

ANTI-TURKISH LITERATURE IN 15TH- 16TH CENTURY EUROPE

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Özet

15-16. Yüzyıl Avrupa'sında Türk Karşıtı Edebiyat

Makale, 15-16. Yüzyıllarda, hem Batı ve Orta Avrupa hem de Balkan edebiyatındaki Türk karşıtı konuları hakkında bilgi sunmaktadır. Karşılaştırmalı incelemeler gösterir ki bazı Avrupa edebiyatları, Türk karşıtı içeriği belirten kendi karakteristik formlarını geliştirdiler: Polonya, demekten çok okumaya yönelik bir sözlü edebiyata odaklanmışlardır. Bunlar Türkiye tarafından işgal veya tehdit edilen ülkelerde (Yunanistan, Balkanlar, Macaristan, İtalya) şiirsel formda ağıtlar, dualar ve şiirler olarak gelişmiştir. Bu çalışmalar, sessiz bir okumadan çok büyük bir kitleye söylenen bir ferman gibi sözel kültürün büyük bir parçasını oluşturmaktadır. Bu makalenin amacı, Avrupa edebiyatındaki Türk imajının nasıl olduğunu açıklamaktır. 120 yıllık araştırma alanı boyunca değişen, dinamik fenomenlerle ilgilenme yazarın tezidir. Bu dönem boyunca Avrupa halkının Osmanlı Türk'üne karşı, negatiften daha pozitive ve Hıristiyan Avrupa'nın düşmanına olan hakiki ilgisinin artışıdaki yargılarının değişimi gözlenebilmektedir. Bu değişime katkısı olan etmenlerden biri de Türkleri geniş ölçüde ilgilendiren her çeşit edebiyatı ortaya koyan matbaanın icadı idi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türk-karşıtı Edebiyat, Batı Avrupa, Balkanlar, Osmanlı Devleti*

Abstract

The paper presents a survey of anti-Turkish themes in European literatures in the 15th-16th centuries from both Western and Central Europe and from the Balkans. Comparative analysis shows that some European literatures developed their characteristic forms of expressing anti-Turkish content: Poland specialized mainly in orations (as a literary genre, orations were intended for reading rather than delivering) while the countries directly occupied or threatened by Turkey (Greece, the Balkans, Hungary, and Italy) developed poetic literary forms: lament, prayers, or poems. These were works which were largely part of oral culture, meant for declamation to an audience rather than for silent reading. The principal goal of the article, however, is to examine how the image of "the Turk" was shaped in European literatures. The author's thesis is that we are dealing with a dynamic phenomenon, changing during the investigated span of 120 years. During that time one could observe a change in the attitude of the European public to the Ottoman Turks, from the negative towards more positive, and an increase in the genuine interest in the enemy of the Christian Europe. One of the factors contributing to this change was the invention of printing, which made all kinds of literature concerning the Turks more available.

Key-words: *anti-Turkish literature, Western Europe, Balkans, Ottoman Empire*

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Turkish studies have been successfully conducted for several decades in many European countries and the USA. There is no room in this paper to discuss the state of this research, which is why we will go directly to the problem of the picture of the Turk in European literatures in the period from the capture of Constantinople (1453) to the battle of Lepanto (1571).

Three circles of European literatures can be distinguished for the historical period discussed: those of countries directly under Turkish occupation (Greece, the Balkans, and partly Hungary); those of the countries threatened by the Turks (Germany, Poland, and again partly Hungary); and literatures of the countries that did not have to fear direct threat (England, the Netherlands); a special case is Spain, whose perspective of anti-Turkish discourse was entirely different than that of Central and Western European countries. Finally, a somewhat different perspective is necessary when examining French literature: the French authors were the earliest to perceive the Turks as equal participants in European international politics; at the beginning of the second quarter of the 16th century France entered a formal alliance with the Ottoman state. It should be stressed that French authors were pioneers in what we would today call cultural anthropology². Their descriptions of the customs, culture, and daily life of the Ottoman society and state are usually characterized by objectivity and start the trend of modern social sciences³. The humanist vision of the world changed in contact with the “Other/Foreigner”. In contrast, the calls to organize crusades by Balkan or Hungarian poets remain deeply embedded within the medieval ideology. While to Erasmus of Rotterdam and his followers the Turkish threat was the mirror in which Christians would look at themselves in order to improve their ways, English humanists used this phenomenon to criticize the social aspects of their country (the same device was actually used by Thomas More in his *Utopia*).

It seems justified to describe these problems in the following geographical order: Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Slovakia, Bohemia, Germany, England, and France⁴.

In the Renaissance (15th-16th centuries) Dalmatia occupied a narrow strip of the Adriatic coast from Istria to the Bay of Kotor (Boka Kotorska), the Montenegrin coast and Albania. During the whole period this South-Slavonic country was subordinated to Venice (apart from Dubrovnik, see below), being

² This was already pointed out, inter alia, by: Schwoebel 1967; Cardini 1975; Fleet 1995; Bisaha 1999; Bisaha 2004a; Wunder 2003.

³ Voisé 1962, p.102-110; Suchodolski 1963, passim.

⁴ The image of the Turk in Polish literature is discussed in detail in my book (Tafłowski 2013); a separate article is devoted to the same problems in the works of Erasmus of Rotterdam (in print).

directly threatened by the Turks. Despite this, anti-Turkish political themes, mainly in a poetic form, were pursued unimpeded in Dalmatian towns subordinated to Venice.

Well-known in Europe was Koriolan Ćipiko (1425-1493), a Dalmatian humanist educated in Padua, the author of memoirs of naval battles with the Turks, in which he took active part. His contemporary Italian historian Marcantonio Sabellico, Ćipiko's friend, used his diaries as the source material and repeatedly praised Ćipiko's writing style.

A supporter of the Venetians was Franjo Božičević-Natalis, a member of the humanist association in Split at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century, one of the masters of Latin poetry in Dalmatia. He expected that they would not only defend Dalmatia against Turkish invasions but also liberate the whole country from the Turkish yoke. In a Sapphic ode dedicated to the legate of the Republic of St. Mark (Marcantonio Mulli) and to patrician Bernardo Novagero, the poet from Split glorified the Venetian rule⁵.

The poems by Jurije Šižgorić of Šibenik (ca. 1420-1509), written in the mid-15th century, speak of terrible disasters which affected the Dalmatian population (*Elegia de Sibenicensis agri vastatione*). The anti-Turkish subject matter introduced by Šižgorić became the principal motif in the creative works of the poets and writers of the Dalmatian Renaissance. In their Latin letters addressed to the Pope and lay rulers the Dalmatian humanists called for a crusade against the Turkish invaders and spoke of the terrible suffering of the people. They carried out similar activities as envoys of Dalmatian towns, Venice or of the Kingdom of Hungary.

Andronicus Tranquillus (1490-1571) aroused greater interest on the part of Polish scholars because of his contacts with Poland. During the Council of Augsburg in 1518 this poet, probably substituting for the Croatian-Dalmatian envoy Ban Petro Berislavic delivered *Oratio contra Turcas ad Germanos habita* in the presence of Emperor Maximilian, and published *Oration against the Turks (Tranquilli Parthenii Dalmatae ad Deum contra Thurcas Oratio carmine heroico)* written in Latin in hexameter. This short poem, specially its beginning, echoes the prayer by the Croatian poet Marko Marulić.

“The Turkish expansion into the European Continent, violence and rapes, many population migrations, lost battles and territorial losses suffered by Croatia influenced the development of a literary vision in which the Turk was a total stranger/alien, a cruel enemy who not only wished to but did indeed destroy the existing world and order. It is here that lays the source of the stereotypic way in which the Turks are presented in Croatian literature: they

⁵ Goleniszczew-Kutuzow 1970, p.74.

are a threat, a terror of all nations, a people brining death and conflagration. The mighty and power of the Turks results in that they create a separate world which opposes all Christendom”, writes Aleksandra Borowiec⁶.

Fighting against the Turks was one of the main subjects in Croatian literature from the 15th century until the 18th century: this theme appeared not only in elitist genres (epic poem) but also in folklore. The classical Croatian narrative poems devoted to the anti-Turkish subject were written in the 16th and 17th centuries. The major works on this subject are *The Capture of Szigeth* by Brne Karnarutić, *Battles against the Turks* by Antuna Sasin (1594/1595), *Osman* by Ivan Gundulic (written before 1638), and *The Mermaid of the Adriatic Sea* by Nicholas Zriny (1660)⁷.

“Literature thus established the negative image of the Turk, showing him as a cruel and strong violent character, a bloodsucker, an unfaithful, perverse, lying and godless man. In contrast, the parallel image of the Christians, Croatsians, and non-Turks, consistently depicted them as faithful, brave, beautiful, good, merciful, wise and worthy people”⁸.

The most eminent Croatian poet in the early 16th century is, in the general opinion, Marko Marulić of Split (1450-1524). In his native tongue he created poems stimulated by the social demand arising chiefly from the Turkish threat. It is to this danger that Marulić devoted his lamentation *Prayer against the Turks* – a realistic picture of the suffering of the Croatian nation under the yoke of the sultans, and also his greatest work titled *Judita* (1521) – an epic about the heroic widow, who saved her town, Betulia under siege by the Assyrian army, by killing their leader Holofernes. It was clear to all readers that the Old Testament events described in the poem were merely a pretext; there was no doubt they were meant to present the contemporary political situation in the Balkans and express the author’s call to fight against the invaders. There is a hypothesis that Holofernes sculpted by Donatello symbolizes Sultan Mehmed II⁹. This would thus be one of the popular symbols widely utilized in Europe, which appeared not only in literature but also in fine arts.

The poem *Tuženje grada Jerolimima* (Jerusalem’s Lament, where it symbolizes Dalmatia) expresses the infinite bitterness and disillusionment of a citizen and patriot whose appeals went unheeded because the poet of Split begged the Pope for help in vain. Marulić’s anti-Turkish activities are also

⁶ Borowiec 2007, p.198.

⁷ Borowiec 2007, p.199.

⁸ Borowiec 2007, p.200.

⁹ Mártl 2005, p.53-95.

shown in his correspondence with Toma Nigler, a diplomat, who traveled all over Europe on diplomatic missions¹⁰.

The echoes of anti-Turkish poems by Marulić and Tranquillus Andronicus are present in the speech of count Vuko Frankopan to Emperor Charles V. The Croatian envoy spoke about violence perpetrated by the Turks, about killings and pillage in the Slavic lands, and about the population abducted into captivity. His Latin prose contains easily identified visions characteristic of the highly tragic poetry of his eminent compatriots.

Petar Zoranić of Zadar (1508-ca. 1569) was the author of the first Croatian elegiac novel *Planine* (1569). The work is a romantic description of the poet's journey around his native mountains in order to forget about his unhappy love. At the same time it is an allegorical account of the life of the contemporary Croatians: joyous in Venetian Dalmatia and full of tragedy and sorrow in the areas incorporated by Turkey. The novel includes Marulić's *Prayer against the Turks*¹¹.

Worth noting among the Neo-Latin poets is Ivan Bolica (Bona de Boliris) from Kotor. In the poem *Descriptio Ascrivii Urbis* he described the attack on Kotor by the Turkish fleet commander, Hayreddin Barbarossa (1539), and he referred to his native town as situated on the very border of the barbarian Turkish Empire¹².

Zadar also gave birth to Brne Krnarutić (ca. 1520-1572 or 1573), a nobleman, officer in the Venetian service, later a lawyer and the author of the poem *The Capture of Szigeth*, in which he depicted the heroic defense of the city against the Turks in 1566¹³.

Finally, a mention should be made of Jurij Dalmatin (ca. 1547-1589), a Protestant writer (who studied theology in Tübingen), famous for his religious songs and translations. Among his original works worth noting is the *Hearty Prayer against the Turks Written like a Song* (1574).

Dubrovnik was an independent republic, formally under Hungarian protectorate until 1526, while at the same time, from the mid-15th century, it was a tribute-paying Ottoman vassal. Dubrovnik political situation was always sensitive because the city's independence was threatened by its powerful neighbors (the Venetians, Hungarians, and Ottomans). No wonder therefore that the literature written there contained hardly any political contents, in particular concerning such a sensitive matter as the Turkish threat hovering over the city.

¹⁰ For more on Marulić see Rapacka 2002, p.98-127.

¹¹ Mucha 2004, p.66.

¹² Goleniszczew-Kutuzow 1970, p.98-99.

¹³ Jakóbiec 1991, p.180-181.

“This caution of the Dubrovnik population was dictated by the strategy for behavior towards their mighty neighbors: avoid frictions at all costs”, wrote Marian Jakóbiec. “Also for that reason, the rich, magnificent republic did not have printing shops at all. Literature was produced in manuscripts, being intended for a comparatively narrow circle of readers. When it was necessary to print something, this was done outside of Dubrovnik, usually in Venice, in order to avoid incurring the anger of Turks”¹⁴.

Unlike the sixteenth-century Venetian Dalmatia with the majority of erudite humanists who wrote in Latin, the cultural life in Dubrovnik developed in a different direction. The independent and wealthy republic, which traded with all of Europe, was able to isolate itself (or rather buy out) from the Turkish invaders. Consequently, the anti-Turkish trend in Dubrovnik’s literature was not too popular: the local poets and humanists generally sought other subjects.

The most eminent sixteenth-century poet in Dubrovnik was Mavro Vetranović (1482-1576), who left behind several thousand poems of different value. Of Dubrovnik origin was also Felix Petančić (1455-ca. 1517), who was in the service of the Hungarian Kings: Matthias Corvinus and Vladislaus II (Jagiellon). He was the last headmaster of the famous scriptorium in Buda under Matthias Corvinus’s patronage. As a miniaturist he painted the portraits of Turkish sultans and officials. His *Historia Imperatorum regni Turcici* (1502), now housed in Nuremberg, is the first history of the Ottoman Empire written in Europe. Petančić travelled to Constantinople in 1513 as a royal envoy, and described his journey in the work *Libellus de itineribus in Turciam*. Between 1522 and 1793 it was reprinted six times as *Quibus itineribus Turci sunt aggredienti* and translated into German, Italian, Serbian, and Croatian. Drawing upon the ancient and contemporary geography, Petančić argued that the Turks should be defeated in their own territory¹⁵.

Major anti-Turkish works written in Dubrovnik come from the later period. Both in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Republic of Dubrovnik invited famous learned Italians to hold senior positions, including those of State secretary and the rector of the humanities school¹⁶. One of them was Francesco Serdonati (1540-1602). After he returned to Italy, in 1590 he wrote a work about the eastern invaders: *Ragionamento de costumi dei Turchi e modo di guerriggerli*, published as late as 1853 in Florence. He also praised the bravery of the women of Korčula, who defended the town against the Turks (which happened when he stayed in Dubrovnik).

¹⁴ Jakóbiec 1991, p.176.

¹⁵ Goleniszczew-Kutuzow 1970, p.77.

¹⁶ See Wróbel 2010, passim.

In the late 16th century, when all of Europe was readying to launch a counter-attack against the Turks, the interest in anti-Turkish literature was growing in Hungary and in the Balkans. In Dubrovnik one then remembered the historian Ludovik Crijevic Tuberon (Aloysius Cerva Tubero). In his commentaries he vividly described inter alia the Turkish sultans, providing the West with a work rich in facts and diverse information concerning the Ottoman Empire, and, which is equally significant; he saw the positive traits of Muslim ethics. He also described the Battle of Kosovo Polje (Kosovo Field). At the end of the century Serdonati undertook to see to it that a portion of the Dubrovnik humanist's manuscript would be published. The manuscript was found in one of the book cases in the Benedictine monastery and published as *De Turcorum origine, moribus et rebus gestis commentarius* (Florence 1590). Owing to this fact, already in the 17th century, Crijević Tubero's name won renown on the European scale¹⁷.

Interestingly enough, in Dubrovnik it was the Jews rather than the Turks who met with dislike as an ethnically and culturally foreign element. *“After a series of accusations there was a pogrom already 1502, and in 1513-1514 the Jews were entirely expelled from the city. Curiously enough, repressions against the Jews provoked severe response from the Turks, who were outraged over the lack of tolerance in the city, (...) larger Turkish groups appeared in Dubrovnik comparatively late, at the end of the 15th century. Apart from a scant number of tradesmen, Turkish officials and sometimes soldiers stayed in the city. The local community treated them with dislike combined with fear, and the authorities were wary and distrustful because they knew that the sultan's power was behind them (the Turks)”*¹⁸. Until 1526, the Turks had the status of aliens there, who stayed temporarily in the city. It could be said that although the Turks were enemies, they were “our” or “familiar” enemies, whereas the Jews, despite being no military threat, were the unknown “strangers”, which turned out to be a worse category than a familiar enemy¹⁹.

According to the outdated views of some literary historians (which were criticized by professional historians), Bulgaria, like Greece, fell under the “Turkish occupation”, and the “Bulgarians began the 15th century in Turkish captivity; their lands were severely destroyed during the conquest, and the population was exterminated. The country's economic, cultural and social development was stopped. The conquered population called ‘raja’ (herd) had no

¹⁷ Goleniszczew-Kutuzow 1970, p.143-145.

¹⁸ Wróbel 2010, p.51. About this republic see also *Opis Dubrownika*.

¹⁹ On the humanists from the eastern coast of the Adriatic see Petrovich 1978, p.624-639.

rights. Frequent, sometimes successful attempts were made to Islamize the Bulgarians.

The literature of that period, like the whole cultural life of the nation, was deprived of support in the higher intellectual class, and it could not count on the state's patronage. The only cultural centers where literary creation was able to develop were impoverished monasteries maintaining their links with the holy Mount of Athos monastery, which enjoyed certain favors of the Turkish authorities (...) In the early 15th century the *Bulgarian Chronicle* was written by an unknown author, which covered Bulgaria's history from 1296 to 1417, and informed about the appearance of the Ottoman Turks in Europe, their victorious conquests in the Bulgarian territory and about the great defeat of the Christians. The *Chronicle* contains many inaccuracies and errors and is more of a literary than historical work (...) among the monk-writers, Vladislav Grammatik (Vladislaus Grammaticus, ca. 1420-1480) is especially worth noting: he wrote inter alia *The Story of the Carrying of Ivan of Rila's relics from Tyrnovo to the Rila Monastery*. In this work he presents vivid pictures of Bulgaria's capital, of the Rila Monastery, episodes of battles with the Turks, with the pages emanating hatred towards the Crescent believers²⁰.

This quotation cannot be left without a comment. Henryka Czajka's authoritative theses about Bulgarian economy are now unacceptable, and those concerning culture are at least controversial. After all, when the *Dzieje literatur europejskich* [History of European Literatures] was published, Machiel Kiel's excellent book had already been known for several years: his studies cast entirely different light on the history of Bulgaria in the Ottoman period²¹.

Rositsa Gradeva in turn emphasizes that after the Turkish conquest of the Balkans, the knowledge about the Turks and their customs became indispensable. It was necessary in the first place to find the dividing line, the factor which would make it possible to mark a distinct borderline between the Turks (Muslims) and the Christians, as well as to define the former as a politically alien force threatening Christendom, and at the same time to identify the reason why this danger hovered over the Christians, and finally to stress the superiority of the Christian world. Because finding this factor would be a necessary condition for Christian communities to survive, so many negative stereotypes grew up around the Turks both in folklore and in literature²². What's

²⁰ Czajka 1991, p.40-42.

²¹ Kiel 1985. See also Todorova 2008, passim. The attitude of the Ottomans to the populations in the conquered countries has been also demythologized by the eminent Polish Turkologist Dariusz Kołodziejczyk.

²² Gradeva 1995, p.183.

interesting, both the Turks and the Greeks were enemies in the Bulgarian folklore. In contrast, Bulgarian literature (“canonized literary sources”) shows only the Turk as the enemy because both the Greek and the Bulgarians were Orthodox Church believers and as such they could not be enemies towards each other²³.

From the early 16th century, the function of an outstanding cultural center was exercised by Sofia, where a well-known writing school was established. Unfortunately, attempts to Islamize the Slavic population were more intensive here than in other Bulgarian towns. When these attempts did not yield the expected results, the Christians were severely punished. In 1515 a Sofia goldsmith Georgi (George) called Novi (the New), died a martyr’s death at the stake, and in 1555 a shoemaker, Nikola, also called Novi, was stoned to death. They both paid with their lives for a firm refusal to convert to Islam. Their attitude was immortalized in literature. “They became heroes of several works: ‘services’, ‘praises’, ‘vitas’. The earliest *Vita of Georgi Novi* (written after 1516) was authored by the priest named Pejo, regarded as an eminent activist of the Sofia school. He also wrote the *Service in memory of St. Georgi Novi*. Pejo’s *Vita* shows the figure of an extremely handsome youth Georgi, whom the Turks tempt with the promises of wealth and high-ranking positions, and when they meet with a resolute refusal, they decide to burn him at the stake. His body remains miraculously intact by fire and also miraculously transported to an Orthodox church”²⁴.

Serbia was in a similar situation like Greece and Bulgaria. It was from there that the author of one of the most widely-read sixteenth-century works came: *Memoirs of a Janissary*. The title, given to the text only later by publishers, suggests that it is a kind of diary, which is not true. The latest edition of this source is titled *The Notes of A Janissary*, while Angiolo Danti suggested that the work be called *The Turkish Chronicle*. Another misunderstanding connected with this chronicle, often repeated until very recently, is to attribute Polish descent to its author. Konstantin Mihailović was actually a Serb, born ca. 1435. As a janissary, fighting in the sultan’s service in Europe and Asia, he stayed with the Turks for eight years. At the end of his life, about 1500, he wrote down his reflections, memories, and observations (it was published in 1565). This work, highly hostile towards the Turks, first of all contains descriptions of Muslim religious rites (the first seven chapters), organization of the government and the sultan’s court (chapters XXXVI; XXXVIII-XXXIX; XLII; XLVIII), including the military organization of the Turks (chapters XL;

²³ Kuran-Burçoğlu 2003, p.27.

²⁴ Czajka 1991, p.43.

XLIII-XLV) and their military operations in Greece, Hungary and in the Balkans (chiefly in Serbia, chapters XV-XVII; XXVII-XXVIII; XXXV). Several chapters are devoted to the battles fought by Vladislav III of Varna (chapters XXI; XXIII) and by John Hunyady, called here voivode Jankul, (chapter XXIV) against the Turks. There is also information here about Sultan Ottoman and his descendants (chapters IX-XIII; XIX-XX; XXII, XXV).

It is in order here to cite an Italian philologist, Angiolo Danti's comment: "The Turks still of course remain 'cursed pagans' who should be fought against but their community should be the object of attention and imitation because of the values that they preserve and respect. If the Christians have faith but lack the deeds, the Muslims do not know the true faith but they have the deeds: it is they who are, in some respects, the true Christians. The Turkish state, undefeated because united, dangerous because well organized, is presented in the *Chronicle* as the embodiment of a new type of society, based on freedom, including religious freedom, and on social justice, where all people are subordinated only to the supreme authority of the Sultan, the genuine charismatic leader. And in the providentialist vision of history, now strongly present in the worldview of Jednota [Union/Unity], the Turks represent the instrument of justice in God's hand to punish the sinful Christians.

If we wanted to document the existence, in the Jednota's cultural tradition, of the attitudes in question towards the Turks, although enemies of faith but at the same time characterized by tolerance and thereby just, i.e. as long as God willed so, the fate of the Christians lay in their (Turks') hands, we would have, I believe, only the problem with choice. Moreover, *The Turkish Chronicle* is no exception: in the European political literature in the West and the East, a great role was played from the early 16th century by the idea of reform whose model was the myth of 'Turkish good government' ²⁵.

In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople. The last emperor of the Byzantine Empire was killed fighting, and the invaders pillaged and destroyed

²⁵ There has already been ample literature on this source, which cannot be discussed in full. See e.g. Bujak 1925, p.129-134; Backvis 1975, p.630-634; Bylina 1980, p.204-207; Bylina 1972, p.5-25; Ćirić 1952, p.140-170; Sikorski 1966, p.34-37; Danti 1980, p.135-256; Danti 1969, p.101-113; Jovanović 1972. Editions: *Pamiętniki Janczara Polaka przed r. 1500 napisane*, wyd. A. Gałęzowski, Warszawa 1828 (2nd edition Sanok 1857, 3rd edition, ibid 1868); critical edition: *Pamiętniki janczara czyli Kronika turecka Konstantego z Ostrowicy napisana pomiędzy r. 1496 a 1501*, ed. J. Łoś, Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich", t. 63, Kraków 1912 (this edition is the basis of contemporary translations into other languages); *Zapiski janczara*, ed. J. Czykwin, Białystok 2008 (with Belorussian translation); *Memorien Eines Janitscharen oder Türkische Chronik*, eingeleitet und übersetzt von R. Lachmann, Graz-Wien-Köln 1975; Mihailović 1975. Excerpts in: *Proza polska*, p.377-390; Vrtel-Wierczyński 1977, p.155-158; *Z duchem* 1991, p.41-44.

the city²⁶. From that time on a new period in Greece's history began – the subjugation and loss of independence, which lasted 400 years. During that period many lamentations were written, which eulogized the sad fall of the Eastern Empire²⁷. The Turkish threat also caused the revival of the Byzantine Empire's historiography, but these were only its last traces.

The siege of the Empire's capital of three decades earlier (1422) was described by a fairly unknown eyewitness John Kananos (Cananus). His *Account of the Siege of Constantinople* is not worth of historical interest, however. Of greater value is the *Account of the Capture of Thessalonica* authored by Kananos's contemporary, John Anagnostes, who interestingly described the history of the capture of the city by Sultan Murad II's army in 1430.

It is only under the influence of the drama of Constantinople's fall and of the Empire's final disaster that excellent Byzantine historiography revived and developed for the last time. Three eminent historical works should be named here.

The author of the first was the only Byzantine historian who came from Athens, a highly educated humanist Laonicus Chalcocondyles (ca. 1430-ca. 1490). His *Histories* in ten books covered the events of 1298-1463 (*De origine et rebus gestis Turcorum libri decem*, edited in Basel 1556). For the first time in the Byzantine historiography the main subject of the author's interest were not the events occurring in the Byzantine Empire but foreign affairs, in this case – Turkish. He presented in detail the history of the Turks, their origin, the organization of the state, the development of its power and the history of Turkish conquests. Laonicus described the endeavors of Byzantine emperors to obtain assistance from abroad, and his narrative also included valuable information about the countries and peoples of Western Europe. He also advanced a specific interpretation of the reasons why the Turks captured Constantinople: it was the revenge of the Asians for the destruction of Asian Troy by the Greeks. Apparently, he might have borrowed this theme from Giovanni Maria Filelfo.

The second noteworthy Byzantine historian of that period was Dukas (ca. 1400-1470), a supporter of the Church Union with Rome, from which he expected assistance in the fight against the Turks. Already after the fall of Constantinople he went on a diplomatic mission to Mehmed II. As a historiographer he authored a lengthy historical work (we do not know its title at present), in which he described the history of Byzantium from 1341 to 1462.

²⁶ See; Runciman 1994; Witasek 2008; Nicol 2004; Herrin 2009, p.360-371. The cruel conduct of the Turks and their plundering of Constantinople were preserved in the accounts of many eyewitnesses. See *La caduta di Costantinopoli*; Pertusi 1983; Jones 1972.

²⁷ Nicol 2004, p.92-96.

The events before the first Battle of Kosovo Field (1389), in which the Serbian army assisted by the allied Eastern Slavic troops suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the Turks, were described rather briefly, while the presentation of contemporary occurrences was far more detailed. The work ended with the account of the history of the Isle of Lesbos until its occupation by the Turks. Its author displayed his good knowledge of the Turkish affairs, and interestingly enough, he believed that the collapse of the Byzantine Empire was God's punishment for the sins of its inhabitants.

Finally, the third Greek historian George Sphrantzes (1401-ca.1478), who held state offices and carried out diplomatic missions in the days of last Palaiologoi. Having survived the fall of Constantinople, he and his family were captured by the Turks. After he escaped, he found shelter at the court of the Peloponnesus Despot, and finally withdrew from active political life and entered a monastery, where he wrote his *Chronicle*, preserved until the present in two versions, the lengthier one being a later compilation.

All the three historians displayed an anti-Turkish attitude. In contrast, Michael Kritoboulos (or Kritopoulos; died ca.1470), was the only one who chose to collaborate with the Turks. At the time of the fall of Constantinople he lived in his native island of Imbros, and was later appointed its governor. After it was captured by the Venetians he fled to Istanbul, where he became a secretary of Mehmed II. It is there that Kritoboulos wrote the *History*, which covered the events of 1451 to 1467, i.e. the last years of the Eastern Empire's existence with the history of the Turkish-occupied neighboring countries, and finally, the history of the first ten years of Mehmed II's reign. It was to this ruler that he also dedicated his work, calling the sultan "the king of kings" and comparing him to Alexander the Great and to the famous emperors of ancient Rome²⁸.

The Turkish success again kindled crusading sentiments in Western Europe (albeit for a short time). These plans never materialized, although they left a mark in literature, in particular in neo-Greek poetry. Lamentations (*thrini*) were written, which expressed pain, suffering and rebellion against the barbarian captivity and helplessness. One of the first lamentations was the *Fall of Constantinople* (1045 verses long) by Emanuel Georgillas. The main part of the lamentation is the description of the tragic fate of the last emperor on the doomsday of destruction of the Eastern Empire's ancient capital. At the end, Georgillas appeals to the European nations for help in driving the Turks out of Greece. This is certainly not a poetic masterpiece but the main value of the poem is its excellent historical material. Two later works were anonymous:

²⁸ Grabski 2006, p.125-126; see also Runciman 1994, p.172-174; Haussig 1980, p.356-357.

Lamentation on the Fall of the City and Lamentation of Four Patriarchs. The latter stands out not only by its content but also its exceptional artistic quality. Metropolitan Matheu's *Lamentation*, written in a mixed language (folk vernacular and Attican) is also interesting. Matheu lamented over the Greeks who believed that the Western European countries (first of all the Venetians and Spaniards) would come to their aid; interestingly enough, he included Muscovy among them. However, no one really intended to help the Byzantines. Even their own wisdom and centuries-long tradition could not save them in that dramatic situation. Such lamentations were written in large numbers.

As Nikos Chadzinikolau writes, "*The Greeks spread all over the world. The flow of mass emigration lasted throughout the whole period of Ottoman rule. A large portion of emigrants were not only political ones. Some Greeks were allowed to freely stay in Constantinople – the seat of the Patriarchate and the cultural and commercial center of Greek phanariots (...). From that time on Greek culture and literature large developed outside of the native country*"²⁹.

Of considerable importance for the crystallization of Western views on the Turkish question was the propaganda of the Greeks who fled from the Ottoman domination. During the 15th century, Greek scholars, diplomats and churchmen went to the West in increasingly great numbers. Byzantine envoys were present at the Councils of Constance and Basel. In the years just before the fall of Constantinople, many Byzantine envoys visited the courts of the Western rulers, begging in vain for help for the city threatened by mortal danger. Many of them never returned home: they took service with the Pope or lay rulers, and also took up Hellenistic studies.

The fall of Constantinople and the consolidation of the Turkish power in mainland Greece and on the Greek islands intensified the wave of emigration. Especially large numbers of refugees appeared in Italian towns. Many of them worked intellectually as teachers, translators, copyists, publishers, and authors of all kinds of works. Unfortunately, it is inter alia their wide dispersal that was responsible for the fact that we know very little about their activities in the field of anti-Turkish propaganda. It found its outlet in letters and speeches addressed to the rulers of the countries north of the Alps (particularly the kings of France: Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I) rather than in literary or journalistic activities³⁰.

While collecting these scattered crumbs of information we learn for example that a fervent supporter of fight against the Turks and an advocate for

²⁹Chadzinikolau 2004, p.369-371; see also Chadzinikolau 1986, p.8-15. I omitted here the nationalist-chauvinistic fragment of the argument, which in fact disqualifies the author in scholarly terms.

³⁰Schwoebel 1967, p.153. On the diffusion of Greek manuscripts see also Mondrain 2005.

the preservation of Greek culture was Cardinal Bessarion. In his propaganda activities he chiefly used letters and orations (his *Epistolae et orationes* were published in one volume in Paris and in Venice in 1471, and were later republished in Paris in 1500), which he addressed to the Western rulers. He appealed for unity of all Christendom (the most frequently repeated motif in all anti-Turkish publications regardless of the author's origin) and for launching an expedition against the Turks, whose military capabilities he underestimated³¹. Similar orations were authored by another refugee, John Gemistus, whose exhortation addressed to Pope Leo X was published in Ancona in 1516. One should also mention the treatise by Theodorus Gaza on the descent of the Turks (1472), which was a polemical counterargument to the work written by George Gemistos Pletho several decades earlier³².

In the first decade of the 16th century the *Informatione ad impresa contro a Turchi* was written by John Lascaris – it was a propaganda piece for launching an anti-Turkish crusade. For that reason the author exaggerated in his insistence that the Turkish army was weak, without giving more balanced judgments. The bulk of the work lists the conditions which, he believed, supported the idea of launching an expedition at that moment, and presents a brief plan of the operation. Nevertheless, the book also contains some important information based on Lascaris's observations during his expedition to Turkey and on accounts of Greek refugees coming to Italy³³.

The Turkish threat was characterized in a particularly dramatic way in the *Hymn to Plato* by Marcus Musurus, appended to the edition of Plato's works, published by Aldus Manutius in 1513³⁴.

In Neo-Greek (Michael Kritoboulos) and Russian chronicles the fall of Constantinople was the sign of the nearing end of the world, which the Byzantine calendar predicted in the year 7000 since the creation of the world, or 1492 since the birth of Christ. Moreover, these sources describe the fall of the capital of the Eastern Empire in entirely natural and rational medieval terms of *translatio imperii*. To Russian chroniclers it was obvious that Moscow became the third Rome. This thesis was to be legitimized by the marriage of Ivan III to Sophia Palaiologina, Constantine XI's niece³⁵.

On the other hand, it should be remembered that there were also strong anti-Greek sentiments in the West. Some authors, like Laonicus

³¹ Soykut 2001, p.24-29; 49-54.

³² Meserve 2008, p.124-142.

³³ Schwoebel 1967, p.161-163.

³⁴ Schwoebel 1967, p.169-170.

³⁵ Andermann 2000, p.34-36; Tafłowski 2010, p.23-24.

Chalcocondyles, wrote that the Turkish victory was God's just punishment upon the Greeks for destroying Troy. A significant role was also played by religious disputes. Many Western priests were not particularly upset about the defeat suffered by the "Schismatics". The blame was put on Greek arrogance and vehemence against the church union³⁶, while the Greeks did not forget about the humiliation at the hands of the Latin Catholics in 1204, when the Crusade army attacked Constantinople rather than try to conquer the Holy Land. All the authors writing about the fall of Byzantium (F. Babinger, S. Runciman, J. Herrin) repeat the statement attributed to Lucas Notaras "Better the Turkish turban than the papal tiara", which may be the quintessence of this aversion. The same undertones are present in the account by the Polish chronicler Jan Długosz³⁷.

The Italian states played one of the major roles in Europe's contacts with the Ottomans. A special place was occupied by Venice, which was in a sensitive position because of its dominions, the maintenance of which depended on preserving the *status quo* with Turkey. That is why the Venetian Republic maintained intensive contacts with it – not only diplomatic but also commercial. What is more, it was Venice that functioned until the late 16th century as the European "press agency" – the *avvisi* of Venetian ambassadors largely influenced European political consciousness.

From the standpoint of Rome, the capital of Christendom, the Ottoman Turkey was the antithesis of the Christian Europe, a mortal enemy: hence came the oft-repeated papal appeals to launch a crusade. Literature on Turkish subjects must have therefore been abundant here, the more so that "in the sixteenth century, there was an extreme interest about any news, article, book or simply pamphlet about the Turks. Evidently, the publishers made so much money out of publishing these *Turkish themes* that almost everything was published on this subject irrespective of the reliability or its source"³⁸. Nevertheless, these problems have so far failed to gain recognition among present-day scholars. Even M. Soykut himself confirms in the introduction to his dissertation that there is no study of this kind yet, apart from the book on the image of the "Turk" in Venice³⁹.

In this context, most attention focused on the works of Pope Pius II. It is certainly true that he exerted a great impact on the authors who wrote in the

³⁶ Hankins 1995, p.132-133.

³⁷ Długosz 2009, p.189-191. See also Runciman 1997, p.111-134; Balard 2010, p.201-214.

³⁸ Soykut 2001, p.123.

³⁹ Preto 1975. I encountered a similar problem when writing the book about Italian wars (Tafiłowski 2007). It was only two years after my publication that the study by Marco Pellegrini (Pellegrini 2009) appeared, yet is a popular-science study and does not cover the whole period.

later period but the statement itself is highly insufficient. This influential and widely read author, both as a famous humanist and the head of Church, wrote this about the Turks: *“They are cruel and ignoble people, and being ardent in every manner of luxury, they eat those things that others would abhor, such as the meat of wild animals, wolves and vultures, and neither would they abstain from the erections of the immature parts of the body”*⁴⁰. Pius thus used a fairly primitive rhetorical figure by contrasting the Turks with the civilized nations of the Christian Europe. The crude Turk does what we do not and what we are disgusted with.

He wrote similar humiliating comments about Muslim faith: *“This nation hostile to the Holy Trinity follows some alleged prophet Muhammad, who was an Arab infected with pagan errors and Jewish perfidy, and listened to Christians affected by Arian and Nestorian blemish. He grew in fame by disgracing a powerful widow, and renowned for his adulteries he gathered a band of villains, through whom he won the rule over the Arabs, and knowing the Old and the New Testament he tainted both of them; he dared to say that he is a prophet and talks to the angels. He seduced simple peoples to such an extent that he gave them a new law and convinced them that they should abandon Christ the Savior. He used charms and tricks, and by condoning lewdness and vile copulation he easily attracted the people given to lust, to whom, having taken away the wine from them, he allowed all other things to convince them to follow his law, which, although it admits that Christ is the Divine Breath born from the Virgin, the maker of miraculous deeds, yet it denies His Divinity, and that He suffered torment and death to redeem us. He does not accept the prophets; he will not listen to the words of the Apostles or Evangelists”*⁴¹. This way of viewing Islam and discourse on its subject was begun already by St. John of Damascus, and then borrowed by Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius of Padua, and, through Pius II, by many later authors (Johann Boemus or Stanisław Orzechowski).

This Pope was also a fervent advocate of anti-Turkish crusades, and the author of many orations on the subject⁴², the anti-Turkish question occupying a lot of room in his creative output. He insisted that Islam was a sinister force opposing Christianity; it may have even been created as its complete opposite and contradiction. He perceived the Turkish problem mainly in terms of religious struggle, which, however, should be conducted by secular means:

⁴⁰ Cited as in: Soykut 2003, p.56.

⁴¹ Pius II 2005, p.82. See also Winowski 1978, p.16-28.

⁴² Helmrath 2000; Bisaha, 2004b, p.39-52; Pius II 2005, p.629-637; announcing of the crusade, Pius II 2005, 645-646; Pius II 2001, p.26-46.

hence came his militancy and even militarism. He conceded that the Turks were brave and ready to die for their faith but he challenged the opinions that they were allegedly invincible or that their army was too numerous to be defeated by the Christians. Conversely, he contended, contrary to facts, that the Christians were always able to defeat the Turks in combat⁴³.

An interpretive problem is posed by his letter to Sultan Mehmed II. In it, Pius inter alia encouraged the Ottoman ruler to accept the Christian faith, and, referring to the Sultan's humanistic culture (Mehmed II was presented as a Renaissance prince in Zorzo Dolfin's *Cronaca* on the basis of accounts by Iacopo de'Languschi⁴⁴), he (the Pope) tempted him by the title of the Roman Emperor instead⁴⁵. Some studies assume that this was the expression of a certain attitude or conviction that it was possible to establish peaceful relations with the Turks. This interpretation runs counter to Pius's opinions expressed in his writings. These doubts appear to stem from an incomplete acquaintance of the content of this letter among commentators, who focus only on its one sensational theme. Political and philosophical-theological arguments are only a part of this lengthy work, which was not a letter in the traditional sense of the word, while its author did not give up his militaristic beliefs in it or become a pacifist. The true objective of the work was not to build a peace agreement between the Christians and the Turks, but to demonstrate the superiority, truth, and dominance of Christian faith over Islam, which the Sultan was expected to give up as a false faith, having accepted the papal arguments⁴⁶.

At this point we need to mention a minor work by the Greek Niccolo Sagundino *De familia Autumanorum id est Turcorum ad Aeneam [Sylvium] Senarum episcopum*. This "reportage" was written after its author went on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople after the city's capture by the Turks. It starts with the presentation of the Ottoman rulers in the chronological order, and then its author "presented the beginning of the Turkish expansion in Europe, Sultan Murad II's war with the Polish king and the death of King Vladislaus III (Władysław Warneńczyk) at Varna in 1444, and finally, the victorious advance of Mehmed II, Murad II's successor, which culminated in the capture of Constantinople, and he [Sagundino] described the horrors, dangers and hazards

⁴³ On Pius II's attitude to the Turkish question see also Schwoebel 1967, p.64-77; Soykut 2001, p.18-23.

⁴⁴ Babinger 1977, p.116-117; 122. This scholar goes on to say that nothing distorts this sultan's personality as an attempt to show him as a Renaissance ruler. Ibid, p.364.

⁴⁵ Helmrath 2000 p.124-127; Babinger 1977, p.205-207.

⁴⁶ Babinger 1977, p.424-425. For more on the attitude of Pius II towards the Turks, on the sources of the letter (Nicholas of Cusa, Juan de Torquemada), and the edition of the Latin text with the German translation see Pius II 2001a.

associated with the Turkish invasion. The abovementioned first edition of Sagundino's work, known only from Polish catalogues, was reprinted in a more comprehensive publication in Vienna in 1551" The same anonymous printing shop, which published *De familia Autumanorum*, also printed *Epistola ad Mahumetum II* by Pius II⁴⁷.

Another work on this subject, dedicated to Pius II was *Tractatus super principales errores perfidi Machometti et Turcarum sive Saracenorum* by a Spanish priest Juan Turrecremata. I mention it here because, as has been said before, it was one of Pius's inspirations while writing the letter to Mehmed II.

Not all Italians agreed with Pius's views. Some authors tried to justify the Turkish conquest, using the legend about the descent of the Ottomans from the Trojans and on the wave of anti-Greek polemics. In his work, over 4000 verses long, called *Amyris*, Giovanni Maria Filelfo described the career and conquests of Mehmed II. Aware of the fact that he laid himself open to criticism by choosing such a subject of his work, he presented his apologia by referring to ancient examples and insisting that the Turkish sultan deserved historical reflections as was the case with the ancient deeds of Hannibal, Cyrus, and Philip II of Macedonia.

The main part of the poem was about the capture of Constantinople and the sultan's campaign in Greece. Its author, who was born in Constantinople and studied there in 1440-1442, blamed the Greek for their defeat and was equally harsh towards the Latin Church followers who were not able to unite in the face of jeopardy to Christianity. He highly praised the sultan, whose personal virtues, he emphasized, proved that the sultan could in no way be accused of barbarity. His war exploits brought him immortal fame, the subjugation of Greece being an act of historical justice. The destruction of Troy by the Greeks was finally revenged⁴⁸. The opposite view was voiced by Francesco Filelfo, who, in his "lengthy" letters, repeatedly supported the war against Turkey⁴⁹, and, similarly, by Francesco Barbaro, who advocated the necessity of war against the Turks, particularly after the fall of Constantinople.

Similar opinions to those of Giovanni Maria Filelfo were advanced by an Italian historiographer Francesco Sansovino a century later. In his work *Gli Annali Turcheschi overo Vite de' Principi della Casa Othomana* (Venice 1573) he showed a positive image of the Ottoman rulers presented in the Renaissance staffage. He also compared them to ancient Greek and Roman rulers (Julius

⁴⁷ Lewicka-Kamińska 1976, p.511-512. See also Helmraht 2005, p.97-99.

⁴⁸ Schwoebel 1967, p.149.

⁴⁹ On his letter in support of the matter to King Charles VII of France see Babinger 1977, p.78-79; on his two other letters, Babinger 1977, p.245.

Caesar, or Alexander the Great). He emphasized their education, love of sciences and perfection of governing.⁵⁰ An important work was also the somewhat earlier three-volume *Dell'Historia universale dell'origine et imperio de Turchi* (Venice 1560-1561).

Whether such commendations were an exception or the rule in the views of the Italian public opinion needs yet to be investigated and clarified. Studies of this kind have not been carried out to date, although one could safely propose a thesis that this phenomenon was associated only with learned culture, which was familiar with the figures of ancient history and with the legend of the Trojan war, as well as with certain values of humanist and Renaissance and culture. The image of the “Turk” in Italian popular literature, poetry or folk songs must have undeniably been different, shaped by other influences.

One cannot ignore here an extremely interesting work by the Italian traveler, Luigi Bassano, who visited Turkey: *I Costumi ed i Modi Particolari de la Vita de' Turchi*, Rome 1545⁵¹. This work with anthropological leanings discusses the customs and daily lives of the Turks.

In 1519 the book *La Genealogie du grant Turc à present regnant* appeared in Paris, the title is misleading, however. Its author's intention was to describe the history, customs, forms of government, and religion of the Turks. It was the first book in Europe entirely devoted to this subject and it retained its authority over the century, having had many reprints and new editions. The work was published as anonymous, although C. D. Rouillard attributes it to Teodoro Spandugino born in Italy around the mid-15th century (this attribution was not repeated by C. Göllner). The author was able to present differences between many elements of social and political life in the West and in Turkey, the value of the study being enhanced by the fact that the differences were not overstated. Sometimes the Western customs are even criticized, and the Turkish ones praised. The author tried hard to arouse the audience's feelings of tolerance, understanding of Turkish culture, and healthy interest in it⁵². The name of Spandugino bore the book published in 1523 in Bamberg, *Der Türcken heymlichkeit*, and the one published in 1550 in Luca: *Della casa regale de Cantacusini... delle historie & origine de principi de Turchi*⁵³.

The defeats suffered by the Hungarians at the hands of the Turks caused them to be regarded as resulting from something more than the military

⁵⁰ Soykut 2003, p.58-60.

⁵¹ Soykut 2001, p.33-35.

⁵² Rouillard 1938, p.169-179; Schwoebel 1967, p.209-211.

⁵³ Further reading: *Venezia e l'Oriente* (Venezia 1966); Donnelly 1977; Cavallarin 1980; Comboni 1985; Grendler 1988.

superiority of the Ottomans: the Turks began to be regarded as an apocalyptic people, through whom God punished the Hungarians for their sins. The most spectacular were the Hungarian defeats at the battles of Nikopolis during the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1396)⁵⁴, Varna (1444)⁵⁵, and Kosovo [Kosovo Polje] (1448), and finally, and ultimately, at the Battle of Mohács (1526)⁵⁶. For one hundred and thirty years the Hungarians lived under the constant Turkish threat, and the darkest scenarios eventually came true. The Ottomans occupied a large part of their country, including the capital. These dramatic events could not fail to be reflected in literature, poetry, folk songs, preaching, etc.

In particular, the 16th century in Hungary, and in its literature, was the “golden age” of the development of “historical songs”, i.e. the creative achievements, usually associated with Reformation trends, of so-called poets-songsters, who composed music for their own works. These songs were usually concerned with historical topics. In this field Sebastian Tinódi (1505 or 1510-1556) became particularly famous, whose historical epic songs, mainly extolling wars against the Turks, gave rise to the later Hungarian epic. These songs were gathered in the collection called the *Chronicle* (Kolozsvár 1554)⁵⁷.

Latin humanistic poetry, usually written in the form of *heroides*, represents the idea of *querela Hungariae*, *luctus Hungariae*, *ruina Hungariae*. As desperate as futile calls for international help addressed most often to *Germania* emphasized the role of Hungary as the bulwark of Christendom. This type of poetry was represented inter alia by Bálint Balassi, Hungary’s most important Renaissance poet. An interesting rhyming “anti-Turkish” piece in literary terms called *Opusculum ad Regni Hungariae proceres* (1523) was a Benedictine monk Márton Nagyszombati (died ca. 1524).

The common motif present in all the foregoing works (similarly, in the literature of the Balkan countries and others) is the call for the unity of Christendom in the face of the Muslim threat, and the faith in victory over the “great Turk” as soon as this reconciliation happens. Politicians, monarchs, and princes did not, however, treat the calls by poets and intellectuals seriously.

One of the earliest poets, who composed anti-Turkish pieces, was the most eminent representatives of fifteenth-century Hungarian humanism, Janus

⁵⁴ Atiya 1934.

⁵⁵ On the battle of Varna, the latest, highly valuable study by K. Olejnik should be recommended: (Olejnik 2007). See also *Philippi Callimachi*; Swoboda 1994; Potkowski 1990; Halecki 1939; Halecki 1943; Halecki 1958; Prochaska 1882; Prochaska 1900; J. Dąbrowski 1922; Dąbrowski 1966; Kwiatkowski 1883.

⁵⁶ Tafiłowski 2010.

⁵⁷ Felczak 1983, p.135; Csapláros 1991, p.405.

Pannonius⁵⁸. Shortly before 1480 the *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum* was written, which was attributed to Brother George of Hungary. It was probably a monk, who was taken prisoner by the Turks in 1438 and stayed there for the next twenty years. This piece was published many times in Latin and translated into German (its publisher was Martin Luther)⁵⁹. Its author presents the sources of the Turkish power, describes janissaries, including the devshirme system, and other Ottoman military formations, and finally, Turkish customs and rites, including religious life⁶⁰.

In 1544 the printing shop of Hieronymus Vietor printed a collection of poems connected with the Battle of Mohács and the lamentable fates of Hungary. Its full title *Pannoniae luctus, quo principum aliquot, et insignium virorum mortes, aliique funesti casus deplorantur* shows that this collection contains dirges and laments, while in the poems in Latin or partly Greek the poets bewail the defeat of Hungary and the death and sad fate of the Hungarian king and many dignitaries of the Kingdom of Hungary.

Like *Pannoniae luctus*, Hieronymus Vietor's Krakow printing shop also published in 1527 an account of the Battle of Mohács by the Chancellor of the Kingdom of Hungary Istvan Brodarics (died 1539). The work, even though extensive and, apart from the description of the battle, also discussing many diverse subjects (it contains, inter alia, a geographical description of the Kingdom, albeit highly inaccurate as if its author was not very familiar with the country's topography) was written in an extremely cautious way. He did not want (or could not) discuss some matters directly, having entirely omitted others. He also clearly tried to adulate John of Zapolya, who held the office of the Transylvanian voivode before the battle, and was elected the "national" king of Hungary after the defeat. Although mentioned here, the work is essentially not anti-Turkish (even if there are descriptions of Turkish atrocities in it). It was written rather for the current political propaganda purposes in the struggle for the succession after the Hungarian Jagiellonian line⁶¹.

Extremely popular, well into the 17th century, were the booklets by Bartholomaeus Georgievich (Georgiewitz), a Hungarian pilgrim who remained in Turkish captivity for thirteen years⁶². His work was first published in Antwerp in 1544 in two small books: *De afflictione tam captivorum quam etiam*

⁵⁸ Goleniszczew-Kutuzow 1970, p.184; see also Tańkowski 2006, p.9-10.

⁵⁹ Brecht 2000, p.19.

⁶⁰ Palmer 1951, p.44-68; Classen 2003, p.257-279; Cazacu 2007, p.45-50; Neuber 2000, p.258-259; Schwoebel 1967, p.208-209.

⁶¹ This publication has not been preserved; the text is in *Acta Tomiciana* [1860], no. 193. For Polish translation see Tańkowski, 2010, p.87-113; Zawadzki 1977, no. 12.

⁶² See: Setton 1992, p.29-39.

sub Turcae tributo viuentium Christianorum (also in French and Flemish) and *De Turcarum ritu et ceremoniis* (also in French and German). They were repeatedly published as a joint Latin edition titled *De Turcarum moribus epitome*.

According to C. D. Rouillard, from 1553 to 1600 there were thirteen editions of Georgievich's books, while C. Göllner counted 43 editions in 1544-1600.

The book *De afflictione tam captivorum quam etiam sub Turcae tributo viuentium Christianorum* described the hard fortunes of the slave in Turkish captivity. It was a tendentious work consolidating negative stereotypes and strengthening Christian prejudices. The theme of punishment also appears here: Turkish conquests are the Divine punishment for immoral life, discord and sins of the Christians, especially those of their rulers. It was not until the Christian states united (their lack of solidarity was opposed by Turkish unity), and morally improved that victory would be possible. At the end there is also emphasis on the superiority of Christian faith over Islam, Muhammad being depicted as a miracle-worker, which was a blow aimed at his dignity as the Prophet.

This was a work that enjoyed immense popularity, repeatedly published in many languages all over Europe, consequently, its content, which movingly described the miserable fates of Christian prisoners in the Ottoman state, largely shaped the mass consciousness, thereby establishing the image of the Turk as an oppressor of the Christians.

The book *De Turcarum ritu et ceremoniis* is entirely different in its substance. The author turns out to be a person curious about the world, able to be an objective observer of customs, culture, and daily life. Interestingly enough, he also gives examples of Turkish poetry, the book ending with a small Turkish dictionary and phrase book⁶³.

In general, the collection of (anti-)Turkish works is not very impressive, both in quality and quantity. According to József Jankovics: "*One might think that the problem of this coexistence with the enemy of their bodies and souls, the natural enemy as the Turks were considered, the aggressor, the cruel oppressor of the Hungarians, the pagan and barbarian opponent of Christianity would be the most fundamental target and frequent topic of Hungarian literature during the Renaissance period. This was my expectation as well, but my findings did not entirely support this preconception. In searching through a wide array of non-fictional writings, which include all the major genres of the literature of the period, including sermons, prayers, congregational chants,*

⁶³ Rouillard 1938, p.189-195.

jeremiads, disputes, letters, orations, verse chronicles, historical records, diaries, and the accounts of envoys and travelers, as well as the writings of prisoners such as Georgius de Hungaria, Benedek Kuripesics, Hans Dernschwam and Dávid Ungnád, to discover the previously mentioned image of the Turks, I have found no more than stereotypes, or topoi, and almost nothing individual either in discourse or characterization"⁶⁴. It should be remembered, however, that the political situation in Hungary after 1541, when the former Kingdom of Hungary was divided into three parts, was far more complicated than for example in the countries that were under direct Turkish domination. Here the invaders were not only the Ottomans but also the Habsburgs, while a representative of another political party could become the enemy. Taking these conditions under consideration, we should not perhaps be too surprised at the scant number of (anti-)Turkish pieces, although the events in that country aroused interest all over Europe. That is why texts about fights against the Turks in Hungary were also written and published in other countries (for example Ascanio Centorini degli Hortensi, *Commentarii della guerra di Transilvania...ne quali si contengono tutte le cose, che successero nell'Ungheria dalla rotta del re Lodovico XII. sino all'anno MDLIII*, published twice in Venice: 1565 and 1566, the Krakow publications discussed above, or reports on the siege of Szigetvár, etc.).

In the 16th century Slovakia was part of Hungary, while little is known about sixteenth-century Slovak anti-Turkish pieces. One of Slovak authors, Martin of Trnava, in his *Opusculum ad regni Hungariae proceres* (1523) criticizes the Hungarian nobles because they were not very eager to fight against the Turks, thus showing negligible responsibility for the state. In order to overcome this passivity, the writer gave examples that were expected to be the models of bravery, he also reminded the readers of the heroism of their ancestors in the fight against the fatherland's enemies. Later songs, written in Czech, such as *O nešťastnej bitvie a porážce Uhruo od národa tureckého...*, spoke about the defeat at Mohács, and were almost like news bulletins reporting the situation in the battlefield⁶⁵.

Slovak "lay Renaissance poetry in Czech (or in Slovakized Czech) was also originally expressed in historical epic songs written under the influence of the events that shook the consciousness of Slovak authors and readers, who disseminated the texts in copies, sometimes so frequently that their authorship was lost". This poetry was based on the evocation of actual dramatic war events

⁶⁴Jankovics 2000,p.269-270.

⁶⁵Nawrocki 2004, p.108.

that took place inter alia during fights against the Turks⁶⁶. The Slovak leaflets on this subject were discussed by Gabriela Žibritová⁶⁷.

To the Czechs the Turkish threat remained largely a theoretical question. They did not feel directly jeopardized and were unwilling to take part in the fight against the Ottomans (in 1526 they carried out very slowly the recruitment of soldiers to help the Hungarians, and eventually did not come to their aid). Nevertheless, there are many extant sixteenth-century “noviny” or newsletters devoted to the Turkish subject⁶⁸, and Czech poets and writers appealed for the union of Christendom and for starting a joint crusade.

The most eminent poet of Czech Renaissance was Bohuslav Hasistein of Lobkowicz (1460-1510), a rich nobleman educated in Bologna and Ferrara. Like almost all poets-humanists, he appealed to the European rules for a crusade against the Turks. In his anti-Turkish elegy – “a direct, journalistic reaction to public matters” – the most pertinent is the appeal to Venice and the apostrophe to the Jagiellonians (*Carmen heroicum ad Imperatorem et Christianos reges de bello Turcis inferendo*).

This song is an interesting, erudite and the most meaningful call in Czech literature for an offensive war against the Turks. The *Carmen* was published as the eighth among the poetic *Opuscula* of Bohuslav Hasistein in 1509, and then after his death in 1561-1562⁶⁹.

In 1493 Bohuslav Hasistein made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and then described it. He presented the fights of the populations of Croatia, Dubrovnik, and Durazzo, bravery of the Albanians, praise of the Venetians and the knights of Rhodes. The reader will have no doubt where the author’s sympathies lay. Similar anti-Turkish sentiments were present in the account of the journey to Jerusalem (1490) by the Utraquist Martin Bakalář, while a more moderate opinion was voiced by Martin Kabátník⁷⁰. In 1546, Oldřich Prefát of Vlkanov visited Cyprus on his way to Palestine: he described the inconveniences and difficulties encountered by pilgrims on the part of the Turks⁷¹.

The Czech adaptation of Sebastian Münster’s *Cosmographia* translated and enlarged by Sigismund of Púchov (1554) shows how the Habsburgs tried to benefit from the struggle against the Turks. While Sigismund (or Münster) had little to say about the Ottoman Empire (the work basically contains only the

⁶⁶ Nawrocki 2004, p.111.

⁶⁷ Žibritová 2006, p.57-61. See also Kopčan 1986.

⁶⁸ Rataj 2002, p.317-336.

⁶⁹ Polišíenský 1953, p.89.

⁷⁰ Polišíenský 1953, p.87-88.

⁷¹ Polišíenský 1953, p.94-95. On Hasistein of Lobkowicz see also: Magnuszewski 1995, p.31-62.

description of expansion by the “hostile Turk”⁷²), in the chapter devoted to the Hungarians there is a fairly accurate explanation for the events of 1529, culminated with an oratory condemnation of the “cruel and fierce pagan, that dog Turk, the scourge of God, Satan’s tool, diabolical tyrant who murders innocent Christians contrary to all human laws”. The similarly expressive praise of the Habsburgs, in particular Ferdinand I, can be explained by the fact that it was he who was initiated the publication of the work. Anti-Turkish propaganda of this kind is present in most of the newsletters (noviny) published during the campaign on the Hungarian borders. Their heroes were victorious hussars or brave captains, full of all virtues that a *miles Christianus* was expected to have⁷³. A similarly repulsive image of the Turk was depicted in Jan Carion’s Czech version of “The Nuremberg Chronicle” (*Liber chronicarum*), translated by Burian Sobek of Kornice (1541). The subsequent (late 16th-century) anti-Turkish additions were meant to persuade towns to actively participate in building a standing army that would replace mercenary troops. The authors (Daniel Adam of Veleslavín and Jan Kocín of Kocinet) stressed that the power of the Turks lay in the weakness of undisciplined Christian armies⁷⁴.

A year before the publication of the Czech translation of *Cosmographia* an aristocrat Jan Zajíc of Házmburk “came to the conclusion, in the spirit of the ideal Christian knights, that the Czechs had the potential to effectively oppose the Turks, but they should be spiritually reborn without delay. They should redefine their history, renounce ideological relationships with Hussitism, and have to orient their former Hussite fighting spirit towards fighting to defend general Christian values. At the same time the Czechs had to overcome their anti-German views and transform them into an intransigent attitude towards the Islamic Turks, which would make it possible for the Czechs and Germans to jointly fight against the Ottoman aggressors. The Czech *miles Christianus*, supporting the uniform Catholic Church and devotedly serving his nation and the Habsburg ruler, would thus become the prototype warrior in the fight against the threat of Islamization of Europe”⁷⁵.

The abundance of literature as well as the interest of contemporary scholars show that in the 15th and 16th centuries the question about the limits to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the curiosity about this country were especially strong in Germany. Indeed, the Turkish themes were present in publications from the beginning of print. As early as December 1454 in Mainz,

⁷² See: Iwańczak 2005, p.95, where there is a reproduction of the relevant page of Münster’s work. The original edition of *Cosmographia* appeared in 1544 in Basel.

⁷³ Pánek 2008, p.65-84.

⁷⁴ Polišínský 1953, p.95-97.

⁷⁵ Pánek 2008, p.76-77.

in Johann Gutenberg's printing shop, the so-called six-page Turkish calendar in German was printed: *Eyn manung der cristenheit widder die durken*, which was an appeal for fight against the Turks. One of the consequences of Constantinople's capture by the Turks was that many writers appealed to European rulers to defend Christianity. The new invention – the printing press – was immediately used to serve this idea⁷⁶.

From the latter half of the 15th century the Turkish issues were strongly present in the humanistic speeches delivered in the Imperial Diets (Reichstag)⁷⁷, in German town chronicles⁷⁸, in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century chronicles of the world (with eschatological motifs) as for example in the chronicle by Sebastian Franck⁷⁹. These eschatological themes derived from the constantly threatening Turkish jeopardy in the writings of Protestant theologians, especially Martin Luther, were discussed by Carl Göllner⁸⁰. At that time popular prophecies also appeared concerning the Turks (about the war they waged, their conquests, and the fate of their state): these were based on biblical prophecies from the book of Daniel or Ezekiel, or they were even astrological predictions. This was also a frequent motif in the sermons, in which preachers explained biblical prophecies through historical events⁸¹.

Thomas More attacked Martin Luther (he was not the only one, the reformer was attacked from all sides) for his statement that the Turkish invasion was the divine punishment for the sins of the rulers and the people. Both More and other religious polemicists wrongly understood that Luther also claimed that if this was the divine punishment, then opposing the invasion was a sin⁸². Similar trends appeared in the Hungarian (particularly Protestant) thought.

The former Augustian monk, Luther, was attacked for example by J. Cochlaeus in *Dialogus de bello contra Turcas in Antilogias Lutheri... XV. Contradictiones ex duobus primis quaternionibus libri Lutherici de bello contra Turcas* (Leipzig 1529). The title page of the work bears a wood engraving showing a figure with two heads: of Luther and Palinodus. The text is aimed against Luther's conception saying that the Turks are the scourge of God, and refutes the thesis that they should not be fought against; it also contains the defense of King Ferdinand Habsburg. Luther is treated here as an even greater

⁷⁶ Andermann 2000, p.33; *Als die Lettern*, p.50-51; Migoń 2006, p.10.

⁷⁷ Helmuth 2004, p.53-69.

⁷⁸ Andermann 2000, p.37-39.

⁷⁹ Andermann 2000, p.40-43; Neuber 2000, p.259-260.

⁸⁰ Göllner 1978, p.173-186.

⁸¹ Andermann 2000, p.43-50; Rando 2005, p.51.

⁸² Adams 1962, p.274-275.

enemy of Christianity than the sultan, he is depicted as a defender of Islam, Quran, and the Turkish legal order.

According to Nedret Kuran-Burçoğlu, “*This negative image was reinforced by the metaphors used in a series of impressive speeches that were rendered by Martin Luther (1483-1546). The titles of these speeches were following: **Vom Kriege wieder den Türken** (1529), **Heepredigt wieder den Türken** (1529) and **Vermahnung zum Gebet wieder den Türken** (1541). In these speeches Martin Luther, the leader of the Protestant Church, the Turks were designated as the **whip** or the **scourge of God**, and as the **tool of the devil**, they were even equaled to the **devil** and to **hell**. Martin Luther put the blame of the unfavorable situation of Europe in the 16th century on both the Catholic Church and the Pope, and on the Turks. And while he accused the Turks of killing the Christians, he also accused the Pope of killing the souls of the Christians*”⁸³. By promising to behave better, getting rid of the sin, the Christians could take this whip away from the divine hands.

The Turks appear in Martin Luther’s works far more often⁸⁴. Luther was afraid of Germany being threatened by the Turks, and he did not actually oppose armed battle but he supported a defensive war and was against crusades, particularly if they were to be organized by the papacy, which he identified, like the Turk, with Antichrist (he regarded both the Pope and the sultan as “world tyrants”⁸⁵). He also knew a lot about the Ottomans, in particular about the faith they believed in: as a theologian he was interested in this matter the most, more than in military-political issues, which he regarded as part of the sphere of the profane. He published several earlier works on the subject, and he was especially interested in Quran⁸⁶.

The influence of the severe ethics of Martin Luther and other reformers went far into the 16th and even mid-17th centuries. In the 16th century the belief that the end of the world was near was especially strong among the Protestants, in particular the Lutherans. The signs of the Apocalypse were looked for everywhere. Hundreds of pamphlets reported floods, fires, rains of blood and stones, solar and lunar eclipses, glows in the sky, rainbows, comets, and other astronomical phenomena, and births of monsters. There were also reports of visions of angels urging people to repent in the “last days”. Amid the heated feelings all phenomena were closely observed that could have been interpreted as the harbingers of the nearing Apocalypse indicated by the Holy Scripture.

⁸³ Kuran-Burçoğlu 2003, p.27.

⁸⁴Brecht 2000, p.9.

⁸⁵ See Kąkolewski 2007, p.191-192.

⁸⁶Brecht 2000,p.19. See alsoBerman 2005.

One of such herald would be the appearance of Antichrist, who, according to some of the society, was the Turk⁸⁷. To the German Protestants, the nearing end of the world would be personified by the apocalyptic pair: Gog and Magog or Antichrist with two heads. In either case, these were the Pope and the Turkish emperor.

Another great reformer, Ulrich von Hutten, believed (rejecting any role of the papacy like Luther) that the burden of defense of Christendom against the Turkish threat rested on the shoulders of the Holy Empire: consequently it was an entirely German problem. His appeals for a crusade were addresses not to all Christian rulers but to the princes of the Reich. "At this opportunity" he also criticized them for lawlessness, disloyalty, and disobedience. He contrasted the dissoluteness, drinking, gluttony, and fondness of entertainment of the German gentry unable to endure war hardships with the discipline of the Turks who were conquering new territories on all fronts⁸⁸.

The Turkish danger was a highly relevant topic in the sixteenth-century Germany. Almost every day, new information on the subject arrived and was discussed and debated. Particularly after the battle of Mohács, and especially after the siege of Vienna, the problem became highly significant to the Germans. They were convinced that to the Padishah Suleiman the Magnificent the capture of Vienna would be but another step on the road to seizing power over the world. This was expressed in letters, orations, newsletters, court and folk songs and in carnival plays.

Of importance are also descriptions of journeys to the East and to Turkey authored by Leonhart Rauwolff, Salomon Schweigger⁸⁹ or Arnold von Harff (1499)⁹⁰. A compilation by Bernhard von Breidenbach *Peregrinatio ad Terram Sanctam* was also highly popular. Despite its lack of originality, by 1522 the book had twelve different editions and adaptations, including translations into German, Flemish, and French. It must have owed its popularity largely to wood engraving illustrations by Erhard Reuwich of Utrecht. One of them shows figures of the "Turks" in different types of attires. Moreover, the work contains inter alia a table with the Arabic alphabet and a Latin-Arabic phrasebook⁹¹. Its main part describes the journey to the Holy Land and holy locations there, as well as the journey to Egypt. The work devoted a lot of room to Muhammad,

⁸⁷ See Delumeau 1994, p.167-168; 172-173.

⁸⁸ Schwoebel 1967, p.218-219.

⁸⁹ Neuber 2000, p.260-265.

⁹⁰ Neuber 2000, p.193-196.

⁹¹ Schwoebel 1967, p.190-191; *Als die Lettern* p.44-45; 128-129. Polish translation was made as soon as 1610. See Nosowski 1974, p.299-309.

Quran, and Islam, and, finally, to the descriptions of battles against the Turks (the fall of Constantinople, Negroponte, and the siege of Rhodes).

The Turkish issues were not particularly popular among English authors. The Carl Göllner catalogue records only 28 titles of works published under the Tudors that were devoted to this problem, of which about 20 were reprints and translations⁹². One might thus say that the interest of English authors in writing anti-Turkish pieces was marginal during that period. England was far away from the center of events associated with the Ottoman expansion and the English rulers were generally distanced from what was happening on the Continent. Nor did England have an opportunity to come into direct contact with Turkey until the end of the 16th century. Although in 1507 King Henry VII did not rule out his participation in the anti-Turkish crusade⁹³, yet it was not a serious declaration. That is why the English concepts of and beliefs about the Turks were mainly formed based the accounts by scholars and writers from other countries. The figure of the “Turk” appears more often only in the works of Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare’, i.e. the last quarter of the 16th century. More themes of this kind are present in English literature only in the later period. They often appear in the Elizabethan drama (the Elizabethan period is conventionally defined as between 1579 and 1642)⁹⁴. English scientific studies devoted to Turkey were written only in the 17th century⁹⁵.

Although little was written on this subject, works on the Turkish issues were also read in England. It was from them that English scholars and humanists learned about what was going on the Continent. These works also brought the echoes of the Turkish danger into English humanistic literature. Therefore, sixteenth-century English book collections contained works devoted to Turkey and Islam. The flow of information was thus caused by the movement of works and people (the English went to Italy to study), exchange of letters, and by diplomatic contacts (the Tudor diplomacy was on a high level). Erasmus of Rotterdam was highly merited here: his influence on English humanists was emphasized by Robert P. Adams.

The Ottomans, invading deep into the European Continent, were a serious threat to Christendom. It was a pretext for the English humanists to engage into social criticism: it was the bad, quarrelsome, and aggressive rulers who brought this danger onto their countries as they were unable to establish universal peace in the Christian world. They made use of the parallel, introduced by Erasmus,

⁹² See; Deitz 2000, p.396-397.

⁹³ 1966, p.154-157.

⁹⁴ Aksoy 2003, p.197-208.

⁹⁵ See Tomkinson 2003, p.211-225.

between the fall of the Roman Empire and the contemporary jeopardy to the Christian world. For example, according to Thomas More the Turkish invasion was a punishment to discordant rulers (*Dialogue Concerning Tyndale*)⁹⁶.

When analyzing the views of early English humanists on war the same scholar wrote that although the time of medieval crusades had passed, in 1481 William Caxton tried to inspire his readers with a similar idea. According to him, peace should be concluded in the Christian world, and then the united Christian forces should be used to attack the Turks⁹⁷. Caxton is first of all known as the pioneer of English typography, but he also made translations into English. The idea of crusades was presented in his adaptation of the work *Godefroy de Bologne*.

Juan Luis Vives, in his work *De Europae dissidiis et bello Turcico dialogus*, advocated the need to unite the Christian Europe in the face of the Turkish threat. He published it in October 1526, just after the fall of the Kingdom of Hungary at the battle of Mohács, when the Turks invaded Hungary and potentially posed a danger not only to Austria but also to Italy and the papacy⁹⁸. Already after the fall of Rhodes and Belgrade the English were called upon to help fight the Turks. Pope Hadrian VI wrote to Henry VIII that exhausted Italy would not be able to stand up to the Turkish invasion: in the face of danger the King of England should actively prove his right to the title of “Defender of Faith” by restoring peace in Europe, withdrawing his troops from France and redeploying them to defend Christianity. The Turkish conquest in Europe would after all be dangerous to the British Isles.

The English humanists shared interest in the Turkish issues and fear of the Turkish expansion in Europe with their continental colleagues. The history of Turkey and its society were considered in their writings not only in order to put forward proposals how to check the Turkish advance into the Continent but also as politically and historically significant case studies. Theoretical problems such as the nature of power, government forms, education of rulers, problems of tyranny and rebellion were discussed in relation to examples taken from ancient history, contemporary Europe, and Turkey. The writings of almost all humanists of Thomas More’s circle contained references to the Turks, some of them having published works devoted to the Turkish issues exclusively (e.g. J. L. Vives, *De Europae dissidiis et bello Turcico dialogus*, Bruges 1526)⁹⁹.

⁹⁶ Tomkinson 2003, p.122-143.

⁹⁷ Tomkinson 2003, p.15.

⁹⁸ Adams 1962, p.262-264; Göllner 1961, p.134-135.

⁹⁹ Artemel 1995, p.153.

Anti-Turkish Literature In 15th- 16th Century Europe

The oldest known description of a journey to the Holy Land by a Frenchman comes from ca. 1389. It contains unfavorable remarks about the Turks and Sultan Murad I. The representation of the Turk in medieval French literature was characterized almost without exception by either hatred, which led to the presentation of Muhammad and Muslims as revolting demons, or by confusion that the authors felt because of Turkish military victories over Christian armies, which subsequently resulted in idealization of the Turk as a knight. All these, however, did not arouse interest in the diversity of cultures and in the exotic. The foregoing statement applies to all medieval European literature. It was not until the mid-15th century that this image began to radically change.

The 15th century left more descriptions (usually in manuscripts, and therefore unknown to the wider public), whose authors often emphasized the shocking difference of Turkish customs. It should be stressed that although frequent, the negative assessment was not a rule. A sensible judgment is present in the account by Bertrandon de la Broquière (ca. 1430). Bertrandon, a member in the retinue of the Duke of Milan's envoy, Benedetto Folco da Forli, participated in the audience with Sultan Murad II. Owing to his presence, he left a description of the sultan, discussed the binding etiquette during the audience, the sultan's entertainment, revenues, system of government, his army and the justice system. He pointed out the great obedience of the sultan's subjects, and analyzed the military superiority of the Turks, their mobilization speed, and easy deployment of troops, also emphasizing such factors as light armaments, fast horses, high discipline, tactical abilities, and the skill of organized escape, which disorganizes the enemy. The next part offered advice to the Christians on how to effectively fight the Ottomans. The text also contains descriptions of towns, attires, and people. It is unquestionably the best, objective source about the Turks in that century¹⁰⁰. In the mid-15th century an eminent center of Turkological studies was the Burgundy court of Duke Philip the Good.

The official historiographer of King Louis XI, Thomas Basin, first mentioned the Turkish problem in his work only in the context of the capture of Otranto by the Turks. The author dwelled on the descriptions of atrocities committed by the Ottomans, and spared no disdainful words about them ("canes pocius quam homines appellandi", "spurca et barba gens Turcorum"). He did not conceal satisfaction with the sultan's death ("*seva illa et cruenta bestia*"), which temporarily delayed the threat to Christianity. However, he perceived the Turkish question rather in terms of historical digression, without connecting it

¹⁰⁰ See: Rouillard 1938, p.37-57.

with France's Italian policy, about whose anti-Turkish declarations he had nothing to say.

A new perspective is provided on the Turkish issue by excellent diaries (recognized as a first-rate source) of Philippe de Commines. Their author, an experienced diplomat – first in the service of Burgundy dukes and then the kings of France, a man with the broad mind, profound knowledge, and representing a modern, independent way of thinking, overcame the pattern of prejudices of his time. He regarded Sultan Mehmed II (along with Louis XI and King Matthias Corvinus) as one of the three most eminent rulers of their century. In his opinion the sultan was a wise and valiant monarch who was guided in action more by reason and prudence than by rampant boldness. After the capture of Constantinople he showed remarkable restraint. He did not yield to the influence of his milieu, he made all his decisions by himself like the other two rulers compared with him. He made many conquests and although two empires and four kingdoms fell prey to him, he did not wage wars exclusively with the Christians, he fought just as vigorously against his Muslim rivals, e.g. Karaman and other Eastern princes.

This positive image of the Turkish ruler is not flawless, however. As for his habits, Mehmed II cannot be compared to Louis XI, because immoderation in eating largely contributed to Padishah's death. Nevertheless, the Ottoman ruler's figure in Commines's diaries is presented expressively and highly different from stereotyped presentations by earlier chroniclers. The diarist is not content with contemptuous epithets only. Instead, there is an attempt at honest evaluation of and even a kind of fascination with the conqueror of Constantinople¹⁰¹.

From the mid-15th century on, more frequent contacts with the Turks caused the attitude of the French towards them to be ambivalent: the feeling of awe and hostility (hatred of the Turk, Islam and prophet Muhammad was seen in Georges Lengherand's account, who made a journey to Palestine and Egypt in 1486) began to be combined with admiration and recognition. Under these circumstances, the old legend of the common descent of the Turks and the French was revived. *Annales* by Nicole Gilles (died 1503) begins with a mythological argument on the descent of European nations. The work contains inter alia information that the two nations come from the grandsons of the Trojan King Priam, Troilus and Francinus. The former reputedly led his sons and subjects to the East after the fall of Troy, the latter to the West. After centuries their descendants met; which is why, according to the Turks, no one

¹⁰¹ Baczkowski 2000, p.30-31.

but them and the French deserves to be called a true knight¹⁰². This idea is actually older by 400 years and comes from the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, written shortly after 1099: it originally referred to the Seljuks rather than the Ottomans¹⁰³. This kind of theme first appeared already around 660 in the history of the Franks by Fredegar. He wrote that one of the peoples of Trojan descent was the one that settled in the Thracian lands after the territory was left by the Franks going to the Rhine. This people assumed the name Turks from the name of their king Torquatus and were distinguished by bravery. The legend was later adopted by Capetian historiography¹⁰⁴. The legend that the Turks were descended from the Trojans was also derived from the homophony of the names *Turci* and *Teucri*. The latter word was the synonymous name denoting the inhabitants of Ilion: it came from the name of Teukros, the legendary ancestor of the royal Trojan family, Tros's grandfather¹⁰⁵. This kind of genealogy was the *locus communis* of humanistic writings (although this thesis was opposed by Enea Silvio Piccolomini)¹⁰⁶, its traces being also present in Jan Długosz's *Annales*.

Of significance in this text is the sultan's false letter to the Pope (known from many manuscript copies in Latin, German, and French), in which the sender (Sultan Morbisanus) tries to persuade the Pope to forgo his plans of a crusade, arguing that the real enemies of the Christians are not the Turks but the Jews, who had crucified Christ. The Turks are descended from Antenor, Priam's descendant (what is more, the Italians are also the descendants of the Trojans), and their conquest in Europe and the subjugation of the Eastern Empire would be a justified retaliation for the destruction of Troy by the Greeks and the innocently shed blood of Hector. The goal of the Sultan is to restore the destroyed kingdom. It is often assumed that this is an apocryphal letter of Sultan Mehmed II to Pope Nicholas V or Pius II, most probably written by some Western humanist in the service of the Sultan¹⁰⁷; however, the text was actually written in 1348, perhaps for the benefit of Genoa or Florence, whose interests in the Levantine trade were threatened by the crusade plans of Clement VI.

We might add here that the Turkophobe Jean Lemaire de Belges said in his *Illustrations de Gaules et singularités de Troie* (1500-1513) that it was the French who were "genuine Trojans", whereas the Turks only usurped the

¹⁰² Baczkowski 2000, p.36.

¹⁰³ *Anonymi gesta*, p.207; see also Meserve 2008, p.56; 60.

¹⁰⁴ See: Cardini 2006, p.87; Morawski 2007, p.55-70; Pomian 2009, p.30; Meserve 2008, p.47-64.

¹⁰⁵ Grimal 1987, p.345; Helmrath 2000, p.110-111.

¹⁰⁶ For more see Şengel 2003; Göllner 1978, p.233-236; Göllner 1977; Heath 1979, p.453-471; Babinger 1977, p.216; Runciman 1972; Harper 2005; Hankins 1995, p.135-144; Meserve 2000, p.409-436; Meserve 2008, p.22-64, *ibid* more literature.

¹⁰⁷ Şengel 2003, p.192.

name¹⁰⁸. Andrea Cambini in *Commentario delle origine de Turchi et imperio della casa ottomana* (Florence 1538) in turn rejected the theory of the Trojan descent of both the Turks and the French¹⁰⁹.

Over the next two decades after the publication of *La Genealogie du grant Turc* (1519) nothing of similar significance appeared in France. Pilgrims to the Holy Land met the Turks only on their way to Syria and their account showed more Christian hatred than curiosity. The earliest of those descriptions was published in 1520 in Cambrai and was later sold to pilgrims as a guide. Its author was Jacques Lesaige, a silk merchant from Douai. More interesting is *Tresample et abondante description du voyage de la Terre Sainte... pays de Grece et Turquie*, widely described by a pilgrim, Denis Possot from Coulommiers, who set out in March 1532. One of his pilgrim companions, Charles Philippe, completed the account when Possot died upon his return. The account of their journey was published in Paris in 1536.

More characteristic of the French knowledge on Turkey is an anonymous pamphlet full of first-hand observations concerning the life among the Turks (1528) *Extrait d'une Lettre que ung Chrestien qui demeure en Turquie a escript et envoi à ung sien cousin chrestien. Et de l'estat que l'on tient en Turquie*, published probably in 1528. Its author learned his merchant trade in Ulm, he then worked in Hungary, to subsequently move to Turkey, where he worked for a distinguished Muslim, whose daughter he married. The account shows that each inhabitant of the Ottoman Empire was the sultan's slave in the literal sense.

From the mid-1520s, France had close diplomatic relations with Turkey (the first official French-Turkish treaty was concluded in Constantinople in February 1536). At a certain period one could even speak of a French-Turkish alliance aimed particularly against the Habsburgs¹¹⁰. This produced a new wave of interest in the Turks, especially in their victories on battlefields, this interest having grown particularly strong about the year 1540. That is why accounts of their conquests (Rhodes, Mohács), battles with the armies of Emperor Charles V, or other books devoted to them were systematically published¹¹¹. It should be remembered that although France officially supported papal anti-Turkish and crusade policies, it in fact quietly conducted a friendly policy towards Turkey, having made alliances with it. Contrary to the actual French policy, there were

¹⁰⁸ Şengel 2003, p.182; Rouillard 1938, p.57-59; Voisé 1962, p.232.

¹⁰⁹ Şengel 2003, p.183.

¹¹⁰ Göllner 1978;Malettke 2000,p.373-394; Rouillard 1938, p.105-133; Tafiłowski 2007, p.329 et al. (idem recent literature).

¹¹¹ Rouillard 1938, p.64-73.

also hostile trends towards Turkey in the public opinion. Hence it was necessary to justify the king's policies to the public, both at home and in Europe. This role was fulfilled inter alia by the pamphlet by Pierre Danés, *Apologia cuiusdam regiae famae studiosi, qua Caesariani Regem christianiss, arma et auxilia Turcica euocasse vociferantes, impuri mendacii et flagitiosae calumniae manifeste arguuntur* (Paris 1551).

Probably connected with the foregoing phenomenon was the growing interest in different customs of other nations. An example thereof can be the great Europe-wide popularity of the book *Omnium gentium mores* by Johann Boemus (ca. 1485-1535) published in French translation eight times in 1539-1547. The eleventh chapter of Book Two was devoted to the Turkish issues (the state, its population, history, customs, military organization, law, and religion, including Muhammad himself, who was also recognized as a Turk here: *De Turcia, Turcarumquae moribus, legibus, et institutis omnibus*). His work was extremely popular all over Europe, and apart from its French translation, it was translated into English, Italian, Spanish, and German.

There is ample evidence of special interest of the French in Turkey. In 1540 a pamphlet by Christophe Richer titled *Des Coustumes et Maniere de vivre des Turcs* appeared in Paris. The author went on several missions to Constantinople, yet his work is hardly revealing. Far more important was the study by Antoine Geuffroy *Estat de la court du Grant Turc*, first published in 1542 in Paris and in Antwerp. Its author presented to the French reader the most lucid, genuine and intelligently shown picture of Turkey that was possible in his time. The French translations of the books authored by the Hungarian Bartholomaeus Georgievich were also known¹¹².

As C. D. Rouillard emphasizes, the earlier French envoys to Turkey were accompanied by very few travelers. This changed only when the post of ambassador to the High Porte was taken by Gabriel d'Aramon (1547-1554). The descriptions of journeys and customs, and of the Turkish state produced at that time were published mainly between 1550 and 1570. Their authors were Jacques Gassot, Jean Chesneau (secretary to the ambassador), Pierre Belon (botanist), André Thevet (Henry II's royal cosmographer, the author of the work titled *Cosmographie de Levant*, published in 1554), Guillaume Postel (the most learned sixteenth-century French orientalist, professor of Hebrew and Arabic), and Nicolas de Nicolay¹¹³.

One of the most widely-read works of the time was the history of the Turks by Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), titled *L'Histoire Méorable de la République des Turcs* (1560). The work was revised and republished as *Des*

¹¹² Rouillard 1938, p.179-189.

¹¹³ Rouillard 1938, p.195-217.

Histoires Orientales et Principalement des Turcs (1575). It was widely cited as an unquestionably authoritative study on the history of Turkey and other Eastern states. This highly-regarded scholar, linguist and historian lived for some time in Constantinople and in Arab countries subordinated to the Ottoman Empire. In the introduction to his work he explained that his goal was to enlighten his fellow countrymen and brothers in faith about the customs and religions of other peoples because this was the foundation for concord and unification of all nations. For that reason some of his contemporaries regarded him as a satanic figure¹¹⁴. He also authored the work *Alcorani, seu legis Mahometi et Evangelistarum Concordiae Liber*, in which he compared the common characteristics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Again, we are dealing here with an already utterly modern phenomenon. The credit went to both Italian and French authors in the 16th century that Christian religion, “although still regarded as the most important and best, ceased to be the only one to which all the others – as «pagan» – had to give precedence”¹¹⁵. This was the result of both contacts with the Islamic world and Far Eastern countries and cultures of the New World.

In the second half of the 16th century “the Turk” appeared in French drama (Gabriel Bounin, *La Soltane*, 1561)¹¹⁶. This is approximately the same period when this phenomenon occurred in England in Elizabethan drama, the difference being that Bounin’s drama was the only work of this type in France in the 16th century. Artistic works of this kind were characteristic of France in the 17th century.

As far as the French novel of the 16th century is concerned, the Turkish motif first appears in Francois Rabelais, and in *Histoires tragiques*, the work translated from Italian by Pierre Boaistuau, and then in François de Belleforest’s work, in *Le Printemps* by Jacques Yver, and in others¹¹⁷. It might be finally added that C. D. Rouillard studied 96 French printed publications of 1481-1571 devoted to the Turkish issues¹¹⁸.

Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke records 682 editions of incunabula on the Turkish subject matter¹¹⁹. Almost half of them (328) are letters of

¹¹⁴ Artemel 2003, p.169.

¹¹⁵ Voisé 1962, p.111-112.

¹¹⁶ Rouillard 1938, p.421-434.

¹¹⁷ Rouillard 1938, p.516-533.

¹¹⁸ Rouillard 1938, p.646-652. Further literature: Heath 1986; Merle 2003.

¹¹⁹ Tafłowski 2012.

indulgence (*Ablässbriefe*) published for anti-Turkish crusade. An important position is occupied by descriptions of current events of the time such as the fall of Negroponte and Otranto, the capture of Caffa (Theodosia), the siege of Rhodes or minor battles with the Turks (*Istoria della bataglia data dai Turchi contro la galera de pelegriani dell' anno 1497*). It also contains several announcements from Germany concerning the imposition of special taxes for the war against the Turks. The productions of the first printing presses also include such bestselling items as the letter of Pius II to Mehmed II (15 editions) or a collection of the Ottoman sultan's fictitious correspondence titled *Epistolae magni Turci*, edited by Laudivio Zacchia (Vezzanense), known for 23 incunabulum publications and 7 sixteenth-century editions, both as self-contained or jointly with other correspondence editions (e.g. Strasburg 1510), and from manuscript copies. The extant copies often bear traces of intensive and emotional reading. This work should be classified as sensational literature rather than an epistolary piece in the strict sense. Bernhard von Breidenbach's *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* should also be mentioned at this point.

An interesting example of the growing interest in Turkey is the next, successively enlarged editions of *Geschichte von der Türkei* by Jörg von Nürnberg. While the first edition published in Memmingen without the publication date was barely 13 pages long, the third one, published in Nuremberg in 1500, were as many as 153 pages long. The next examples of this trend are the books: *Türkischer Kaiser, Turci. De Turcis* (5 editions), Johannes Presbyter's *De ritu et moribus Turcorum*, the life of Muhammad published in Plzen, 1498, in Czech (*Mohamet. Život Mahometa*), and even an operetta – *Turci. Operetta del Turco*.

In Poland in 15th century equally popular as in entire Western Europe was the description of Bernhard von Breidenbach's voyage (as many as 17 copies preserved up to the present day). The fear of the Turkish threat is reflected in a significant number of (14) copies of John Anniius' *De Futuris Christianorum triumphis in Saracenos*. And this combination perfectly reveals the blend of Europeans' feelings in relation to the Orient – fear and fascination. One was feared of the threat, but at the same time curiosity was as strong as fear. Accents are distributed more or less evenly herein. Letters of indulgence concerning participation in the crusade remained in 18 copies, whereas letters of Pius II – 7, Mehmed II – 9, works of Sagundin and George of Hungary – all together in 20 copies. As a reflection of apocalyptic fears, among which Turks were one of the elements, are divine revelations of St. Methodius (15 copies). Evidently, the other thing is how the current state of preservation can be considered representative. However, it seems obvious that it is a reflection of real

phenomena and basing on it one can draw cautious conclusions. These proportions are certainly not entirely coincidental.

The same summing up can be made for the next century on the basis of Carl Göllner's catalogue. Like all catalogues this one is also incomplete, it could be complemented for example with Polish (anti-)Turkish pieces (it does not have works by Jan Dantyszek (Joannes Dantiscus)). These deficiencies do not belittle the importance of the work, however, and do not distort the picture of the whole, that is why further analyses will be made using the information collected in it. According to the findings of this scholar, in the 16th century 2463 editions of (anti-)Turkish pieces were published. Especially at the beginning of the century it lists the works and names of the authors known from fifteenth-century publications. Printers-publishers re-issued the recognized repertory, from which they expected a comparatively sure profit. Out of interesting new publications, *De obsidione Scodrensi* by Marino Barlezio appeared in 1504, while between 1508 and 1510 - *Historia de vita et gestis Scanderbegi Epirotarum principis* by the same author. In 1513 in Strasburg there were three editions of *Die Türkisch Chronica* by Jan Adelphus (re-issued in 1516). Worth noting are also the books by Wolfgang Drechsler (*De Saracenis et Turcis chronicon. Item de origine et progressu et fine Machometi... Ioannis Galensis Angli liber. Omnia nunc prima edita*, Strasburg 1550) and by the author known as Captivus Septemcastrensis (published in 1530-1531): *Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum, Chronica unnd beschreibung der Türckey mit yhrem begriff, ynnhalt, provincien, völkern...*, *Cronica, Abconterfayung und entwerffung der Türckey mit yhrem begriff...*, *Türckei. Chronica, Laube, Gesetz, Sitten...*, *Saracenis, Türckisch, und Mahometisch Glaub, Gesetz, Chronic, Gotsdienst, Ceremonien...* Paolo Giovio described the history of the Ottoman Empire very succinctly and lucidly in his *Commentario de le cose de'Turchi*, arranged by the reigns of successive Padishahs (interestingly enough, this work was soon translated not only into German but also adapted into Czech); the list of the Ottoman rulers together with the description of campaigns of Suleiman the Magnificent could be found in *Beschreybung aller Türckischen Kayser*. Certainly, many more works of this kind appeared. On the other hand, it should be observed that almost every year there were reports about miraculous signs seen in Constantinople, prophecies of the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the like. Lighter pieces such as comedies were also repeatedly published.

All these works are preserved in a considerable number of copies, not giving way to quantity of the calls of the crusades. It should be noted that, although in case of latter we know more titles, they remained only in single copies. In contrast, even though there are fewer titles of the texts in broader context anthropological, historical, each one of them remained in many copies

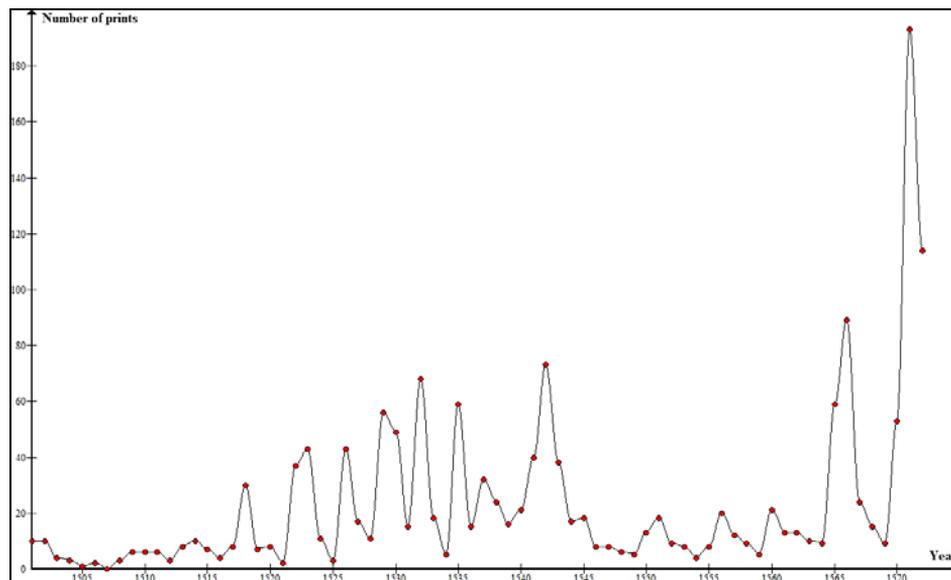
(sometimes a dozen or so or more than twenty). This is a very important indication that points what type of literature was the most desirable, sought and the most read, what European readers were paying particular attention to and what was less significant to them.

In quantitative terms, there were still more texts appealing for war against the infidels and reports on major and minor military battles. By 1518 the number of published anti-Turkish pieces was not very high. It was only then that great interest was evoked by wars in the Levant, and Ottoman advances in Syria and Egypt, which were systematically followed. After Selim I subjugated Mecca and incorporated Syria, Egypt, and Hejaz into the Empire in 1517, the next year saw an almost quadruple increase in the number of printed anti-Turkish pieces, which dropped to the previous level again in 1519.

Similar fluctuations occurred several times more. In 1521 (the fall of Belgrade) barely two (anti-)Turkish pieces were published while in the following year (when Rhodes was also captured) as many as 37 appeared, and in 1523 – 43 (including many *laments* on the loss of the seat of Knights of John)¹²⁰. In 1524-1525 there was also a distinct decrease in the number of published anti-Turkish pieces, which again rose high in the year of the battle of Mohács, reaching 43 editions (mainly newsletters [*avvisi*] and reports concerning the battle and its consequences). In the next two years there was a drop again, and another leap to the level of 56 editions in the year of the Siege of Vienna. The years 1530-1531 saw another decline, the quantitative leap occurring in 1532, i.e. during the intensification of the Turkish-Habsburg struggle in Hungary and in the Mediterranean. The prevalent pieces were then orations that were a call to the war against the Turks, and reports from the battlefield, for example on the siege of Güns (Nikolaus Jurischitz [Juričić], *Des Türken erschreckenliche Belagerung der Stadt und Schloss Güns*, [without place of publication] 1532). The letter of Pius II to Mehmed the Conqueror was reprinted that year. The next year saw the descriptions of mainly naval operations and fights for Tunis but this did not arouse great emotions in the European public opinion. Tunis was captured by Charles V in 1535 and then reports on that event were prevalent. All the time the information about the Ottoman advance in Persia appeared; Europe still hoped that the Persian king would defeat the Padishah. After 1543 the number of annually published anti-Turkish pieces dropped (to slightly rise only in 1556 when the Turks besieged Szigetvár) and continued to be comparatively low until the Turks laid siege to Malta (1565), when their numbers rose rapidly. All the time there was interest in the fate of Szigetvár; during the long second siege, costly to either side,

¹²⁰ See Rossi 1927.

Padishah Suleiman died, the fortress having been captured two days after his death (7 September 1566). In the year of the Christian victory in the battle of Lepanto the quantitative record of published (anti-)Turkish pieces was broken: as many as 193 editions.



All this shows clearly that the publishing movement pulsed with the rhythm of historical events, the printing presses being a sensitive barometer of the international situation. As contacts of the West with the Ottoman East grew intensive during the 16th century, information on current Turkish policies, institutions, organization and customs in this state circulated more and more widely in Europe. Not only the information items were published increasingly often but they were also recognized as important enough to be included in scholarly works.

If there were no new texts, those from several decades before were re-issued, as did the Krakow printer Jan (Johann) Haller by publishing in 1524 Philip Callimachus (Buonaccorsi)'s oration to Pope Innocent VIII, written in 1486. Did this speech become relevant after 38 years? It did not, but the printer could be sure that by taking advantage of the current circumstances he would sell the printed copies and earn money on this edition.

Some events were referred to again after some years, e.g. in 1554 Cornelius Scepper's *Rerum a Carolo V... in Africa bello gestarum commentarii*,

elegantissimis iconibus ad historiam accomodis illustrate was published. The expedition of Charles V took place 19 years earlier. In the publication's year no fights with the Turks were fought, therefore this publication might have been meant to remind the readers of the previous triumph and spur people to fight.

Obviously, many of these publications were hateful, full of slander, offensive, partial, unjust, prejudiced to Islam, its believers and the Prophet himself. The saturation of literature with these types of elements is emphasized in particular by scholars discussing anti-Turkish literature in the 15th century. However, when we exclude this aggressive war rhetoric and calls for launching crusades present in all kinds of orations or elegies, and then look under this topical mask, what we get is a picture of a huge cognitive craving in the West towards the Muslim world. It should be also noted once again that from the second half of the 15th century on the medieval attitude of the Christian West towards the Muslim East was redefined. With time, in the next century the willingness to learn increasingly counterbalanced hatred. The curiosity of the readers stimulated by the current events not only encouraged publication of reports from battlefields but also works containing in-depth information about the enemy. It did not matter that many times this thirst for knowledge was satisfied with untrue, deliberately distorted and propaganda-influenced information, and that the interest was not always friendly. We should remember that in the Middle Ages and in the early modern era the people's attitude to the truth (particularly in reference to geography, history, and anthropology as we know it) differed from our contemporary approach. That is why we should soften Carl Göllner's harsh assessment of *De Turcarum origine* authored by Niccolo Sagundino (Sacundinus): "Verworrene Kompilation ohne jeden geschichtlichen Wert". The interest in the Ottoman Turkey remains an undeniable social fact.

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