében lángot és fegyvert,/ Ez keresztény világnak nagy veszedelmet."

[35] On the representation of Suleiman in Zrínyi, cf.: Klaniczay 1973, 347.

I must write the truth, listen to me now:
Though Sultan Suleiman was our enemy,
Only his faith being pagan aside,
Perhaps never was there such a lord amongst the Turks.

Even aside from that, I can confidently say,
Amongst pagans there never was upon this earth
A man so honorable and wise, who in so many wars
Was victorious, and over many nations. (II, 44–45)[36]

"I must write the truth": this statement is explained by the fact that *The Siege of Sziget* also intends to be a military report, a traditional *tudósító ének*[37] ("rhymed chronicle which served as broadsheets to his contemporaries"[38]), enriched by the baroque vision and transformed into an epic. In this hemistich there is not only the profession of serious concern for historical truth, but also concern for the military backwardness of the Hungarian, who, in fact, in the political-military scenario of the seventeenth century, may not be up to the challenge of history, cannot counter the Turk, especially because of his being "disciplinatus."[39] Everywhere in the poem there is a clear acknowledgment by Zrínyi of the quality of the Turks, but, actually a selective appraisal, restricting, within the Turkish army, the knowledge of military strategy specifically to Suleiman and the *kajmekán* [governor]:

For they cower, for they have no general.
Lost are their wise men, and their captain;
The emperor and the *kajmekan*, only these are strategists,
Deliman, Demirham are daring fools. (XIII, 95)[40]

The World of the Turks

In the works of Zrínyi, the Turk, really, is not only an embattled enemy. Why, indeed, endow the Turks the positive solution of the three most important issues: luck, military art, and love? It seems that the dream world is the province of the Turks, where fantasies come true, as well as desires unattainable by common man, where the dimension of the impossible, of the arcane and inexplicable meet and vanish. In this fashion Zrínyi too has his

[36] "Igazat kell irnom, halljátok meg mastan,/ Noha ellenségünk volt szultán Szulimán,/ Csak aztot kivészem, hogy hiti volt pogán,/ Soha nem volt ily ur törökök közt talán.// De talán nelkül is bátran azt mondhatom,/ Pogányok közt soha nem volt ez földháton/ Illyen vitéz és bölcs, ki ennyi harcokon/ Lett volna győzödelmes, és sok országon."

[37] This opinion of mine is confirmed by Nemeskürty 1975, 364.

[38] Bertényi 1999, 126.

[39] Zrínyi 2003, 419.

[40] "Mert félnek, mert nincsen sem generálisok,/ Elveszett, ki mit tudott, itt kapitányjok;/ Császár és Kajmekán, csak azok hadtudók,/ Delimán, Demirhám vakmerő bolondok."

share in the idea that life is a dream. In his poetry he shows the impalpable tension of the unattainable, that bittersweet mixture expressing the real (in)consistency of human action, the happy unhappiness only on offer and yieldable through the suspension in the oneiric limbo. The dream as a refuge, then, as a sphere of expectation, opening from time to time for access to a place removed from daily life's realities. With the Turks, there can never be friendship, but this forced choice of side does not preclude the envy of what is positive on their side, what they have that is denied to the Hungarians by history and destiny. The Turks represent a loved and hated counter-world, unknown and desired, unreal, yet there. In a sense they represent the Dionysian element envied and feared by the Apollonian element, which sustains but also restrains and represses the Hungarian and Christian side.

Zrínyi's intent is to strike a reasonable balance, which is not always appealing nor is it always satisfactory: the interdependence of good and evil – here evident at the epistemological as well as the existential level – is demonstrated by the reasoning of the mind and the instinctive impulses. And it is the result of the attention payed by Zrínyi less to the Hungarians than to the Turks. He also locates the sphere of love in the Turkish counter-world, in which he unfolds a phenomenally vivid, although materially inconsistent, perception of a fragile and precarious satisfaction of the senses.

The precise and accurate description of the interiors and of the habits of the Turks (III, 28–30) originates, perhaps, not solely from the wish and the need to give the poem a local colour. We may also say, that the Turkish otherness is elected to do the "dirty work", i.e. to give voice to all the claims, that could not otherwise have been expressed openly, and all those beliefs, he could not have sincerely admitted. In the poem it is also the Turks who state a negative opinion of the Habsburgs, not without a good measure of satisfaction on the part of the author.

> Nowhere does he have ready troops, and he does not even think,
> Like a madman, that he may sometime need them.
> And Maximilian lives among the Magyars
> Tranquilly, only eating and drinking. (I, 64)[41]

Zrínyi did not like the Turks, but neither did he like the way, the Habsburgs managed the political situation in the region. What then? It was necessary to substitute them by rebuilding a strong Hungarian monarchy modelled on Matthias Corvinus' kingdom. In this new state there could and should be room for religious tolerance, not necessarily limited to Christian denominations, but including a cultural dialogue with Islam. The latter had,

[41] "Nincs sohul kész hada, s nem is gondolkodik,/ Mint bolond, hogy valaha talán kelletik./ Ám Maximilian magyarok közt lakik/ Gondviseletlenül, csak észik és iszik."

in fact, already taken root in many areas of Hungary's *hódoltság* (Turkish Occupation), already peopled by "mixed" Hungarians, who were thus involved in this dialogue and were, by then, the product of it. Zrínyi is a political realist. He knows that his political projects will have to take off in an already established situation. The future does not belong to him; it will be built starting from the birth of the new kingdom of Hungary. Perhaps Zrínyi had to discriminate between the Ottoman Empire and Turkified Hungary.

III: Political Project and European Horizon

What we have observed, so far, in *The Siege of Sziget* is also present in military treaties. In *Vitéz hadnagy* (*The Virtuous Captain,*1650–1653) Suleiman is an example for the Hungarian soldiers.[42] In *Az török afium ellen való orvosság* (*An Antidote to the Turkish Opium*, 1660–1661) Suleiman is synonymous with military discipline.[43] But we must also remember that the treatise includes lengthy discussions of the fundamental skills highlighted in the heroic poem, for example, the *okos rendtartás* (III, 51: smart formation) granted to Zrínyi, which is also called *jó rendtartás* (VI, 57: good order; precise military order) attributed to the Turks and/or Suleiman. Equally indicative of Zrínyi's thought are the epithets applied to Suleiman, who is not only generically "great" (*nagy*: I, 2, IV, 53, IV, 77, XV, 100, XV, 67), "world-wrecking" (*világrontó*: VIII, 20), "enraged" (*haragos*: XI, 15), "powerful" and "mighty" (*hatalmas*: V, 6; VIII, 23, 81, 87), but also and especially "diligent" (*szorgalmatos*: II, 52) and "wise" (*okos*: IV, 103; XII, 65).

But Zrínyi's political project necessarily also implies issues of religious peace. He is a link between Reformation and Counter Reformation, aiming at re-establishing a realm modelled on Matthias Corvinus' kingdom, but itemizing the entire ideological apparatus that sprang from the so-called *bűnlajstrom*, that is, the record of the alleged evils of the Hungarian nation, which entailed the necessity of a moral catharsis of an entire people and the moral redemption of an entire historical epoque. Thus, we think that Zrínyi – as a strong supporter of the re-founding of the Hungarian kingdom following the Corvinian model, perhaps combined with the most recent and successful ideas of French absolutism – found the Hunyadian moderation in confessional matters agreeable. The cultural interaction between Hungary and the rest of Europe would become so much more efficient and profitable: if the Hungarian political vision fed on contemporary European acquisitions, a particular interest towards ideas and events from the Balkan-Danubian area was similarly manifest at the European level. The Turks no longer posed a

[42] Zrínyi 2003, 331.
[43] Zrínyi 2003, 412.

real threat, but the constant reference to their domination was instrumental to the experience of hitherto unthought-of aggregating possibilities. Zrínyi's political project – modelled on the reign of Matthias Corvinus and the Transylvanian principality of Gábor Bethlen – was so unambiguous that it became fatal to him: his thinly veiled aversion to the increasingly pervasive interference of the Habsburgs did not engender the desired effects, although it managed to elevate the Hungarian nation to rank among the most important countries in Europe.

Zrínyi was in fact also a particularly well-informed *maître à penser*. Rummaging around his rightly famous library holds a good many surprises in store. But to our author historical information and painstakingly accurate corroboration is never a passive element of sheer erudite quotation, as his treatises demonstrate. In particular *Vitéz hadnagy*, where he manipulates freely and with great nonchalance some important sources, and *Az török afium ellen való orvosság*, where the concepts of *szorgalmatosság* (zeal, diligence, care) and *disciplina militaris* are of great consequence, precisely those qualities that are lacking to the Hungarians, and which the Turks to the contrary possess in abundance.

In *The Siege of Sziget*, the poet's ancestor, Zrínyi, and Suleiman embody the values of the ideal warrior: "Therefore the "epic" hero is in contrast to the "romance" hero, and the warrior to the knight."[44] Yet there might also be something else, since Zrínyi opposes order to disorder, and sets the good *condottiere* against the armed fighter, the latter in lack of a tactical vision of the battle as well as a strategic view of the war. This ideological system, although typically Hungarian, corresponding to the needs of the historical and political situation of Hungary, was also valid in a wider European context and certainly was in tune with Pope Urban VIII, who was by the way also a poet. Urban considered the poetical conception of *Jerusalem Delivered* to be useful for really cogent aims: to inspire and theorize imitations of Tasso with a view of proposing anew in all of its actuality concrete warfare against the Turk. It was basically about a transformation of the matrix of Tasso's *inventio poetica* into the factuality of a real struggle against the Turk, by means of a truly, and finally, committed literature. In other words, art was to serve the moral regeneration of modern man: indeed, it had to become the foundation of modernity.

[44] Jossa 2002, 139.

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Turks and Other Germans in the Work of Daniel Casper von Lohenstein

By Todd Kontje

With a view of the background of his role as public administrator in the complex geopolitical situation of Silesia a number of works by Lohenstein (1635–1683) directly or indirectly relate to the Turkish theme, simultaneously treating themes of relevance to the author's own context. His drama Ibrahim Sultan about a monstrous Oriental despot thematizes relations between autocratic power and the role of court and bureaucracy as advice and restraint. Although events in Lohenstein's last work, the huge novel Grossmütiger Feldherr Arminius oder Herrmann, *take place in Germanic and Roman antiquity and have a nationalistic theme related to the socalled Hermann-Schlacht, it is also an indirect reflection of Lohenstein's attitude to the Turks, a depiction of modern Turkey in the guise of ancient Rome.*

This essay examines the image of Turks in the work of Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683), a seventeenth-century German author who lived at a time when the Ottoman Empire was at the zenith of its power. I begin with a brief overview of his life in historical-political context, turn next to his two dramas set in Turkish courts, and conclude with a look at his historical novel. I will argue that while Lohenstein portrays certain corrupt Turks as stereotypically decadent Oriental despots, he also leaves room for a more tolerant view of the foreign culture and a critical view of his own.

Lohenstein's Breslau in Geopolitical Context

Daniel Casper was born in the Silesian town of Nimptsch in 1635, but attended school and spent his adult life in the capital city of Breslau, today's Wrocław in eastern Poland.[1] His father was granted a hereditary title of nobility in 1670, and thus the writer became known to his contemporaries and posterity as Daniel Casper (or Caspar) von Lohenstein.[2] He studied law at the

[1] For an overview of Lohenstein's life and work see Asmuth 1971; Spellerberg 1984; and Browning 1996.

[2] Casper was the German family name that was Latinized to Caspari; the patent of nobility was granted Lohenstein's father just weeks after his son was elected to a high administrative

universities of Leipzig and Tübingen, went on the obligatory European tour that included travel to the Netherlands, northern Germany, and up to the Turkish border in Hungary, before settling down as a lawyer and leading city administrator in Breslau. Lohenstein also wrote a half-dozen plays and a massive courtly novel, but unlike modern authors compelled to work for a living at jobs that impede their creative endeavors, Lohenstein does not seem to have experienced a conflict between his professional and artistic activities. Literature for Lohenstein might better be considered the continuation of politics by other means.[3]

Lohenstein lived in a complex geopolitical landscape. He was born in the midst of the Thirty Years War in a region that was particularly hard-hit; parts of Silesia suffered a population loss of up to 85%.[4] Silesia nevertheless experienced a remarkable literary "boom" during the seventeenth century, with such authors as Martin Opitz, Andreas Gryphius, Friedrich von Logau, Johannes Scheffler (Angelus Silesius), Christian Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau, and Daniel Casper von Lohenstein rising to prominence.[5] Lohenstein's literary works display the elaborate rhetorical flourishes and encyclopedic erudition that were expected and appreciated in the highly stylized court culture of the baroque, but they also contain graphic images of horrific violence that shocked later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers. The seventeenth century was the era of punishment, not discipline, as Michel Foucault reminded us, a time when public torture and gruesome executions were staged against the backdrop of a land ravaged by religious war, famine, and pestilence.[6] It would be another century before Germany would experience the cultural revival of the "Age of Goethe," and two before its first national unification and rise to become a major European military, industrial, and imperial power.

In Lohenstein's lifetime, Louis XIV's France was emerging as the dominant European power, while the Ottoman Empire threatened Europe from the southeast. When Lohenstein died in April 1683, Ottoman troops were advancing on Vienna; their defeat in that September would mark the

post in the government of Breslau, so ennoblement of the Casper family may well have been more in recognition of the son's accomplishments as a lawyer, administrator, and writer that those of his father (Asmuth 1971, 2, 12).

[3] See Béhar 1988, Lohenstein's "actes littéraires sont autant des gestes politiques" (1, 4).

[4] Barraclough 1992, 76–77, map 5.

[5] Szyrocki 1978, in *Die Welt des Daniel Casper von Lohenstein* (Kleinschmidt et al. 1978). This volume contains valuable and accessible essays on various aspects of Lohenstein's work by leading scholars in the field; see in particular Oestreich 1978.

[6] Foucault begins his work with a memorable account of the public torture and execution of "Damiens the regicide" in 1757, 1977, 3–31. Michael Kunze (1987) goes into similar graphic detail.

beginning of the end of their power within Europe, but that was after Lohenstein's time. While the macro-political setting placed Silesia between France and the Ottoman Empire, between Paris and Constantinople, the micro-political tensions within German-speaking lands stretched between Vienna and Berlin. Breslau was a predominantly Protestant, semi-independent city-state within the Holy Roman Empire, with the capital city of Vienna as the center of the Catholic Counterreformation, but Prussia was a rising Protestant power to the north. The highpoint of Lohenstein's diplomatic career took place when he was sent as an emissary to Vienna to try to dissuade Emperor Leopold from turning Breslau into a garrison city. Lohenstein succeeded in negotiations that revealed the delicate balance of power between Breslau and its neighbors, a complex political situation that would also be reflected in Lohenstein's creative work.[7]

Propaganda and Politics in Lohenstein's Turkish Tragedies

Lohenstein's first drama, *Ibrahim* or *Ibrahim Bassa*, was published in 1653, although it was written as a school exercise three years earlier, when he was only fifteen.[8] Its plot is quickly summarized: Ibrahim is an Italian Christian who has risen to prominence in Soliman's Turkish court. While Ibrahim is on an important diplomatic mission to Persia, Soliman becomes interested in Ibrahim's wife, Isabelle. Ibrahim tries to flee with her back to Italy, but is apprehended and returned to Constantinople, where he and his wife are imprisoned and condemned. At the last moment, however, Soliman changes his mind, pardons Ibrahim, and renounces his desires for Isabelle. But Soliman's wife, Roxelane, and his advisor, Rustahn, convince him that defiance of the sultan must not go unpunished. Soliman objects that he had promised Ibrahim that he would be safe as long as he (Soliman) remained alive; to execute him now would be to go back on his word. The Turkish courtiers solve the problem by convincing Soliman that sleep is a kind of death, and that the execution can therefore be carried out with no loss of honor while the sultan slumbers. Thus Ibrahim is executed after all. A distraught Isabelle at first considers suicide, but decides instead to go abroad to spread the news of Turkish perfidy.

[7] Jane O. Newman (2000) is particularly good at situating Lohenstein's literary works in his local and international political context.

[8] *Ibrahim* was Lohenstein's original title; the posthumous reprint of 1689 added "Bassa" (Pasha) to distinguish it from Lohenstein's later drama, *Ibrahim Sultan* (Asmuth 1971, 24). For the sake of clarity, I will follow tradition and refer to Lohenstein's first drama as *Ibrahim Bassa*. Béhar offers a detailed account of the work's composition history (1988, 1, 32–40).

Taken at face value, *Ibrahim Bassa* is a work of anti-Turkish propaganda, written by a precocious schoolboy at a time of rising Ottoman power.[9] Lohenstein dedicated the play to members of the Silesian nobility, and, in an addendum marked by a typically baroque combination of servile self-deprecation and obsequious praise of his superiors, Lohenstein extols Ibrahim's upright character and declares that the shameful practices of the Turkish court will be banished from Silesia.[10] Lohenstein underscores his anti-Turkish polemic by beginning the play with an allegorical representation of Asia, wrapped in chains by vices and condemned to death. "Woe is me!" cries Asia: "I was once the queen of the world, Europe and Africa bowed down to me, but now I am entirely corrupt".[11]

A closer look at *Ibrahim Bassa* reveals somewhat more nuance in this admittedly heavy-handed condemnation of the Turks. Soliman is not so much evil as a weak and vacillating ruler controlled by a domineering wife and corrupt advisors. In his addendum to the drama, Lohenstein describes Soliman as "a virtuous prince who is nevertheless overwhelmed by the two strongest emotions" (lust and jealousy?) ("einen Tugendhafften/ doch von den zwey schärffsten Gemüths-Regungen übermeisterten Fürsten").[12] Although his advisors tell Soliman that by Islamic law any Muslim who aids a Christian must be condemned, the actual practice at Soliman's court must be different, for how else could Ibrahim have risen to the position of an ambassador entrusted with an important mission to the Persian court? In the brief interlude between the pardon and the final execution, Ibrahim and Soliman share a peaceful stroll in the late afternoon sun; shortly thereafter, Soliman sings Ibrahim's praises to his wife, suggesting that respect, friendship, and even mutual admiration are possible between Christian and Muslim. True, the reconciliation proves deceptive, but we are left with the impression that if Soliman had not been undone by lust and evil advisors, the friendship and political alliance with Ibrahim might have continued indefinitely.

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[9] Klaus Günther Just reads both of Lohenstein's "Turkish tragedies" as anti-Turkish propaganda. "Lohenstein und die türkische Welt," in Lohenstein 1953, xxxvii–xlvii.

[10] Lohenstein 1953 (*Türkische Trauerspiele. Ibrahim Bassa. Ibrahim Sultan*. Ed. Klaus Günther Just), 81. Just also edited Lohenstein's *Römische Trauerspiele. Agrippina. Epicharis* (Lohenstein 1955) and his *Afrikanische Trauerspiele. Cleopatra. Sophonisbe* (Lohenstein 1957). In 2005, de Gruyter began publishing a multi-volume critical edition of Lohenstein's *Sämtliche Werke*. As this edition is not scheduled to be completed until 2020, I quote Lohenstein's dramas from Just's earlier editions. Lohenstein's complete works are also now available free of cost online at zeno.org.

[11] *Ibrahim Bassa*, in Lohenstein 1953, 16–19.

[12] Ibid., 81.

Twenty years later Lohenstein transformed the weak and vacillating Turkish sultan into a monstrous Oriental despot. *Ibrahim Sultan* (1673) features a sex-crazed monarch whose unchecked desires spell disaster for his realm. One of the courtiers recalls with disdain that Ibrahim ascended the throne "with his neck adorned with pearls, his body with diamonds, his fingers with golden nail polish, and eagerly trying in many ways to be a woman" ("Mit Perlen schmückt den Halß/ mit Diamant den Leib/ Die Nägel gulden färbt/ und auf viel Arth ein Weib Sich emsiget zu seyn").[13] Ibrahim's cross-dressing is symptomatic of his general willingness to subvert the natural order of things. In the course of the play he will imprison his own mother, threaten her with death, and even kill one of his sons on stage. The play begins with Ibrahim attempting to rape his brother's widow, who defends herself with a dagger in a melodramatic scene of the sort that recurs throughout Lohenstein's oeuvre.[14] Although we later discover that Ibrahim already has two wives and five sons, we also learn that this "lascivious stallion" ("der geile Hengst")[15] spends most of the time in his harem, which is luxuriously appointed with fur rugs, decorated with pornographic art, and well stocked with voluptuous odalisques. All is forgotten when Ibrahim sees a picture of the mufti's attractive fourteen-year-old daughter Ambre, however. Her father is not opposed on principle to the honor of his daughter becoming one of the sultan's wives, but she refuses. Undeterred, Ibrahim orders his loyal servant Achmed to throw her into bed "split-naked" (*fingernackt*).[16] After he rapes her, Ibrahim exposes Ambre to public shame, whereupon she commits suicide.

As in the case of *Ibrahim Bassa*, *Ibrahim Sultan* can be read as anti-Turkish propaganda. The specific occasion for the completion of the drama was the marriage of the Austrian Emperor Leopold to Archduchess Claudia Felicitas in 1673.[17] This marriage took place against the backdrop of a rising threat to the Austrian Empire from the east. In 1663, the year in which Lohenstein drafted the first version of this drama, Silesia was under attack

[13] *Ibrahim Sultan*, Act IV, lines 29–31, Lohenstein 1953, 177.

[14] Lohenstein's penchant for graphic violence and explicit sexuality made his works seem shocking to nineteenth-century readers, but the raw emotions of his "baroque maximalism" (Browning 1996, 272) might prove fertile ground for today's interest in melodrama and affect in literature. See Meyer-Kalkus 1986.

[15] *Ibrahim Sultan*, Act II, line 75, Lohenstein 1953, 138. Ambre protests against the notion that her "pure crystal … should be a vessel into which the lascivious stallion should spurt his filthy scum" (Chrystall … rein … Darein der geile Hengst den Schaum der Unzucht spritze). Asmuth notes that more than one critic has raised an eyebrow at Ambre's precocious "knowledge of sexual details" (1971, 41).

[16] *Ibrahim Sultan*, Act III, line 507, Lohenstein 1953, 172.

[17] Béhar 1988, 1, 67.

from Turkish armies and refugees from afflicted areas sought shelter in the city of Breslau.[18] Within a decade of the drama's completion, Vienna would be besieged for the second time by the armies of the Ottoman Empire. As Lohenstein writes in his dedication, the play is about "the eclipse of an Ottoman moon" ("Verfinsterung eines Oßmannischen Mohnden") by the Austrian sun.[19] In the prolog to the play, an allegory of the Bosphorus laments the corruption of the Turkish court and decides to marry the Danube as a way of declaring loyalty to the virtuous Austrian royal pair. Lohenstein's drama thus presents the Ottoman court as the negative counterpart to Austrian splendor, contrasting its sexual debauchery and moral turpitude to the marital fidelity and just rule of the Holy Roman Emperor and his new wife.

Here again, however, Lohenstein complicates the overt message of his political drama. As Jane O. Newman has argued, "Lohenstein's political analysis reveals more similarities than differences between the Turks and the Europeans at the time, especially as concerns the mechanics of power at the court."[20] *Ibrahim Sultan* also suggests a more nuanced appreciation of the virtues as well as the vices of Islamic politics. A typical martyr drama of the period would represent a virtuous Christian victim persecuted by infidels.[21] Andreas Gryphius's *Catharina von Georgien* (1657), for instance, portrays the Christian queen of Georgia imprisoned by the Persians. The Shah presents her with an ultimatum: marry me or die! Catherine gladly chooses death by slow torture, scorning the pleasures of this world for the comfort of eternal salvation. Lohenstein's first drama follows a similar pattern, as the Muslim Soliman lusts after Ibrahim's Christian wife Isabelle, but Lohenstein seems more interested in the psychology of political power than in the glorification of religious martyrdom. *Ibrahim Sultan* removes questions of religious difference entirely, as the political crisis unfolds within an all-Muslim court. Thus the Islamic religion per se is not to blame, but rather the depravity of one bad ruler.[22] Act II opens with the innocent Ambre praying fervently to Mohammed and promising to make a pilgrimage to Mecca if only she can be spared from being besmirched by the sultan's filthy desires. After her rape and suicide, Ibrahim is deposed from his position of authority on the grounds that he has violated both civic and religious law: "He who does not accept the Divan's laws is no longer a sultan, and indeed, no longer a Muslim" ("Wer

[18] Ib., 1, 49–50.

[19] *Ibrahim Sultan*, Lohenstein 1953, 102.

[20] Newman 1995, 349. Gillespie also argues that Lohenstein's Turkish dramas serve "a double function": condemnation of an evil Orient that "also offered convenient foreign dress in which to parade the manners of one's own age." (1965, 29).

[21] Szarota contrasts Lohenstein's secular tragedies to the religious dramas of his contemporary playwrights: 1967, 306–313, 329–340.

[22] Newman, 1995, 349.

das Gesätz und Recht des Divans nicht nimmt an/ Der ist kein Sultan mehr/ ja auch kein Musulman").[23]

Just as religion takes a back seat to politics in Lohenstein's drama in a way that differs from the work of his contemporaries, social class distinctions are less important than they will be in the bourgeois tragedies of the late eighteenth century. Ibrahim prefigures such characters as Samuel Richardson's Lovelace, Goethe's Faust, and Mozart's Don Giovanni, but his victim is not a young woman who embodies the virtues of her social class.[24] There are to be sure gradations of power within Ibrahim's court; to be chosen as a potential wife for the sultan would normally be a step up for the daughter of a mufti, if only this particular sultan were not so debased. But there is a vast gap between the intrigues and power struggles at court and the faceless mob or "Pöfel" (*Pöbel*) that seethes outside the palace walls. Lohenstein gives frequent reminders that a bad ruler threatens the stability of the state, but the suggestion that we find already in Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), "that the *Governments* of the World … were made by *the Consent of the People*", would have been alien to the Silesian aristocrat.[25] Lohenstein's focus in *Ibrahim Sultan* is on personal corruption as a threat to political authority, and on what must be done to restore the proper exercise of power in the state. He highlights the wise council of court officials that tempers the sultan's tyranny. In doing so, he transposes the political dynamics of the Austrian Empire to the Ottoman court, for Lohenstein and other members of his social class sought to exert similar influence on royal authority. One might even argue that the condemnation of the corrupt Turkish ruler in *Ibrahim Sultan* by his top advisors served as a covert warning or even a veiled threat to the Austrian emperor not to abuse his power, even as it offered an overtly flattering contrast between the two courts.

Two questions that are of particular importance within the dynamics of the play would have resonated in European courts as well: can women occupy positions of political power? And are subordinates who carry out the commands of despotic rulers morally responsible for what they do? Whereas Ambre is an innocent victim who gets relatively few lines in the play, Ibrahim's mother Kiosem plays a much larger role. She tries to prevent Ibrahim from raping his brother's widow in the opening scene and is thrown into prison by her own son as a result. Much of the subsequent strategizing on the part of those who want to remove Ibrahim from power centers on their need to enlist Kiosem in the campaign against her son. She eventually agrees to join their cause, on the condition that Ibrahim be imprisoned rather than

[23] *Ibrahim Sultan*, Act V, lines 573–574, Lohenstein 1953, 208.
[24] On the eighteenth-century theme of "seduced innocence" see Petriconi 1953.
[25] Locke 1988, 336.

executed. Kiosem's active role in Turkish politics reflects a situation that regularly confronted Lohenstein's European contemporaries. The last male heir to the Silesian Piast dynasty died in 1675, [26] for instance, raising questions about the legitimacy about of female rule in central Europe of the sort that had already troubled Elizabeth's reign in England in the previous century. Lohenstein's dramas engage this issue by repeatedly portraying powerful women in positions of political authority. Here again his work differs sharply from eighteenth-century bourgeois norms, which equated female domesticity with virtue and any form of public life for women – be it on stage, in politics, or as a prostitute – with aristocratic vice.[27] For Lohenstein, female rule may be problematic, but it is not out of the question; what ultimately matters is not a ruler's sex, but his or her character and ability. In fact, one might argue that the female figures in Lohenstein's oeuvre best exemplify the virtues required to intervene in conflicts at court. Characters such as Cleopatra and Sophonisbe use their physical charms to further their political goals. Their strength of character is exemplified by their ability to control their emotions, subordinating personal desires to political strategy.

The question of moral responsibility for carrying out immoral commands in *Ibrahim Sultan* centers on the character of Achmet, who aids and abets the sultan's rape of Ambre. When confronted in the final act, Achmet is defiant:

> was ist des Achmets groß Verbrechen? [...]
> Ich leugn ihr Freunde nicht:
> Daß ich des Mufti Kind gewaltsam weg hieß holen.
> Doch! wen entschuldigt nicht? Der Sultan hats befohlen.
> Steht Fürstlichen Befehl zu weigern/ Knechten frey?
> Zu grübeln: Ob sein Thun recht/ oder unrecht sey.[28]
>
> What is Achmed's great crime? My friends, I don't deny that I had the mufti's child taken by force. But who would not excuse [what I did]? The Sultan commanded it. Is it up to subordinates to resist a royal order? To worry about whether or not the deed is just?.

Modern German history is notorious for its stories of those who argued that they were "just following orders" while perpetrating crimes against humanity, but the question of where obedience to authority ends and individual responsibility begins is not unique to Nazi Germany. Although Achmet is summarily executed by unsympathetic enemies of the sultan, his defense of

[26] Spellerberg 19884, 648. See Newman 1995 on Kiosem's important role in *Ibrahim Sultan*.

[27] Landes 1988.

[28] *Ibrahim Sultan*, Act V, lines 379, 386–390, Lohenstein 1953, 203.

his actions raises a question that would have resonated just as much in Lohenstein's society as it did in the realm of the Oriental court.[29]

Germans, Romans, and "Turks" in Lohenstein's *Arminius*

Lohenstein spent the final decade of his life working on the novel *Großmüthiger Feldherr Arminius oder Herrmann* (Magnanimous General Arminius or Herrmann, 1689/90). He had completed all but the final chapter of the novel when he died in 1683; his brother and a pastor from Leipzig completed the work and published it a few years later.[30] The novel is huge, stretching to over 3,000 double-columned pages. In a nutshell, it tells the story of the Germanic struggle against the ancient Romans, beginning with the victory of Herrmann or Arminius over the Roman general Varus in 9 CE.[31] As is typical for the baroque genre of the heroic or courtly novel, the convoluted plot features romance as well as war among the ruling elite, with episodes sprawling across the ancient world from Europe to the Middle East, and on to northern Africa, India, and China.[32] Action scenes alternate with seemingly endless discussions in which characters digress with encyclopedic thoroughness on any topic that comes to mind. What to the modern reader may seem superfluous nevertheless serves a purpose, for Lohenstein's *Arminius* is an encyclopedic "mirror of princes" (*Fürstenspiegel*) set in the form of dialog and debate. For this reason the novel that seems so alien to modern taste made a powerful impression on its contemporary readers,[33] although the percentage of those in Lohenstein's society with the literacy and leisure to engage with his enormous work was quite small. Only in the course of the eighteenth century, as the aesthetics of genius began to replace the rhetorical flourishes and ostentatious erudition of the baroque novel, did Lohenstein's *Arminius* fall into disfavor. Ironically, the author who had devoted himself to the most "German" of themes, Herrmann's victory over the Romans, was denounced as the practitioner of a style at odds with the German national character.

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[29] In the context of his discussion of Lohenstein's *Cleopatra*, Spellerberg (1984, 655) notes that the play engages questions raised by Machiavelli's radical ideas: "ob überhaupt und in welchem Maße politisches Handeln gegenüber den Normen einer religiös fundierten Ethik Autonomie und Eigenwertigkeit beanspruchen könne" (if at all and to what extent political actions can claim autonomy and independence over the norms of a religiously based ethics). *Ibrahim Sultan* transposes the same sort of question into a fictional Turkish court.

[30] For a brief overview of the novel's composition and content, see Asmuth 1971, 62–68.

[31] The more common spelling of the name in German today is Hermann, but I will follow Lohenstein's practice and refer to him as Herrmann. Lohenstein's primary source was Tacitus's *Annals*.

[32] Alewyn (1963) offers a useful overview of the two major forms of the baroque novel, the picaresque and the heroic or courtly novel.

[33] Borgstedt 2008, 155.

Arminius is nevertheless an important document of what might be termed baroque nationalism and an indirect reflection of Lohenstein's image of the Turk. As Simon Schama observes, the beginnings of German nationalist sentiment can be traced back to the fifteenth-century rediscovery of Tacitus' *Germania*.[34] During the early modern period, German humanists envisioned their Germanic forebears as noble savages, set against the decadence of ancient Rome and modern Italy. In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Arminius would become one of Germany's national heroes in such works as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's patriotic drama, *Hermanns Schlacht* (1769) and Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Hermannsschlacht* (1808), a violent drama of anti-Napoleonic nationalism. In 1875 the Germanic hero was immortalized in a monumental statue that still looms above the presumed ancient battlefield in the Teutoburg Forest outside the town of Detmold. Such dramas and monuments contributed to what George Mosse terms the "nationalization of the masses" as Germany moved toward political unification,[35] but in the seventeenth century, the unified nation-state of modern Germany lay far in the future.

What, then, did it mean to write of idealized Germanic heroes at that time? As suggested earlier, the erudite courtiers engaged in extensive debates about an encyclopedic range of topics in Lohenstein's *Arminius* are far removed from the robust primitives depicted in Tacitus's *Germania*. But how exactly are we to understand the relation of these fictional figures to their contemporary political context? In an early study of Lohenstein's *Arminius*, Elida Maria Szarota argued that the novel is another tribute to the Austrian Emperor Leopold as the modern incarnation of the ancient hero.[36] Thomas Borgstedt cautions against a one-to-one identification of Leopold with Herrmann, however, suggesting that the novel might better be understood as the representation of an idealized Germanic type rather than the encoded glorification of a particular regime.[37] The negative counterpart to the virtuous Germans in *Arminius* are the decadent Romans, but in keeping with the multivalence of the novel, the ancient Romans can also be understood as unflattering portraits of Lohenstein's contemporary French and also the Ottoman Turks.[38]

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[34] Schama 1995, 75–134. See also Krebs 2011.

[35] Mosse 1975.

[36] Szarota 1970..

[37] Borgstedt (1992) stresses Lohenstein's position as a leading representative of Protestant Breslau and sees his praise of Leopold more as strategic *Realpolitik* than heartfelt enthusiasm.

[38] Szarota (1970, 91) sees beneath the surface depiction of the Romans in *Arminius* evidence of Lohenstein's passionate loathing of Louis XIV's France and his fear of the Ottoman Turks.

As an example of how Lohenstein created an indirect image of modern Turkey in the guise of ancient Rome, I will focus on an episode in the fourth book of the novel's first half. Approximately the last third of this book relates Herrmann's brother Flavius's adventures in Rome. Amidst descriptions of battles and military campaigns that go on for hundreds of pages, this episode can be read as a semi-independent novella reminiscent of Boccaccio in terms of its narrative setting and its fast-paced plot with a series of unexpected twists and turns.[39] Like Boccaccio, Lohenstein sets the narrative in a frame: Flavius tells his story to a group of aristocrats gathered at the German fortress of *Deutschburg* shortly after Herrmann's victory over Varus. The exciting tale has all the ingredients of a potboiler, complete with court intrigue, jealousy, battles, shipwrecks, narrow escapes, and of course, true love.

In Rome, the German Flavius is a close companion of Caesar Augustus's two grandchildren, Lucius and Cajus. At the age of only thirteen, Lucius develops "a strong tendency toward lasciviousness" ("eine hefftige Neigung der Geilheit") (451)[40] that is indulged and encouraged by the debauched pseudo-philosopher Aristippus, who, like his older Greek namesake, advocates a life of sensual pleasure. Aristippus will eventually be arrested and executed for staging a mass orgy for Roman adolescents, but not before he has introduced Lucius and Cajus to the pleasures of the seraglio and awakened in Lucius a taste for black women. Thus when the African King Juba sends his sixteen-year-old daughter Dido to Rome, Lucius is inflamed with lust. But Dido falls in love with Flavius, much to Lucius's dismay. Matters come to a head in a flurry of violent action: Lucius stabs his rival in a fit of jealous rage, Dido wrenches the dagger from Flavius's wound and plunges it into Lucius, and yet another character stabs Dido with the same knife. When the authorities arrive, they find the hot-headed young lovers stretched out in a pool of blood, badly wounded, but still alive.

Flavius recovers with the aid of a British slave-doctor and sails for Africa, where he plans to rendezvous with his beloved Dido, but his journey is delayed by a shipwreck. Dido hears mistaken reports of his death and, in an effort to escape Lucius – also recovered from his wounds and as lascivious as ever – flees Rome and joins a religious cult dedicated to the goddess Diana. When she is finally reunited with Flavius (Lucius having fallen to his death

[39] Borgstedt (1992, 223) calls this episode "eine der erzählerisch reizvollsten Geschichten des Arminiusromans" (one of the most charmingly narrated stories of the *Arminius* novel). Szarota (1970, 217–222) summarizes the story in some detail and Borgstedt also devotes several pages to the episode (1992, 223–231).

[40] As there is at present no modern edition of *Arminius* in print, I will quote from the online edition with page numbers included parenthetically in the text: http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Lohenstein,+Daniel+Casper+von/Roman/Gro%C3%9Fm%C3%BCtiger+Feldherr+Arminius

while trying to storm the walls of her convent) they are unable to marry because she has taken a vow of chastity. Although Flavius insists that her vow was taken under duress and thus invalid, religious fanatics spirit Dido away to a secret location where she is forced to have ritual sex with the high priest to further bind her to the pernicious sect. When confronted by Flavius, the priest insists that he was following Diana's will, not his personal desires, that virginity is more a state of mind than a physical fact, and that in any case, he didn't enjoy the act. Flavius is not convinced by the specious arguments, and, in one of the more painful scenes of world literature, forces the priest to cut off his own penis. Flavius then writes a letter to Dido's parents saying that marriage to the deflowered woman is now out of the question. He returns to Rome, but when news of Herrmann's victory over Varus sparks anti-German riots, Flavius is forced to flee to an island where none other than Dido makes a surprise landfall, still in love with him but consigned to a life of loneliness. She gives him one of her ships in a final generous gesture and Flavius returns to his brother in Germany. Herrmann and the others thank Flavius for his tale, and the chapter comes to an end.

On the surface, Flavius's story underscores the theme of Germanic virtue versus Roman decadence that runs throughout the entire novel, but the work's multifaceted allegorical structure also allows us to substitute modern Turks for ancient Romans (who also resemble corrupt French courtiers). Aristippus looks and acts very much like the sultan Ibrahim from Lohenstein's late drama. He seems respectable enough by day, but the boys find him transformed into something quite different when they meet him in the seraglio: his bald head is covered by a toupee, his beard combed and perfumed, arms and fingers loaded with bracelets and rings, and he is wearing lipstick, rouge, and nail polish. In a room decorated "with the most obscene pictures" ("mit den geilesten Bildern"), Flavius recalls that "he plied us with the strongest drinks, bathed us in perfumed waters, anointed us with Syrian oils, and lavished upon us the entire inventory of Asiatic opulence" ("erqvickte er uns mit denen kräfftigsten Labsaln. Er badete uns mit wohlrüchenden Wassern/ salbete uns mit Syrischen Balsamen/ und verschwendete allen Vorrath des üppigen Asiens") (454). When Flavius is about to enter the "house of lust and pleasure" (*Lusthaus*) a second time, however, an old man restrains him. He is Sotion, a German who knew Flavius' father. He steers Flavius back onto the path of virtue and initiates the police raid that lands Aristippus in jail and soon sinks him to the bottom of the Tiber river with a rock tied to his neck.

As in Lohenstein's two "Turkish tragedies," a closer look at the Flavius episode in *Arminius* suggests that distinctions between Germans and Romans – and by implication, between Germans and Turks, or Europeans and Asians

– is not nearly as absolute as it seems at first glance. Aristippus is Greek, not Roman, and although his gospel of lust has a seductive appeal to Lucius, Cajus, and many other Roman youths, the Roman authorities strongly disapprove of his corrupting influence, just as the upright members of the Turkish court depose Sultan Ibrahim. In both cases, Lohenstein distinguishes between evil individuals and the foreign society as a whole. The distinction between Flavius and the Romans is also not as clear-cut as it might seem. Although he is German, Flavius is more of an undercover agent than an obviously alien presence in Rome. As Flavius explains to his listeners at the *Deutschburg*, he was so close to Lucius and Cajus that he was often able to dissuade them from their worst inclinations more effectively than Caesar, whereupon a minor character offers an important observation: "It is true," said Duke Arpus. "At high courts you always have to be wearing a mask and do things cheerfully that you find most repellent." ("Es ist wahr/ sagte Hertzog Arpus; Man muß an grossen Höffen allezeit vermummte Antlitzer haben/ und das freudig mit machen/ darfür man die gröste Abscheu hat") (451). Cleopatra will voice similar sentiments in Lohenstein's drama of that name. In the fourth act she urges her son Caesarion to disguise himself as an African to escape the Roman invaders, silencing his concerns with a reminder of the need for dissemblance: "Why are you worried, my son? The entire world is in disguise now, and virtue cannot proceed without a mask if it is not to run aground" ("Was ficht/ mein Sohn/ dich an? Die gantze Welt geht itzt vermummt; und Tugend kan Nicht ohne Larve gehn/ sol sie nicht Schifbruch leiden").[41] Caesarion dons the disguise and no one contradicts his mother or Duke Arpus about the need for dissimulation at court. Flavius goes on to describe the constant role-playing that goes on in the elaborate mythological pageants and allegorical tableaux of ancient Rome, a kind of entertainment that would have been familiar to Lohenstein and his European contemporaries.

We are a long way from Rousseau's confessional autobiography or the reckless honesty of Goethe's *Werther*; in pre-revolutionary courtly culture, appearance matters more than essence, strategic role-playing more than heartfelt, soul-bearing confession.[42] At bottom, Flavius is German, as he is reminded when his brother's victory over the Romans suddenly places his life in danger, but he has a tendency to slip so deeply into character that he can pass for Roman: "Thus I gladly came [back to] Rome, and everyone took me for a Roman, not a German." ("Ich kam derogestalt vergnügt nach Rom/ und ward allenthalben nunmehr nicht so wohl für einen Deutschen/ als für einen

[41] *Cleopatra*, Act IV, lines 343–345, Lohenstein 1957, 115..

[42] See Burger 1963; Elias 1983; and Watanabe-O'Kelly 2007, 621–651. As Asmuth (1971, 1) notes, German baroque writers left little or nothing autobiographical.

Römer gehalten") (495). Even after he flees Rome, he continues to go by the name of Flavius, even though, as he mentions in passing, his real name is Ernst (469).

The ambivalence haunting the seemingly obvious distinction between German and Roman/Turk emerges most subtly in the story of Flavius' interracial romance with the African Dido. The theme is introduced when Lucius returns from his second night in Aristippus's den of iniquity. We recall that Flavius had been restrained from participating by his father's friend, Sotion, so he has to listen to the story of Lucius's exploits the following day. On the first evening in the *Lusthaus*, Aristippus had entertained the boys with beautiful women and their naked servants, but this time was even better, says Lucius, "because he had provided young Moorish boys and girls whose fiery erotic charms made the graces of white girls seem cold as ice" ("Denn er hätte sie mit eitel jungen Mohren und Mohrinnen bedienet/ gegen welcher feurigem Liebes-Reitze des weissen Frauenzimmers Anmuth nur für Schnee zu achten wäre") (457). Flavius scoffs at the notion that a raven could be prettier than a swan, but Lucius counters with a discourse on cultural relativity: an African Venus would be black, just as a Greek one would be white, he observes, and Flavius should not confuse German prejudice with universal truth. "But why shouldn't beauty and blackness coexist? Do you think that because your Germans are so white, just as you are, that Moors are equally ugly to everyone?" ("Warumb aber solte nicht auch Schönheit und Schwärtze bey einander stehen können? Meynest du/ weil deine Deutschen/ wie auch du/ so weiß sind/ daß die Mohren in allen Augen so heßlich seyn?") (457–458). Flavius concedes the point, but insists that he would never be interested in a black woman. Dido proves him wrong. Flavius gradually realizes that she is attracted to him, not Lucius, and before long we find him ready to ask for her hand in marriage.

Why does Lohenstein introduce the story of Flavius' love for Dido, and how does the episode fit into the larger pattern of cultural and racial difference in his works? At first it would seem that Lucius's attraction to black women is a sign of Roman decadence – and apparently not only black *women*, as Aristippus entertains the Romans youths with Moorish boys as well as girls. Interracial sex takes its place with *Knabenlust* (pederasty), cross-dressing, and incest as a symptom of "Oriental perversion". Flavius's initial defense of white supremacy reflects opinions expressed elsewhere in *Arminius*. "It is true," proclaims the Armenian King Erato in book six of part one, "white is the most perfect color, and thus the Germans are the most beautiful of all peoples" ("Es ist wahr [...] die weisse ist die vollko[mm]enste unter den Farben/ und daher die Deutschen auch die schönsten unter alle[n] Völckern") (761). We might therefore expect that Flavius's growing interest in Dido is a

sign of his moral turpitude, but this is clearly not the case: she loves him from the start, actively resists other potential lovers, and even helps Flavius escape after he has cruelly rejected the raped woman. When they meet for the last time, Dido approaches Flavius with a concern for his well-being that makes him ashamed for what he has done: "I blushed at the kindness of the woman whom I felt that I had insulted with my disdain" ("Ich ward schamroth über derselben Freundligkeit/ die ich durch meine Verschmähung beleidigt zu haben vermeynte") (495).

One could argue that Lucius is right after all, that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and that Flavius and the others are simply wrong in their prejudice against blacks. Before turning Lohenstein into an anachronistic proponent of modern multiculturalism, however, it is worth noting that Dido's beauty is carefully qualified: "She was, to be sure, black, as people from Numidia are, but her eyes sparkled with grace and her mouth laughed with friendliness. Her lips did not protrude in a Moorish way, but were in perfect proportion, just like the rest of her body" ("Sie war zwar ihrer Numidischen Landes-Art nach schwartz; aber die Anmuth leuchtete ihr aus den Augen/ die Freundligkeit lachte auff ihrem Munde; dessen Lippen nicht nach Morischer Art auffgeworffen/ sondern wie alle andere Glieder ihr rechtes Maaß und ihre vollkommene Eintheilung hatten") (465). Dido's skin may be black, but her features are white, just as the eponymous hero of Aphra Behn's exactly contemporary *Oroonoko* (1688) has skin of "perfect ebony, or polished jet" and yet a nose that was "Roman, instead of African" and a mouth that was "far from those great turned lips, which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes."[43] In both cases it seems likely that these characterizations reflect the prejudices of the authors and their early modern audiences. Behn's noble African slave has the education and facial features of his European masters, just as Lohenstein's Dido looks just European enough to render her attractiveness to the Germanic hero plausible and palatable to the readers of *Arminius*.

The theme of racial difference in Lohenstein's *Arminius* also enables an indirect comment on imperial politics, both in ancient Rome and in the Holy Roman Empire. Lohenstein's choice of the name Dido for his African princess is particularly important in this regard. Her namesake is of course the African queen whom Aeneas must flee, lest he be distracted from his destiny as the founder of Rome. In the fifth act of Lohenstein's *Sophonisbe*, the ghost of Dido appears in a dream to the sleeping heroine and foresees not only the immediate triumph of Rome over Carthage, but also the eventual fall of Rome to the Germanic peoples: "The flood of Goths and the swarm of

[43] Behn 1994, 12.

Wends will rip these plundered goods from Roman hands" ("Der Gothen Sündflutt und der Schwarm der Wenden/ Wird Rom dis Raubgutt reissen aus den Händen").[44] Dido goes on to prophesize future world dominance for the Holy Roman Empire over all of Europe, the New World, and especially the Turks:

> Die verdamten Araber/ Gottes Haß/ die Pest der Erden/
> Werden unsre beyde Reiche überschwemmend nehmen ein.
> Ja der Saracenen Strom wird gehemmt [...]
> Türcke/ Mohr und Mohnd erbleichet [...][45]
>
> Our two realms [the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburgs] will engulf the damned Arabs, God's hatred, the pestilence of the earth. Yes, the Saracen stream will be stopped up [...] Turk and Moor and moon will pale [...]

Drawing on the eschatological tradition of the prophet Daniel, Lohenstein sees the ancient triumph of the Roman Empire as a prefiguration of the even greater grandeur of the Holy Roman Empire.

Here again we find a direct parallel to a contemporary British work, Henry Purcell's opera, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689), whose retelling of Virgil's tale has been linked to the expanding British Empire of the seventeenth century and its participation in the African slave trade.[46] Yet Lohenstein tempers the triumphalism of early modern imperialism by lending a voice to those on the outskirts of empire. As Jane O. Newman has noted, it is more than a little ironic to place a paean to imperial power in the mouth of one of its most famous victims.[47] She points to an alternative tradition to Virgil that sees Dido not as a mere impediment to Roman destiny, but as a strong indigenous leader, and suggests that her presence in Lohenstein's drama introduces a subversive undercurrent to his overt praise of the Roman Empire.[48] The character named Dido in *Arminius* plays a similar role: she is sent as a sixteen-year-old by her father from the colonial periphery to Rome, "to learn Roman customs and to win favor with the ruling family" ("um die Römischen Sitten zu fassen/und bey dem Käyserlichen Hause sich beliebt zu Machen") (465). As it turns out, however, the African "barbarian" represents the civilized alternative to Lucius's Roman decadence.

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[44] *Sophonisbe*, Act V, lines 145–146, Lohenstein 1957, 337.
[45] *Sophonisbe*, Act V, lines 149–151, 155, Lohenstein 1957, 337.
[46] Roach1996, 42–47.
[47] Newman 2000, 59.
[48] Newman 2000, 63–66. See also Breger 2004, 271: "Die Apologie imperialer Politik gewinnt ihre Konturen bei Lohenstein also nur als gebrochene" (the apology for imperial politics appears in Lohenstein only in fractured form).

Flavius's tale of his youthful adventures thus complicates the seemingly clear-cut distinction between Germans and Romans in antiquity, and, by implication, between the Holy Roman and Ottoman empires. If read as a patriotic allegory, Herrmann "is" Leopold and the idealized Germanic peoples of the past are a flattering portrait of their latter-day descendants. But Flavius – or Ernst – is a more complex character than his brother: he is German, but a German who can pass for Roman and who even allies himself for parts of Book II with the Roman cause before returning in the end to his native people.[49] Dido also undermines oppositions between the colonial periphery and the imperial center, between barbarism and civilization, black and white.

The complications that Lohenstein introduces into his literary texts reflect the complexities of his delicate political position as an advocate for the interests of the semi-independent, primarily Protestant city of Breslau, while at the same time professing his loyalty to Leopold and the Holy Roman Empire. Not coincidentally, Lohenstein's most famous tragedy, *Sophonisbe*, focuses not on the conflict between Rome and Numidia per se, but on tensions between Numidians who collaborate with Rome and those who resist: the African queen marries Syphax, a Numidian partisan or "freedom fighter" against Rome, but switches loyalty for debatable reasons to Masinissa, a Nubian who fights for the Romans against his own people. In the end, Masinissa is ill-rewarded by his imperial overlords, as the Roman general Scipio orders him to abandon his Nubian bride. Masinissa is given only two choices: he must either allow Sophonisbe to be taken to Rome and put on public display as a trophy of imperial triumph, or he can give her poison so that she can commit suicide in her native land. In the end, Sophonisbe and her three children take the poison, and Masinissa is placed in command of Carthage as the representative of Rome, but it is a diplomatic triumph that has come at a terrible personal price.

The tension between local loyalty to Breslau and subservience to the Holy Roman Empire also colors Lohenstein's literary representations of the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, the Turks are stylized into the embodiment of evil, either directly, in the "Turkish tragedies," or indirectly, in the

[49] In keeping with her interpretation of *Arminius* as an allegorical glorification of Leopold and the Holy Roman Empire, Szarota (1970) is quite critical in her assessment of Flavius, whom she views as an unreliable and selfish individual (326) whose personal flaws symbolize the character type of the insubordinate prince (330). Borgstedt finds her assessment too harsh, as he notes that Flavius shows signs of genuine remorse for Dido's sorry plight (*1992*, 227). In a more recent article, Borgstedt notes the early modern tradition that viewed Arminius as a Protestant rebel against Rome, and argues that Lohenstein's novel was actually a veiled threat to the Viennese Counter-Reformation (2008, 159).

depiction of Nero's Rome in *Epicharis* and *Agrippina*, and in the decadent Romans of *Arminius*. On the other hand, Lohenstein's literary texts complicate distinctions between Europeans and Turks in multiple ways: Turkish courtiers find a way to remove the despotic sultan Ibrahim from power, suggesting that the deranged individual does not represent their society as a whole; although Nero remains in power at the end of *Epicharis*, the play focuses on the conflict between tyranny and insurrection at an imperial court, again adding nuance to the image of an evil empire. Lohenstein also shows a repeated interest in figures who move between two worlds: the Christian Ibrahim is a loyal servant of the Turkish court and erstwhile friend of the sultan in *Ibrahim Bassa*; *Sophonisbe* features Nubian princes torn between resistance to and collaboration with Rome; Flavius fluctuates between loyalty to his German brother and alliances with his Roman friends; the black and beautiful Dido teaches Roman and German alike a lesson in courage, forgiveness, and love. By voicing his praise of Austrian glory from the peripheral perspective of Breslau, Lohenstein adds a subversive undercurrent to literary works that turn representations of Germans and their Turkish 'others' into images of Turks as other Germans.

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The Attitude towards the Turks in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth under the Reign of Jan III Sobieski

By Barbara Milewska-Waźbińska

Polish texts in Latin about the relations of Poland to the Ottoman Empire reveal certain characteristic ambiguities of these relations. Even if Poland was regarded as a Bulwark of Christendom there was opposition to the idea of a crusade that could be taken advantage of by the Habsburgs. In the religious context the main concern was the Reformation. In various respects Poland was in between the East and the West and Oriental culture was influential. The idea of an Eastern – 'Sarmatian' – origin of the Polish aristocracy prompted the image of Jan III Sobieski as Sarmatian king, yet he was also seen as a new Godfrey of Bouillon, the hero of Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata.

Neighbours

The Polish king Jan III Sobieski rescued the capital of the Habsburg monarchy from the Turkish siege in 1683. The fact that one hundred years later the Habsburgs took part in the Partition of Poland and furthered its disappearance from the European maps for 123 years must be called irony of fate. On the other hand, the Turks, who were defeated by Sobieski, never recognized the final partition of Poland. What is more, when the Crimean War broke out between Turkey and Russia, one of Poland's partitioners, the most important poet of Polish Romanticism, Adam Mickiewicz, came to Constantinople in order to help the Polish nation and create a legion of Polish soldiers in the Turkish army. These plans did not succeed, though, and Mickiewicz died in Istanbul in 1855. A settlement near Istanbul called Polonezköy or Adampol – the latter name being a tribute to its creator Adam Czartoryski – is a permanent reminder of Polish immigration at the time.

During the course of its history, Poland, later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, bordered the Islamic East. Relations between the neighbours were not always peaceful, but it is important to remember that in the 16th and 17th century the Turks were only one of many enemies of Poland, and bordering with the Ottoman Empire did not only result in conflicts. During several hundred years, the peace between Poland and Turkey was broken only a few times. Poland did not take part in the war with Suleiman the Magnificent

during the siege of Vienna in 1529, and the political texts published on this occasion in Cracow had a reflexive, rather than a hortatory, tone[1]. Furthermore, the latter publications describing skirmishes with the Turks did not overtly display anti-Turkish rhetoric such as characterised Philippe Bosquier's book *Vegetius Christianus* (Christian Vegetius, Cologne 1615) on warfare against the Turks. Admittedly, in the years 1543–1544 Stanisław Orzechowski published two Latin speeches, *De bello adversus Turcas suscipiendo …ad equites Polonos oratio* (The Speech to Noblemen of Poland to take up War against the Turks) and *Ad Sigismundum Poloniae regem Turcica secunda* (The Second Turcica directed at Sigismund, the King of Poland), in which he called for a crusade against the infidels. In the first speech it was not so much fear that was expressed, as concerns for the noblemen's freedom:

> non ad bellum vos ego voco, sed ut imminentem servitutem depellatis moneo, quacum nihil homini peius accidat, tamen inprimis vobis ad libertatem et imperium natis intolerabilis est, equites, vos enim ex omnibus propemodum gentibus vere in libera Re publica estis nati. Haec enim demum vera libertas putanda est, in qua omnes servi sunt legum, dominus vero nemo, quo fit, uti sicut liberate, ita etiam dignitate omnes sitis pares.[2]
>
> I am not calling you to war, but I remind you that you should reject the menacing enslavement, beyond which there is nothing worse for a human being, but most of all it is unbearable for you knights, who are born for freedom and to rule; since only you among almost all the nations, were born in a truly free country. One should understand it as true freedom when everyone is subjected to law but nobody is a ruler, and that is why you are all equal in freedom as well as in dignity.

These words did not so much relate to Poland's foreign politics as they pointed to its political and social system. Stanisław Orzechowski also called for a declaration of war on Turkey, though, arguing that it was better to fight on the territory of the enemy than to wait for an attack. In the meantime, as Jerzy Ziomek reported, the Polish king used diplomatic means in an attempt to avoid aggressive action between Poland and Turkey, and "rejected the archaic idea of crusades, predicting, not without reason, that the Habsburgs would turn the results of a crusade to their advantage."[3] The Polish leader made attempts not to provoke the High Porte, and the society of noblemen was sceptical of the anti-Turkish league that was propagated by Vienna and

[1] Milewska-Waźbińska 2000.
[2] Orzechowski 1543, AV v.
[3] Ziomek 1977, 205.

Rome.[4] Simultaneously, rumours began to reach Poland about the Ottomans' imminent defeat. Although these were mostly rhetorical displays of panegyric literature, they influenced the visions articulated by Polish writers and poets.

Despite many tensions, until the 17th century Polish-Turkish relationships were relatively peaceful because Turkish expansion was not directed towards Polish lands. Polish society had somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the Turks – it was regarded as an alien world, but simultaneously as a world that was fascinating with its richness and exotic appeal. Permanent diplomatic relations were established between Turkey and Poland. Captive Polish prisoners who had converted to Islam were present at the Turkish court, and some even held important positions there, including Joachim Strasz (Ibrahim Beg), a converted Pole who was taken into Tatar captivity when he was young and who served as an emissary to Poland and an interpreter during the 16th century. In the 17th century one of the prominent diplomats at the Turkish court was the interpreter, painter, musician, poet and scholar Wojciech Bobowski (Ali Bej, Ali Ufki). The beautiful Tatar captive Roxelana, known as Hürrem, the wife of Suleiman the Magnificent and mother of the sultan Selim II, originated from the Eastern borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. After the death of the Polish king Sigismund I the Old she sent a letter of condolences to his son and successor, Sigismund II Augustus. In the mid-17th century, Franciszek Mesgnien-Meniński, born in Lorraine, took part in a legation to Istanbul and later stayed there as a resident. He was the author of the dictionary *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium,* published in Vienna in 1680. The dictionary comprised entries from the Turkish language translated into Latin and partly into Italian, German, French and Polish. Mesgnien-Meniński also published a book of Turkish grammar.

It is important to mention that in the Old Polish Catholic society of the 17th century, Polish attitudes towards representatives of other religions, as many sources indicate, were as cautious as those towards believers in the Prophet. In the era of Inquisition and religious wars, Poland prided itself of being a "nation without burning stakes." However, in the 17th century the majority of the Polish noblemen accepted the Counter-Reformation slogans and argued that only the Catholic faith guaranteed salvation and was worthy for a Sarmatian. This conviction was supported by Old Polish rituals and state as well as private ceremonies – especially funereal ones – which were closely related to Roman-Catholicism. That is perhaps the reason why the Catholic society seemingly was more afraid of heresy than of Muslims. Jan Chryzostom Pasek, a Polish diarist from the second half of the 17th century, wrote that in the year 1683, Polish Protestants living in Gdańsk were asking

[4] Tazbir 1970, 152.

God to grant victory to the Turks. The author himself took part in a bar fight when one of the Protestants loudly expressed a wish that streams of Catholic blood would flow in Vienna.[5]

Enemies

One of the major conflicts between Turkey and Poland, the Battle of Ţuţora (*Cecora),* took place in the years 1620–1621. Here the Polish military commander Stanisław Żółkiewski – the great-grand-father of the Polish king Jan III Sobieski – died.

In 1621 troops of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth bravely defended the Chocim (Khotyn) stronghold against the Turkish army under the command of Sultan Osman II. The triumph at Chocim was one of the greatest successes of the Polish armed forces in the 17th century. Władysław Waza (Vasa), who would become king later on, gained renown in Europe and won the respect of the noblemen for his participation in the battle. Jakub Sobieski – the father of the prospective king – fought at Chocim under the command of the great Lithuanian hetman Jan Karol Chodkiewicz. After Chodkiewicz's death the command of the Commonwealth troops was taken by Stanisław Lubomirski, Jakub Sobieski became his advisor and participated in peace talks. The father of the prospective King Jan III wanted the events from the notable weeks spent at the Chocim stronghold to remain forever in the memory of future generations. With this in view, he initiated the writing of a war journal, and later – following the example of Julius Caesar – war diaries in Latin. The finished work entitled *Commentariorum Chotinensis belli libri tres* (*Three Books of Comments on the Chocim war*) was published for the first time in Gdańsk in 1646.

The same theme was used fifty years later by Wacław Potocki. His *Transakcja wojny chocimskiej* (*The Progress of the War of Chocim*) is a historical epic. Written in a 13-syllable verse – a measure typical of the Polish *carmen heroicum* – the composition had the features of a classical epic. The poem comprised 10 books, with the first two telling about preparations for war, and the others describing each day until the initiation of peace talks and dismissal of the troops. The epic began with an invocation to God, and descriptions of battle scenes and speeches of commanders were patterned after the works of Homer, Virgil and Lucan. The historical subjects and lack of the traditional epic apparatus drew attention particularly to *Bellum civile (Pharsalia)* by Lucan as the basic epic model for *Transakcja wojny chocimskiej*. Potocki's poem was characterized by loose narration interspersed with numerous digressions on moral and political topics.

[5] Pasek 1989, 237.

Working on his epic, Potocki used both printed and handwritten sources, including Jakub Sobieski's *Commentariorum Chotinensis belli libri tres* as well as oral tradition. In his epic Potocki idealized the Polish commanders, in particular Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, simultaneously painting the Turks in bad light, including descriptions of Sultan Osman as a violent, haughty and cruel man. Potocki used historical comparisons to express his own opinions on social and political matters, idealization of old heroes served as a criticism of contemporary leaders, whose extravagance and greed he harshly criticized. His poetic chronicle, packed with chivalric spirit, glorification of Polish soldiers and open hatred toward pagans, was designed to raise the spirit of his contemporaries. The force of the descriptions, the richness of the language and the vividness and realism of the scenes were some of the factors that contributed to the particular beauty of this work.

In the 17th century, Poland waged equally bloody wars with the Cossacks, Swedes and Moscow. Although there was a general conviction that Poland and Hungary as countries served the defence of Christian Europe against the invasion of Islam, as *antemurale Christianitatis* – Bulwark of Christianity, on a daily basis Polish Catholics feared Protestants more than of Muslims. Tatar units had fought in the Polish Army from 15th century onwards. 16th and 17th century battles with Orthodox Moscow and Protestant Sweden likewise used auxiliary Tatar units. Jan Sobieski commanded a 2,000-man strong regiment of Tartar cavalry during his time as Grand Hetman of the Crown during the war with Sweden in 1656. This regiment came to Poland at the order of the sultan Mehmed IV, who supported Poland during the war of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish Tatar regiments also took part in the Battle of Vienna.

Between East and West: The Culture of Sarmatism

Geographic vicinity to the Ottoman Empire induced the citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to hold a realistic view of the political system and the organization of the Turkish state.[6] Polish envoys, merchants and craftsmen frequently visited Istanbul and many visitors were impressed by the city. Its architecture and art gave rise to admiration and left an imprint on the aesthetic taste of Polish and Lithuanian nobility.

Mutual influence between cultures was a lasting feature of Old Poland. In the Nobles' Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita szlachecka), both the Orthodox Church and Islam were geopolitical, economic and cultural factors.[7] The ethnically and religiously varied vicinity was of crucial importance for the

[6] Backvis 1975.
[7] Prejs 1999, 7.

cultural osmosis, that characterised the Eastern borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Furthermore, the Polish nobility emphasized their alleged origins in the militant peoples called the Sarmatians, who between 4th and 2nd century BC populated the area north of the Sea of Azov. Arguing this lineage, the Polish nobility invoked ancient authors, in particular Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder. The term "European Sarmatians," coined by Ptolemy to describe the peoples living in north-eastern Europe, was introduced into modern Polish literature by the historian Maciej Miechowita in his publication *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis Asiana et Europiana et de contentis in eis* (Treatise about two Sarmatians, European and Asian, and what can be found in each one, 1517). Gradually, the conviction that Polish citizens originated from Sarmatians became firmly established among writers and poets. The Polish nobility believed that Sarmatian warriors conquered and initiated their rule over the primitive Slavs.

The culture created by the Polish nobility, called Sarmatism, was, on the one hand, based on political ideology related to ancient values inherited from the Roman Republic and the Catholic faith, and, on the other hand, shaped by the influence of the Orient. Paradoxically, this influence was especially noticeable after the defeat of the Turks in the Battles of Chocim and Vienna. The reign of Jan III Sobieski contributed to a great extent to the popularization of oriental patterns in Polish applied arts and crafts. As Polish scholars point out, the defeated and humiliated Turkey had a larger influence on the dress and weapons of the nobility in Poland than the once intimidating and victorious Turkey did.[8] It is interesting to notice that in the Battle of Vienna in 1683, the appearance of Polish knights and Turkish soldiers were very similar.

Polish scholar Tadeusz Mańkowski called the Old Polish culture "the taste of Europe married to the taste of Asia," referring to an 18th century saying about Poles by Karol de Ligne.[9] Moreover, the culture of Sarmatism strengthened Polish identity, providing the nobility a distinctive identity differentiated from both West and East.[10] Hence, when the nobility articulated contrasts between Poles and Turks they did not imitate Western European patterns but appealed to their own ancient, Sarmatian lineage. Sarmatians were perceived as courageous knights and warriors, an image of Poles which also proliferated in historical awareness, politics, literature and arts in the 16th and 17th century. Only in the early 18th century did fashionable oriental patterns of a different, Western European, origin become influential in Poland. The popularity of Eastern motifs in the 18th century was, as Polish

[8] Tazbir 1986, 131–134; Łoziński 1969, 161.
[9] Mańkowski 1946, 111.; Prejs, 1999, 26.
[10] Mańkowski 1946, 31.

scholar Marek Prejs underscores, paradoxically a sign of Polish culture becoming more European in those times.

The combination of the belief that the nobility originated from the Sarmatians and the impact of Poland's border with Turkey was reflected in Polish dress, applied arts and crafts, traditional customs, culinary tastes and language. A sweet cake with nuts, figs and raisins (*mazurek*) that up to the present days is eaten by Poles during Easter likely originated in 17th century Turkey. The gentry dress consisting of a long garment (*żupan* from Turkish: *dżubbah*) together with an outer garment (*kontusz* from Turkish: *kontosz*), a hat decorated with a brooch (*kołpak* from Turkish: *kalpak*) and high leather shoes (*baczmagi* from Turkish: *Baczmak*) was fashioned after Turkish dress. In the 17th century, a wide kontusz sash (*pas kontuszowy*) with an Eastern pattern was the most distinctive element of the Polish dress. Initially these sashes were imported from Turkey and Persia but later they were also manufactured in Poland. The curved sword – the essential element of the nobleman's dress – had its origins in a similar weapon used in Turkey. The military hierarchy distinctions – bulawas and maces (Polish: *buzdygan*, Turkish: *bozdogan*) referred to the Eastern club weapons both in the name and shape. Their golden or silver heads were often incrusted with precious stones, most often turquoise, which was considered lucky in Islamic countries. Polish cavalry used light shields called *kałkan* (from Turkish: *kalkan*). Another Turkish inheritance were the carpets put on the floor (Polish: *dywan*, Turkish: *diwan*) and tapestries hung on the walls (Polish: *kilim*, Turkish: *kilim*), which still today ornament Polish houses. The lifestyle of the Polish nobility contributed to the 17th century perception of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as exotic. Rubens' painting *The Head of Cyrus brought to Queen Tomyris* displayed the Eastern grandeur of the Massagetean Queen's court. The men from the retinue are dressed similarly to the Polish dress of the time, according to the idea that members of an eastern tribe from the 6th century BC looked similarly.

Poles travelling around Europe were eager to emphasize their identity with distinctive clothes and customs. The 1633 journey of the Treasurer of the Crown Jerzy Ossoliński to Rome became quite famous. His retinue was memorialized in the etching of Florentine graphic artist and painter Stefano della Bella, as well as in a later painting by Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto. The aim of the Ossoliński envoy was to gain the support of the Pope Urban VIII in the anticipated war—not with Turks, but with Sweden. The splendour of a 300-person legation, precious stones in the horse tacks and Eastern ornamentations evoked admiration and awe among the inhabitants of Rome. For European societies, the Polish Nobles' Commonwealth served as

a cultural link between the West and the East due to the trade route and transit to the East in its territory.

Godfrey and the "Sarmatian" King

Sarmatian culture is widely considered to have been at its peak in the times of Jan III Sobieski. Often called the "Sarmatian" King, Sobieski represented two ideals of nobility – a courageous warrior and a settled nobleman. The court of Sobieski excelled in customs of nobility and in Sarmatian lifestyle.[11] As mentioned above, the King's father, Jakub, took part in the 1621 Battle of Chocim and the peace negotiations that followed. His son – the young hetman Jan Sobieski – later fought the Tatar and Turkish armies.[12] Jan Sobieski's success in these battles greatly contributed to his popularity. It is commonly believed that Sobieski's elevation to Polish king resulted from the Tartar defeat in the Lesienice battle near Lviv and the victory over Turks at the Battle of Chocim in 1673, which earned Sobieski the moniker "the Lechistan Lion." Thanks to his victories over the Muslims, especially at the Battle of Vienna, Jan III Sobieski was also called the Polish Godfrey, since he in many people's eyes embodied the Christian knight fighting infidels.[13] Referring to the Polish king with the name of Godfrey of Bouillon – one of the leaders of the first crusade, that aimed at liberation of the Holy Land and Christians from the Muslim rule – not only recalled historical events but also literature. Godfrey was the main character of Torquato Tasso's epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered* (*Gerusalemme Liberata*), a popular work in the 17th century Poland thanks to Piotr Kochanowski's Polish translation, first published in 1618 and reprinted in 1651 and 1687. Although the plot of *Jerusalem Delivered* was based on historical events during the siege and liberation of Jerusalem, much of the inspiration behind the poem derived from contemporary events – the Turkish expansion in Christian Europe.

The comparison of Sobieski to Godfrey was widespread in Poland, as it is apparent in the texts and titles of plays performed in Jesuit school theatres of the 17th century. One of the performances staged by the students of the Jesuit College in Warsaw in 1685 had the title *Imago victoriae ab Ioanne III rege Poloniae de Turcis relatae in Godifredo Bullonio Primo Rege Hierosolymarum adumbrata* (*The Image of the Victory of Jan III Sobieski the King of Poland over the Turks reflected in Godfrey de Boullion, the first King of Jerusalem*).[14] The play took place in two locations, Palestine and the environs of Vienna. The character of the crusaders' leader was portrayed so

[11] Bogucka 1994, 42.
[12] Wimmer 1983, 23.
[13] Sokołowska 1977, 259.
[14] Korotaj e.a. 1976, 328–329.

often in 17th century because he represented the universal virtues of a heroic knight combined with contemporary national and religious values. These topics were well received by Polish audiences. Struggles between Christians and infidels evoked strong emotions in the 17th century. This motif especially dominated epic writing in Christian countries influenced by perceived threats from the expansion of Muslims, including Arabs, Turks and Tatars. In many French, Italian and Spanish epic poems the heroes, including Godfrey, Roland, and El Cid, were praised for fighting Muslim infidels. Ivo Gundulić, a poet from Dubrovnik, dedicated his epic poem *Osman* to the Polish-Turkish battles and the victory in the Battle of Chocim. In the poem, Władysław IV, a future king of Poland, served as the main character, and Gundulić expressed hope that all Slavs together with the Christian world would soon be liberated from the Turkish yoke.[15] Texts about the struggles with the infidels became increasingly relevant in 17th century Poland due to the situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Their aim, however, was not only to disseminate historical facts. The writers directed their texts to readers who were their contemporaries, took part in the same events and experienced similar emotions. Moreover, they had a clear propagandist aim. Many perceived Sobieski's victory in the Battle of Vienna during the latter period of Nobles' Commonwealth as a confirmation of Poland's role as the Bulwark of Europe. At that time, numerous writings aimed at showing Poland as *antemurale Christianitatis*. Portraying the Battle of Vienna in literature satisfied the ambitions of epic poets. The character of Jan III Sobieski brought even more excitement to the topic, and the best writers of the time characterized the ruler with emphasis on the features comprising the King's "Virtutes": Iustitia (Justice), Prudentia (Deliberation), Magnanimitas (Magnanimity), Clementia (Gentleness) and Fortitudo (Valor).[16]

Jan III Sobieski as an epic hero

Military and political successes predestined Jan III Sobieski to the role of a hero in the highest literary genre of the 17th century – the epic poem. European poetry commonly had the ruling king as a hero of an epic poem.[17] The popularity of this literary genre stemmed from a desire to articulate historical events in literary terms. Epic poetry served that function for several centuries.

The victory at Vienna became the topic of many texts in Poland as well as abroad. In Western Europe it was praised in Latin and as well as in vernaculars: Italian, French, German, English, Czech, Spain, Portuguese and

[15] Barac 1969, 76–78; Rapacka 1975; Darasz 1997.
[16] Singer 1981, 31.
[17] Hobdell Jackson 1982, 16.

Swedish.[18] Among the Polish works about the victory at Vienna were, in Latin: *Carmen de liberatione Viennae ab obsidione per Joannem Sobieski Regem Poloniae (*A Song about the Liberation of Vienna from under the Siege by Jan Sobieski, the King of Poland*)* and *Elogiastica descriptio factorum triumphalium Joannis III* (A Praise of Triumphant Deeds of Jan III) by Jan Kwiatkiewicz; *Sarmatia laureata (*Sarmatia Decorated with a Laurel*)* by Jakub Boczyłowic*;* in Latin a version of the Polish text by Wojciech Stanisław Chrościński: *Tuba vocalis famae ac aeviternae memoriae* (The Trumpet of everlasting Fame and Memory); *Io triumphale* (An Exclamation of Triumph), *Bellaria Martis Sarmatici* (War Deeds of Sarmatian Mars) and *Vota Poloniae sub tempus belli Viennensis 1683* (Polish Gifts of the time of the Viennese Battle 1683) by Jan Wojciech Janicki; *Fulmen Orientis Iohannes III rex Poloniarum* (The Lightning of the East Jan III King of the Poles) by Wojciech Bartochowski.

Two Latin epic poems in dactylic hexameter and modelled on Homer and Virgil deserve special attention: *Sobiesciados carminum libri quinque* (Five Books of Sobiesciada) by Andrzej Wincenty Ustrzycki was published in Venice in 1686 and Jan Kaliński published *Viennis* in Warsaw in 1717. Ustrzycki wrote *Sobiesciados carminum libri quinque* right after the glorious victory of the Cross over the Half-Moon at the Battle of Vienna when all Europe was paying homage to the Polish King. This work was one of many tributes to the Polish king and the knights serving their duty to God and Nation. In effect, it was an epic biography of Sobieski, culminating in the victory over Turks in the Battle of Vienna. At the time he wrote it, Ustrzycki could not have predicted that he was describing the last moments of glory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and that soon Europe would cease to be grateful to these liberators of Vienna, and in fact willingly accept their partition. At the time, though, it was deeply meaningful that the author portrayed Sobieski as the hero for whom Polish epic poetry had been waiting for almost 200 years. Jan III Sobieski was in fact the last modern hero revered in Old Polish epic poems. Ustrzycki's composition did not find worthy followers, and the style of the biographic epic poem slowly perished due to the lack of both heroes and sublime subject matter. In *Viennis* by Kaliński Jan III Sobieski no longer served as a main hero; by this time Leopold I was the driving force behind the military actions. In this text the fate of the world and the individual peoples' destiny depend on God's will, and biographical plots are subjugated historical events. While biography was not as interesting to the author of *Viennis*, his attempt to describe reality in epic form and invigorate the dead genre of epos by introducing a moral message deserves attention.

[18] Klimaszewski 1983 *passim*.

The content of both of these works accurately rendered historical events. Apart from Sobieski, other historical characters appear in their pages: Leopold I and his deputy Karl Ferdinand Waldstein, papal nuncio father Marco from Aviano, Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine, Emeryk Thököly, the leader of Hungarian uprising, and among the Turks, Sultan Ibrahim I and his two wives, Mehmed IV and the vizier Kara Mustafa. The movements of the armies are also accurately recorded, and the description of Sobieski's last days before leaving Poland has a special place in the books. The authors describe the celebrations taking part in Cracow with chronicler's accuracy. Both epic poems have an interesting plot woven into historical content – the farewell of the military leader with his beloved. Both Ustrzycki and Kaliński describe the parting of Sobieski with his wife before he left for Vienna, which indeed took place on the 21st August 1683. Both poems also highlight a cordial welcome of the King in Silesia. In Kaliński's work personifications and allegories are in play. The action proper of his poem begins when the Emperor Leopold I send Christian Religion to Heaven to win God's support. Religion has a long journey among the stars before reaching God and asking for help. The Goddess of the Moon – Luna – attempts to hinder this process due to her support for the Turks. The epic poems of Ustrzycki and Kaliński meet all the requirements to be considered historical epics, exemplars of the genre that was in high esteem in Old Poland. Both authors wanted to describe the historical events in the highest of literary genres. It must be emphasized that the aim of the authors was not to attack the enemy but to praise the victor. In all the epic poems one finds a laudatory tone including phrases that are characteristic for this kind of a rhetorical show (*genus demonstrativum*) in contrast to *genus deliberativum* characteristic for political speeches.

Wespazjan Kochowski, who participated in the Vienna campaign, authored three works dedicated to the battle of 1683. In 1684 he wrote *Commentarius belli adversus Turcas* in Latin and a poem in Polish titled *Dzieło Boskie albo pieśni Wiednia wybawionego (God's Deed or Songs of Vienna Liberated)*. The latter poem, imitating *Jerusalem Delivered* by Torquato Tasso and written in the form of octaves, begins with a request directed to the muse Calliope to support the work and includes the appropriate invocation of the Mother of God, justified by the subject matter of the composition describing a "Christian war." In his poem Kochowski presented historical events including Waldstein's legation to the King of Poland, the battle of 1683 and the meeting of Jan III Sobieski and Emperor Leopold. Throughout the text, the fighting Christians are supported by God and angels. The poem was originally planned to be much longer with a view of telling the entire story of the Turkish collapse, yet only book one was finished.

In 1695 Kochowski published another work titled *Trybut należyty albo Psalmodia polska (Due Tribute or Polish Psalmody)* in Częstochowa. Kochowski deliberately styled this work after the biblical Book of Psalms, and it comprised thirty-six religious and patriotic psalms. In the 19th century Adam Mickiewicz followed a similar style when he created his *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego (Books of the Polish Nation and Pilgrimage)*. In both these works, the location of Poland at the border of the Christian world served as the basis for Sarmatian Messianism.[19] Kochowski indicated similarity between the history of the ancient people of Israel and the history of the Commonwealth, which is presented as the New Israel.[20] Intertwining the divine and the national dimension *Psalmodia* underpins the Sarmatian outlook. God's will is realized by a nobleman – Sarmatian Jan III Sobieski. Through references to the Old Testament idea of a chosen people and biblical stylization, the liberation of Vienna is interpreted within the framework of philosophy of history. It was not the Viennese victory as a historical fact that was important, but its moral dimension. *Psalmodia* was the poet's lyrical testament and his final reckoning.

In a historical and cultural labyrinth

This is what literature says. When facts are taken into consideration, it is obvious that Sobieski's underwriting of the alliance with the emperor of Austria in 1683 was not just motivated by dreams of the everlasting fame of a hero, but was also, and above all, forced by the political situation. The Polish king realized that the Turks could establish a great army that would be able to attack Poland from Eastern and Southern Ukraine and reach as far as Cracow. Sobieski would not be able to hold a defence against the Turks in three places simultaneously. The alliance with the Habsburg monarchy was a political strategy which benefited Poland as well.

Despite the death of his great-grand-father at the hands of the Turks Jan III Sobieski did not hold personal hatred towards the Turkish nation. Nor does he seem to have had an anti-Turkish or anti-Tatar obsession, as some scholars formerly have claimed.[21] The future victor at the Battle of Vienna visited Istanbul in 1654 as an envoy. Turkish was one of the languages he knew.[22] Only once did he explicitly call the Turks "barbarians" in the letters to his beloved wife Maria d'Arquien Sobieska. Although he was undoubtedly pleased by his victories by the Porta river, he was not unbudging, but was always trying to improve the political relations with Turkey. He also stayed a

[19] Tazbir 1970, 7.
[20] Obremski 1995, 14.
[21] Suchodolski & Ostapowicz 2008, 15–16.
[22] Wójcik 1983, 50.

realist in assessing the Turks. Despite the afore-mentioned comparison with Godfrey de Bouillon, Jan III Sobieski did not display fanatical hatred towards the Muslims; he did not consider them to be enemies, but political opponents with whom he had to fight. The fact that the Turks referred to him as the Lion of Lechistan, a term of admiration for a worthy opponent, indicates that the respect was mutual. It should also be remembered that Turkish captives brought from the Battle of Vienna settled in close proximity of the King's summer residence in Wilanów and eventually assimilated into the Polish society. They were responsible for many of the construction projects in the Palace and its surroundings, and for many years they faithfully served the King and his family.

An assessment of the Polish society's attitude towards the Turks in the times of Jan III Sobieski on the basis not only of historical sources but also on customs and cultural texts is not unambiguous. The paths of the citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth are often winding and bizarrely twisted as the path of the Polish King Jan III Sobieski of the Janina coat of arms. Wojciech Tygielski claimed that:

> Polish history was defined by two factors of major importance: belonging to the Latin civilization, originating from the Mediterranean culture (which signified being open to cultural and civilizational inspirations of that origin) and being placed at a physical distance from its main centres – on the border between the Roman-Latin and Byzantine-Orthodox worlds, with all the ensuing political and cultural consequences.[23]

For the citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the geographical state was not identical with the political and cultural one. The former can be located at the eastern borders of Europe close to the Muslim Orient, while the latter includes the common European heritage of Greco-Roman antiquity and Christian religion.

[23] Tygielski 2010, 247.

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