

# 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 Friedrich 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 12<sup>th</sup>) 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 Guisliniani 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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”:

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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 [*Teucrici*, 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.”<sup>4</sup>

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 10<sup>th</sup> Nicholas V decided to prepare for crusade against the Ottomans, and after secret negotiations he published a papal bull on September 30<sup>th</sup> 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

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<sup>3</sup> Leonardo Guisiani et al. 1972, 38–39.

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

Similar interpretations of the Ottoman conquests and the 'Turkish Threat' in general proliferated.<sup>6</sup> John's Apocalypse was read in light of the interpretation of the early Arabic-Muslim conquests in the 7<sup>th</sup> century spelled out in the very influential treatise known as *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and in reference to the prophecies in Book of Daniel. *Pseudo-Methodius* was authored towards the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, i.e., after Arabic-Muslim conquests since Muhammad's time, yet the treatise was presented as authored by the Church Father Methodius of Olympus in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, thus – as it were – prophesizing events in the 7<sup>th</sup> 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-Christ's 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*

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Lelleouch & Yerasimos 1999.

*imperii*. Within this thematic field there are numerous variations, it is impossible to pin down a common, single coherent pattern.<sup>7</sup>

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*.<sup>8</sup> 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,

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.”<sup>9</sup> In Luther’s view, prophecies 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’.<sup>10</sup> “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

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<sup>9</sup> Luther 1996, here 257–258, 262.

<sup>10</sup> 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)<sup>11</sup>

### Humanist Reactions

When Piccolomini in July 21<sup>st</sup> wrote a long letter to the prominent cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, the fall of Constantinople had been confirmed – “unhappy, unfortunate, hard, horrid news”.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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

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<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Piccolomini 2006, 306–318, quotes are from 309, 313, 315, 312, 313. On Piccolomini: Helmroth 2000, Cotta-Schönberg 2016.

<sup>13</sup> 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 Muhammad and the Turks*), consisting mainly of polemics against Muhammad and the Qur’an.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 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.”

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Schiel 2011, 222–251, the main source of what follows. Further, Gleis & 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 Torquemada’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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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-12<sup>th</sup> century, *Collectio Toletana*.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> In a letter to Nicholas (2.12.54), he develops ideas of

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

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Euler & Kerger 2010, Nicholas of Cusa 1453, 1460–61a and 1460–61b.

<sup>17</sup> On pious interpretation Hopkins 1998, in particular 266–68.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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).

<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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.

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<sup>21</sup> “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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> This conflict between Christian unity and commercial interests in trade was at that point centuries old, already in the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Pope intervened in similar activities.<sup>24</sup> The Papacy's defense of Christendom frequently was in conflict

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<sup>22</sup> Martorell & Galba 1996, here xxix; and Martorell 2003. Rosenthal's translation is somewhat condensed, Barberà's is complete.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Hohmann 1998.

<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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 Fastnachtspiel*) 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.<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup>

### **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.<sup>28</sup> 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

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<sup>25</sup> Anon. 1509.

<sup>26</sup> Rosenplüt 1853.

<sup>27</sup> Including numerous references, I have elaborated on these matters in Madsen 2017.

<sup>28</sup> "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's oeuvre, 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.<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup> 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".<sup>31</sup> In 1519 Charles V (king of Spain from 1516) inherited Austria and became Holy Roman Emperor – a

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Drosztmér 2017, 22.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> Perjés 1981, 156.

“turn of events [that] had completely upset Europe’s political equilibrium”.<sup>32</sup> 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.”<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> 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 led 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

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<sup>32</sup> Perlès 1981, 158.

<sup>33</sup> Perlès 1981, 158.

<sup>34</sup> Perjés 1989, Chapter IV: “Suleyman’s proposal: An Outline of Ottoman and Hungarian Policies between 1520 and 1541”, 134–183.

<sup>35</sup> Perjés 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup>

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”.<sup>39</sup> The motive could be to incite foreign, wealthier states to provide “funding and material support for [...] resistance against Ottoman encroachment”.<sup>40</sup>

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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<sup>36</sup> “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.

<sup>37</sup> 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.”

<sup>38</sup> Murphey 2001, 200.

<sup>39</sup> Murphey 2001, 215.

<sup>40</sup> 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 it was translated into several languages and was widely read, yet Giovio returned to questions concerning warfare against the Ottomans in several other writings.<sup>41</sup> The approach in *Commentario* is matter of fact as the title,

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<sup>41</sup> 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 through 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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."<sup>44</sup> 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,

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<sup>42</sup> On Menavino and *Cinque libri*: Schwarz Lausten 2014.

<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> Cit. Höfert 2015, 323.

presented as an *exemplum* uniting martyrdom 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.<sup>45</sup> 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'istoria 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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> The novel remained unpublished into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is quite obvious how it would have been a problematic publication in the

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<sup>45</sup> 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.

<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> 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 paid, 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*).<sup>48</sup> 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).<sup>49</sup> 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

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<sup>48</sup> 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.

<sup>49</sup> 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 Camões' *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.<sup>50</sup> *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.<sup>51</sup> 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, Camões' 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

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<sup>50</sup> On Tasso and the impact of *Jerusalem Delivered*, cf. Madsen 2011.

<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

At the time, Juan Rufo's *Austriada* (*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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup>

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

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<sup>52</sup> 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)

<sup>53</sup> 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.

<sup>54</sup> 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).<sup>55</sup>

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.<sup>56</sup> 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 Alpujarra 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*

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<sup>55</sup> 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).

<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

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".<sup>58</sup> 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 Latino's account, the way he was treated, when he died at the hand of a simple soldier (as opposed

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<sup>57</sup> 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.

<sup>58</sup> 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 Araucanoid*, 1569, 1578, 1589) turned out to move to the forefront of attention.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> 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

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<sup>59</sup> 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.

<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> 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).<sup>62</sup> 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

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<sup>61</sup> As the introductory summary to canto vii says: Is told what at the same time happened at the fortified San Quintin.

<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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."<sup>64</sup> 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

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

<sup>64</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup>

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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> 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,

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<sup>65</sup> 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).

<sup>66</sup> This 'mappamundi' is in the focus of Nicolopoulos 2000 and Padrón 2004.

<sup>67</sup> This is the overall theme of Nicolopoulos' 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.<sup>68</sup> The confrontation between the Ottoman forces and the forces of the Polish-Lithuanian Federation at Chotim at a strategic point of the river Dnestr, 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.

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<sup>68</sup> 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*.<sup>69</sup> Zrínyi, 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 Szigetvár 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.<sup>70</sup> Contrary to the Ottoman areas in the Balkans there was no serious attempt to Islamize the population.<sup>71</sup> 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

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<sup>69</sup> Zrínyi 2011.

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

<sup>71</sup> Hegyi 1987, 210.

authorities but also to their masters from the Habsburg (or Transylvanian) side.<sup>72</sup>

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.<sup>73</sup> Miklós Zrínyi was the most prominent and influential in 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.<sup>74</sup>

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

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<sup>72</sup> 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 savaient jamais quand des soldats turcs ou hongrois mettent le feu dans leur maisons. [...] les Turcs toléraient même, dans les territoires leur soumis, la présence des soldats et de la noblesse hongroises. Au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle la voie était ouverte par les soldats des forteresses hongroises qui percevaient les impôts dans les territoires turcs. Au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, par cette voie, la noblesse hongroise reconquit, elle aussi, son influence et son droit d'intervention dans la vie du peuple de la province turque: elle faisait l'imposition, donnait des ordres, prenait des dispositions, des règlements et contrôlait leur observation, publiait des interdictions et punissait sévèrement les réfractaires. Le peuple des régions occupées 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.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Molnar 2001, 95–100: "Partition, population and society".

<sup>74</sup> 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 Zrinyi 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.<sup>75</sup>

Justus Lipsius’ neo-stoic book *De constantia in publicis malis* (On constancy in times of public evil, 1583) was one of Zrinyi’s main inspirations.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Hausner 2016, 255–57.

<sup>76</sup> 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 martyrdom 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) Zrínyi 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, Zrínyi displaced some of these conflicts to the Muslim Camp.

Zrínyi'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

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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**

Zrínyi 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.<sup>77</sup>

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):

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<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup>

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-*

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<sup>78</sup> 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 (*Verhängnis*). 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.<sup>79</sup>

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 sérail du Grand Séigneur* (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-

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Béhar 1988, chapter V: "Lecons de l'œuvre tragique" 245–344.

Turkish themes.<sup>80</sup> 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-Ważbińska'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-Ważbińska 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,

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<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup>

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-Ważbińska 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.

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<sup>81</sup> Kochowski 1983.

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