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THE CROATIAN HUMANISTS AND THE OTTOMAN PERIL

1.

The Ottoman invasion of the Balkan Peninsula in the 14th century and Ottoman conquests in Southeastern Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries gave rise to a considerable literature in Europe concerning the Turks and the Ottoman threat to Christendom¹. This literature coincided with two major cultural developments: the invention of the printing press with its resulting unprecedented supply of reading material, and the rise of Humanism as the prevailing outlook and literary style of Renaissance Europe. Scholars have thus far largely neglected the role of Croatian Humanists, not only in Humanist literature in general, but in that particular branch of Renaissance literature that dealt with the Ottoman Turks. This neglect is all the more unjustifiable in that the Croatian Humanists of the 15th and 16th centuries were, of all Catholic and Protestant Europeans, the closest both to the cultural influences of Italy, home of the Renaissance, and to the depredations of the invading Ottoman forces.

The Croatian lands, particularly Dalmatia and the whole eastern Adriatic coast, produced many Humanists; some two hundred are known by name². This is not surprising if one keeps in mind that the cultural ties between the eastern Adriatic coast and Italy, since ancient times, promoted by the pre-Slavic Latin character of the coastal cities, were only reinforced by the imposition of Venetian rule from Istria to Albania between 1407 and 1420. As for the hinterland, the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom was politically associated with Hungary and culturally exposed to the Humanist influences which emanated from Budapest. Meanwhile the Croats found themselves along the cutting edge of the Ottoman invasion. Having conquered Bulgaria and Serbia by 1459 (the fall of Smederevo), the Ottoman invaders concentrated on Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Zeta, and began to raid both Dalmatia and the Croatian lands north of the Sava River, thus confronting directly the power and interests

1. See, for example, Robert Schweebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk 1453-1517* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967), for a survey of this literature in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.

2. See the article by Kruno Krstić, "Humanizam kod Južnih Slavena", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, IV (Zagreb: Leksikografski Zavod, 1960), pp. 287-300.

of Venice, Hungary, and Austria. Throughout especially the latter half of the 15th century and the whole of the 16th century most Croats were either subjugated by the Ottoman Turks or the victims of their campaigns and raids. The Croats suffered all the more for inhabiting what became an unstable no-man's land which was constantly overrun by armies moving back and forth with the changing tides of military fortune.

These troubles inspired many Croatian Humanists to make it their task to acquaint the rest of Europe with the Ottoman peril from their firsthand experience and to appeal to European potentates to come to the aid of their beleaguered homeland. These writers were assisted by several advantages which the Bulgars and Serbs did not have. First, the Croats were Roman Catholics and a part of Western Christendom. Second, as Humanists they belonged to an international republic of arts and sciences with a common literary language, Latin. Both this linguistic unity and the rapid rise of printing assured the Croatian Humanists of a widespread audience and reading public, throughout Western and Central Europe. Third, many Croatian Humanists lived not only in their troubled homeland but in foreign countries, above all in Italy and Hungary, where they often held important positions as prelates, chancellors and ministers of state, papal legates and royal ambassadors, military commanders, scholars, and men of letters. Moreover, they spoke with the authority of men who had actually seen and encountered the Ottoman Turks face to face, who had fought them, negotiated with them, travelled through their lands, and even lived as their captives and slaves. Thus what they wrote or had to say about the Turks commanded attention in a Europe that was ever eager to learn more about the great and alien Ottoman might.

The writings of the Croatian Humanists about the Ottoman Turks thus merit serious attention, both as historical sources and as examples of Humanist neo-Latin literature, as this paper hopes to demonstrate.

2.

Some Croatian Humanists were personally engaged in battle with the Ottoman Turks and left eyewitness accounts of those battles and campaigns. Let us cite three such examples.

The first, chronologically, was Coriolanus Capiro (Koriolan Cipiko, 1425-93), a patrician of the Dalmatian city of Trogir, who, as the commander of a galley from his city, took part in and described a Venetian naval campaign against the Ottoman Turks from 1470 to 1474 under the Venetian commander, and later doge, Pietro Mocenigo. Capiro wrote his account in 1475, immediately

after the campaign, while his memories were still fresh, and published it in 1477, in Venice³. This makes Cepio's work one of the earliest printed books by any South Slav. Here one finds detailed and fascinating descriptions of Venetian warfare against the Turks, not only in the islands and the coastlands of the Ionian and Aegean Seas, but in Asia Minor itself, military information, accounts of negotiations, the qualities of the Ottoman forces and their leaders, the life of Christians under Moslem rule, and much else. If Cepio's work was propagandistic, its aim was not to malign the Turks but to praise his commander, Mocenigo. Thus his description of the enemy is matter-of-fact and relatively free of animus. Its exciting content and elegant classical Latin caused it to be published five times in Latin⁴ and four times in Italian (in 1570, 1594, 1794, and 1796)⁵.

Georgius Difnicus (Juraj Divnić, ca. 1450-1530) was bishop of Nin, in northern Dalmatia, during the worst Ottoman attacks on that fortress town. Indeed, the bishop himself took active part in the defense of his town. His report of September 9, 1493, to Pope Alexander VI is a precious source for one of the most decisive battles and worst defeats in Croatian history, the Battle of Krbava Plain, for Difnicu's description is an eyewitness account written on the very day of the battle⁶. This battle is sometimes called the Croatian Kosovo. In both battles the victorious Ottoman forces practically killed off most of the old local nobility.

Similarly, Stephanus Brodericus (Stjepan Brodarić, ca. 1480-1539), a Croat from Slavonia, wrote the most complete immediate account, from the Christian side, of that great catastrophe in Hungary's history, the Battle of Mohács in 1526. Brodericus's account was published in Cracow, in 1527⁷. Here we have an account not only by an eyewitness but by a participant who fought with the Croatian troops under Francis Batthyány, Ban of Croatia,

3. Coriolanus Capiro, *Petri Mocenici imperatoris gesta* (Venetiis: Bernardus Pictor, Erhardus Ratdolt et Petrus Löölein, 1477). We are using a later edition: *Coriolani Cepionis Dalmatae De Petri Mocenici Imperatoris Cestis Libri Tres*. Per Robertum Winter, Basileae Anno MDXLIII.

4. See the items under Koriolan Cipiko in *Iugoslaviae scriptores latini recentioris aetatis. Pars I. Opera scriptorum latinorum natione Croatarum usque ad annum MDCCCXLVIII typis edita*, Tomus I, Fasciculus 1 (Zagrabiae: Consilium Academiarum Scientiarum et Artium Iugoslaviae, MCMLXVIII), 112.

5. Kruno Krstić, "Cipiko, Koriolan (Cepio Coriolanus)", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, II (Zagreb: Leksikografski Zavod FNRJ, 1956), p. 381.

6. Divnić, Juraj, *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, III, p. 18. No author indicated.

7. *De conflictu Hungarorum cum Turcis ad Mohacz verissima historia...* (Cracoviae, Per Hieronymum Viotorem, 1527).

and who was himself an important political figure with intimate knowledge of the situation that preceded the battle; Brodericus was State Chancellor of Hungary at the time, and had been one of Hungary's leading ambassadors charged with gaining Europe's aid against the Turks⁸.

3.

While Brodericus was one of the few Christians who escaped from the battlefield of Mohács, another Croat there, Bartholomaeus Georgievich or Georgievicz (Bartol Djurdjević, also Georgijević, ca. 1506-1566) was captured by the Turks. He was taken to Asia Minor, where he spent thirteen years as a slave under various masters. When, after several attempts, he finally succeeded in escaping, by way of Armenia, Syria and Palestine, and returned to Europe, Georgievich spent the rest of his life writing books about the Ottoman Turks⁹. They were all in Latin, beginning with two works published in 1544, in Antwerp. One was called *On the Affliction of Captives and of Christian Tributaries Living under the Turks*¹⁰. The other was entitled *On the Usages and Ceremonies of the Turks*¹¹. His later works included an *Exhortation against the Turks* and a *Prediction or Prophecy of the Mohammedans*, both published in Antwerp in 1545, a *Disputation with a Turk on the Christian Faith* (Cracow, 1548), and his *Epitome on the Customs of the Turks* (Lyons, 1553)¹². It would be hard to find a writer in all of Europe at the time whose works on the Ottoman Turks were more widespread. There are at least thirty-six Latin editions of his works between 1544 and 1596¹³. Besides, his works were translated into Italian, French, German, English, Dutch, Polish and Czech¹⁴. They were published

8. Kruno Krstić, Brodarić, Stjepan, *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, II, pp. 228-9.

9. Miroslav Kurelac, "Djurdjević (Georgijević, Georgievicz, Georgius), Bartol", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, III, p. 209.

10. *De afflictione tam captivorum quam etiam sub Turcae tributo viventium Christianorum* (Antverpiae, Typis Copenii, 1544).

11. *De Turcarum ritu et caeremoniis, autore Bartholomaeo Georgievich* (Antverpiae, Apud Gregorium Bontium, 1544).

12. *Exhortatoria contra Turcas ad illustrissimum principem Maximilianum archiducem Austriae* (Antverpiae, Cura et impendio Bartholomaei Georgievits, typ. Eg. Copenii, 1545); *Pro fide christiana cum Turca disputationis habitae...* (Cracoviae, Apud viduam Floriani Unglerii, cura et impensis Bartholomaei Georgievits, 1548); *De Turcarum moribus epitome. Bartholomaeo Georgieuiz, peragrino, autore* (Lugduni, Apud Ioan. Tornaesium, 1553).

13. See *Jugoslaviae scriptores latini recentioris aetatis*, I, fasc. 1, p. 175, items 1020-1032.

14. *De Turcarum ritu et caeremoniis, autore Bartholomaeo Georgievich* (Antverpiae, Apud Gregorium Bontium, 1544), Chapter IV (unpaginated), 11 pp.

in Antwerp, Liège, Lyons, Paris, Strasbourg, London, Rome, Florence, Basel, Geneva, Wittenberg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Prague, and Cracow. Just his *Epitome on the Customs of the Turks* underwent at least thirteen Latin editions between 1533 and 1686¹⁵.

Georgievich was such popular reading in 16th-century Europe precisely because he was so full of firsthand information about the Ottoman Turks. His works abound in descriptions of Moslem religious life and institutions, the organization of the Ottoman armed forces, the system of justice, roads and transportation, agriculture and animal husbandry, food and clothing, the life of the non-Moslem subject peoples, and other aspects of Ottoman life as Georgievich himself saw it. It is noteworthy that, thanks to his linguistic interests, he was among the first to give Europeans some idea of the Turkish language, by presenting, in the fourth chapter of his work *On the Usages and Ceremonies of the Turks*, a rudimentary but practical Turkish-Latin dictionary of terms dealing with religion, physical features of the earth, plants and animals, clothing, tools, salutations, numbers, and the like, with a sample Turkish-Latin conversation and a few basic rules of grammar¹⁴. It would be a worthwhile effort for some Ottomanist scholar to make a critical evaluation of Georgievich's knowledge since his works obviously were highly prized and widely read by his contemporaries, including, one may assume, the personages to whom he dedicated his various works—Emperor Charles V, Archduke Maximilian of Austria, King Sigismund of Poland, Pope Julius II, Pope Pius V, Philip Melanchthon, Martin Luther, and still other notables.

4.

Another Croat, the Ragusan abbot and historian Ludovicus Cervarius Tubero (Ludovik Crijević, 1459-1527), was a source, both in his day and later, for Ottoman history. He was the author of a historical survey, in Latin, of the Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia during the thirty-two years from the death of King Matthias Corvinus in 1490 to the death of Pope Leo X in 1522. The entire work was not published until 1603, in Frankfurt on the Main, under the title *Commentary on the Events which Took Place in His Times in Those Parts of Europe Inhabited by the Pannonians and the Turks as Well as by Their Neighbors*¹⁵. However, a good portion of this large work did not have to wait

15. *Commentariorum de rebus quae temporibus eius in illa Europae parte, quam Pannonii et Turcae eorumque finitimi incolunt, gestae sunt* (Francofurti, Impensis Claudii Marnii et haeredum, 1603).

that long after the author's death to see the light of day; in view of the avid interest which Europeans of that day had in Ottoman affairs, just that part of the work dealing with the Turks was published previously, in 1590, in Florence, under the title *Commentary on the Origin, Customs and History of the Turks*¹⁶. Here Tubero surveyed Ottoman history from Osman to Selim I and Süleyman the Magnificent in his own times; he also offered a description of Turkish mores and characteristics. The historical survey included not only the encounter between European Christendom and the Ottoman Turks, but the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire itself, in Armenia, Syria, Egypt, and elsewhere.

5.

Several Croats, all Dalmatians, wrote works about the Ottoman Turks in their capacity as highly placed officials at the Hungarian Court and as ambassadors.

Among the earliest of these was Felix Brutus Petancius (Felix Petančić, ca. 1455-post 1517) of Dubrovnik. He first went to the court of Matthias Corvinus in 1487 to work in that enlightened monarch's scriptorium as a calligrapher and miniaturist. He then held a series of posts as ambassador for the Republic of Ragusa and for King Ladislas II of Hungary-Croatia and Bohemia. Petancius spent much of his life on missions to help organize the Christian rulers in a crusade against the Ottoman Turks. With the failure of the League of Cambrai, one of his last missions was to Sultan Selim in Istanbul to obtain peace for Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia¹⁷. It was in 1502, upon his return to Budapest from Rhodes on a mission to Cardinal Pierre d'Aubusson, Grand Master of the Knights of St. John and supreme commander of the allied Christian forces against the Turks, that Petancius wrote two memoranda for King Ladislas as well as a history of the Ottoman sultans. These are among the most important works written in 16th-century Europe about the Turks. The first memorandum, and the one most often republished (nine editions just between 1532 and 1600), was a detailed description of the main routes between the Ottoman Empire in Europe and surrounding Christian

16. *De Turcarum origine, moribus et rebus gestis commentarius* (Florentiae, Apud Ant. Patavinium, Francisci Serdonati cura, 1590).

17. The most complete work on the life and activities of Petancius is that by Dragutin Kniewald, *Felix Petančić i njegova djela* (Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, Posebna Izdanja, Knjiga CCCL, Odeljenje Literature i Jezika, Knjiga 12, Belgrade, 1961). For Petancius's early career, see especially pp. 1-41 *passim*.

lands which were best suited for military campaigns¹⁸. It does not tell much about the Turks themselves except for their military logistics. However, the two other memoranda have much information on Ottoman internal affairs and history. The first is erroneously referred to simply as the *Genealogy of the Turkish Emperors*, because it begins with a genealogy of the sultans from Osman to Bayezid II and his children, accompanied by miniature portraits exquisitely done by Petancius himself. Actually this ambitious work of 154 folios contains much material on the organization and state of the Ottoman Empire as well, including a detailed description of the civil administration and branches of the armed forces¹⁹. This work was published five times in the 16th century, under various titles and as a part of works by other authors²⁰. Finally, Petancius wrote a work of 36 folios for King Ladislas II which is generally referred to as the *Historia Turcica* which he never finished, due to political circumstances, and which has never been published. The manuscript is in the city library of Nürnberg. It is a very brief survey of Ottoman history from Osman to Bayezid II of which the first part is largely taken from Nicholas Sagundinus's work written *circa* 1456 for Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, better known later as Pope Pius II, when the latter was bishop of Siena²¹. While devoid of scholarly value, it commands attention both for the artistry of its illuminations and for the fervor of the author's appeal for a crusade against the Ottoman Turks.

Antonius Verantius (Antun Vrančić, 1504-1573) was the most highly placed Croatian Humanist to deal with the Ottoman Turks. A native of the Dalmatian coastal city of Šibenik, Verantius sought his fortune at the Hungarian Court. Eventually he became a royal chancellor, ambassador, archbishop of Esztergom and primate of the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary, regent, and cardinal. While only a few pages of his voluminous writings were published in his lifetime, the *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* include twelve volumes of his complete works, mostly in Latin, published in Budapest between 1857 and 1875²².

18. *De itineribus in Turciam libellus Felice Petantio cancellario Segniae autore* (Viennae Austriae, Ioannes Singrenius, 1522). See Kniewald, *supra*, pp. 43-46 for a description of the various editions of this work.

19. For a detailed description of the contents of Petancius's *Genealogia Turcorum*, see Kniewald, *op. cit.*, Chapter XII, pp. 58 ff. and especially pp. 67-69.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

22. *Verancsics Antal, Összes Munkai*. 12 vols. Edited by László Szalay. *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*. Budapest, 1857-1875. (Gusztáv Wenzel was co-editor of some of the volumes).

Several of Verantius's writings on the Ottoman Turks and on events in Southeastern Europe should be of special interest to historians, particularly in view of his personal dealings with the Turks and his high station. For example, after the fall of Szigetvár in 1566, it was Verantius whom Emperor Maximilian II sent at the head of a delegation to conclude peace with Sultan Selim II. Verantius negotiated the treaty with his fellow South Slav, Grand Vezir Sokolli Mehmet Pasa, and signed it in Edirne in 1568²³. Verantius spent four years in the Ottoman Empire, especially in Istanbul and Asia Minor. A highly cultured man with a special interest in history, archeology, geography and ethnography, he noted whatever he could in his travel accounts and reports. Of special interest is the account of his journey from Budapest to Edirne in 1553²⁴; of his embassy to Istanbul in 1553 (written in the form of a dialogue with his brother Michael)²⁵; his fragments on Hungarian history in 1536, with particular attention to Süleyman's campaign in Moldavia and Wallachia²⁶; his report to Ferdinand I of his embassy to the Turks in 1557²⁷; his description of the geography, ethnography and history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia²⁸; and his fragments on the history of Hungary during the time of troubles after King Matthias Corvinus's death in 1490 and the Ottoman invasion²⁹. These are only examples of the many reports, letters, and other writings dealing with the Ottoman Turks to be found in Verantius's complete works.

It seems especially appropriate to note here that Verantius also visited

23. Miroslav Kurelac, "Vrančić (Verantius, Vrantius, Wrantius, Vrancich), Antun", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, VIII, 534.

24. *Iter Buda Hadrianopolim anno MDLIII. Exaratum ab Antonio Verantio. Nunc primum e Verantiano Carthophylacio in lucem editum* (Venetiis, Aloysius Milocco, 1774).

25. *Dialogus Verancii cum fratre suo Michaele* in Verancsics Antal, *Összes Munkai*, I, pp. 268-288; also in Martinus Georgius Kovachich, ed., *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* etc., II (Budae: Typis Regiae Universitatis, MDCCXCVIII), pp. 157-176, under the title "De itinere et legatione sua Constantinopolitana Antonii Verantii cum fratre suo Michaele Dialogus".

26. *Liber de rebus hungaricis anni MD*. 36 in Verancsics Antal. *Összes Munkai*, I, pp. 37-50; *De apparatu Joannis regis contra Solimanum caesarem in Transsylvaniae invadentem*, *ibid.*, pp. 50-119.

27. *Summa successus ultimae actionis Legatorum Antonii Verancii, Francisci Zay, et Augerii a Busbeche apud Principem Turcarum Zoleimanum habitae. 1557. mense Augusto* in Kovachich, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-223. Also in Verancsics Antal, *Összes Munkai*, IV, pp. 300-344. Volume IV also contains Verantius's reports of his entire stay in the Ottoman Empire.

28. *Antonius Wrancius Sibenicensis Dalmata de situ Transsylvaniae, Moldaviae et Transalpinae* in Verancsics Antal, *Összes Munkai*, I, pp. 119-151.

29. *De rebus Hungarorum ab inclinatione regni historia*, *ibid.*, pp. 1-8.

Ankara, not just as a diplomat but as a scholar; it was here that he and his travelling companion, the Flemish diplomat and writer Augier Ghislain de Busbecq, found an inscription dealing with Roman Emperor Augustus later known as the Monumentum Ancyranum³⁰. Humanist though he was, Verantius was interested in much more than Greek and Roman history; it was he who, while in the Ottoman Empire, had the Turkish chronicle *Tarihi Ali Han* translated into Latin. This version was later used by J. Leunclavis (Loewenklaus) in writing his history of the Ottoman Empire³¹.

Finally, of Verantius's writings which have to do with the Turks, we wish to draw special attention to a letter which he wrote to a neighboring Ottoman district governor (*sancak beyi*) called Hasan Bey in 1559 concerning some border problems. What is particularly remarkable about the letter is that, though it was written by a Hungarian official to an Ottoman official, both men were Croats by birth. Indeed, Verantius capitalized on this circumstance by appealing to Hasan Bey, on behalf of some peasants along the border, "for the sake of our neighborliness and our common Croatian origin so dear to both of us..."³². As more than one Croatian Humanist reported, notably Verantius and Cepio, the "Turks" whom they encountered were sometimes men of their own blood and race.

6.

Wherever they were in Europe, Croatian Humanists begged help for their beleaguered homeland and preached a crusade against the Ottoman Turks. Their various appeals to the popes, kings, and parliaments of Christendom comprise a whole genre of their literary output and contain some of their most eloquent Latin rhetoric. Let us simply list here some outstanding examples.

One of the earliest such appeals from the Croatian lands came not from a Croat but a Venetian patrician, Bernard Zane (ca. 1450-1517), who was archbishop of Split from 1503 to 1514 and the hub of a whole circle of local Humanists. He addressed the first session of the Lateran Council in Rome, in 1512, in the presence of Pope Julius II, on the need for confronting the Ottoman danger³³. The speech was immediately printed in Rome by Archbishop

30. Kurelac, "Vrančić", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, VIII, p. 534.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Verancsics Antal, Összes Munkai*, VIII, "Ad Hassan begum Zangziacchum Hatvanensem", pp. 77-78.

33. Giuseppe Praga, "Tomaso Negri da Spalato; umanista e uomo politico del secolo XVI", *Archivio storico per la Dalmazia*, XV, No. 88 (July 1933), 179.

Zane's Croatian companion and fellow Humanist Thomas Niger (Toma Crnić, Crnota, Črne, ca. 1450-post 1531), then canon of the cathedral in Split, who added to the address his own epistle to still another Split Humanist, Marcus Marulus (Marko Marulić)³⁴. Niger spent much of his life on diplomatic missions to Christian rulers and potentates—from Emperor Charles V in Brussel to the magnates of Hungary—seeking to inspire a counter-offensive against the Turks. Among his repeated appeals was one delivered before Pope Leo X and a consistory of cardinals in Rome in 1516³⁵. He delivered another before Pope Adrian VI during a consistory held in 1519. It was in reference to him that Pope Adrian described Croatia as the *antemurale Christianitatis*—a phrase that came to be much used in later Croatian history³⁶. Niger delivered another such appeal in Venice, in 1521, backed by letters from the Croatian nobility, in which they threatened, in the absence of any help, to become tributaries of the Turks³⁷.

Simon Begnius (Šimun Kožičić-Benja, ca. 1460-1536), a native of Zadar and bishop of Modruš, addressed two such appeals: the first in 1513 to the sixth session of the Lateran Council in Rome, and the second in 1516 to Pope Leo X. Himself a refugee from Turkish raids, Begnius combined a sense of anguished urgency with classical Latin eloquence, especially in the latter appeal, which was published under the title *On the Desolation of Croatia*³⁸. Though the harassed Croatian bishop was respectful, his message was quite direct and even threatening. What good did it do, he demanded, for the Papacy to squander gold on building palaces in Rome instead of ransoming Christian prisoners? He called on the Pope to gird a sword about his loins and to lead Christendom in a crusade against the Turks. If no help came, Begnius warned, the desperate Croatian nation would be forced to conclude an alliance with the Turks, and the Pope would have much to answer for before the throne of

34. *Oratio reverendissimi d. archiepiscopi spalatensis habita in prima sessione lateranensis concilii* (Romae, impressa in Vico Pellegrini per Iacobum Mazocchium MDXII die 6 mensis novembris). Edited by Thomas Niger, whose letter to Marulus was appended under the following title: *Thomas Niger, canonicus, archipresbyter et vicarius Spalatensis... Marco Marulo nobili Spalatensi... Romae, V Idus Majas, 1512*.

35. Praga, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

36. Miroslav Kurelac, "Niger, Toma", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, VI, p. 286.

37. Praga, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

38. *Simo. Begnii... Oratio in sexta Lateranensis concilii sessione quinto Kalendas Maias habita MDXIII* (printed in Venice in 1530? See Marin Franičević, "Kozicić (Begna), Simun", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, V, p. 367); also *Si. Begnii. epi. Modrusien. De Corvatiæ desolatione Oratio ad Leonem X., pont. max. Non. Novembris habita MDXVI* (Venice, 1530?).

Almighty God. "And if you do not wish to believe me", Begnius warned Pope Leo, "you will remember that I told you so"³⁹.

Two appeals by Andronicus Tranquillus Parthenius (Fran Trankvil Andreis, 1490-1571) are among the best examples of Croatian Humanist published oratory. Andronicus was the scion of a patrician family of the Dalmatian city of Trogir. After gaining an education in Dubrovnik, Padua, Perugia, Siena, Bologna, Rome and Vienna, Andronicus spent a long life as a roving ambassador for the courts of France, Hungary, and Austria. His missions took him throughout Europe, from England to Poland and Istanbul. As a Humanist he cultivated friendships with some of the leading intellectuals of Europe, notably Erasmus, who not only corresponded with him but included him in a dialogue, *Convivium poeticum*, in his *Colloquia* (Basel, 1524), under the name of Parthenius⁴⁰. Andronicus worked all his life to unite Christendom against the Ottoman invaders, both as a diplomat and as a Humanist author. His two addresses, one to the Germans in 1518 and the other to the Polish nobles in 1545, combine an impressive command of Latin with the fervor of a Croat who is representing the interests of his suffering nation. Andronicus delivered the first before the Emperor Maximilian I and the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire in Augsburg⁴¹. It was rather more than a mere appeal. It included a brief survey of the origins of the Ottoman Turks and the spread of their armies from Asia to Poland, with vivid descriptions of their destructive might. His message to the Germans was that they not wait for the Turks to invade their lands but that they lead a campaign to drive the Ottoman Turks back and to free Constantinople and Jerusalem from the greatest foe that Christendom has ever faced. Andronicus's admonition to the Polish magnates was published in Cracow in 1545⁴². Though written over a quarter of a century after his warning to the Germans, Andronicus repeated a similar message to the Poles, only now made more urgent by the defeat of the Christians at Mohács in 1526 and the invasion and dismemberment of Hungary.

Various appeals to European potentates were made by several members of the powerful Croatian noble family of Frankapan (later Frankopan), which

39. See excerpt from *De Corvatae desolatione* in *Hrvatski latinisti: Croatici auctores qui latine scripserunt*, I, *Iz latiniteta 9-14. stoljeća, pisci 15. i 16. stoljeća: Ex monumentis latinis saec. IX-XIV, Auctores saec. XV et XVI* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1969), p. 513.

40. Kruno Krstić, "Andreis, Fran Trankvil", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, I, p. 101.

41. *Oratio contra Thurcas ad Germanos habita* (Augustae Vindelicorum, In officina excursoria Johannis Miller 1518).

42. *Ad optimates Polonos admonitio* (Cracoviae, Apud Hier. Viet., 1545).

owned vast tracts of Croatian territory and who were especially hard hit by Ottoman incursions. In 1522 Bernardinus de Frangepanibus (Bernardin Ozaljki Frankapan, 1453-1529) spoke a hard-hitting plea for help before an assembly of German princes in Nürnberg. He reminded them that Croatia was “the shield and the gate” of Christendom, and that if Croatia fell to the Turks, then the Holy Roman Empire itself was not safe⁴³. The printed version of the address was preceded by the author’s letter to Pope Adrian VI. Bernardinus’s son Christophorus (Krstó Brinjski Frankapan, 1482-1527) also addressed a plea to Pope Adrian VI, in 1523⁴⁴. In 1530 Vuolffgangus de Frangepanibus (Vuk Tržački Frankapan) addressed Emperor Charles V and an Imperial Diet meeting in Augsburg⁴⁵. In 1541 Count D. Franciscus de Frangepanibus (Franjo Frankapan), then archbishop of Kalocsa and Hungarian ambassador, addressed the Emperor and Diet in Regensburg, though his plea was not on behalf of Croatia but of the whole Hungarian realm⁴⁶.

Marcus Marulus (Marko Marulić, 1450-1524) of Split, the most eminent Croatian man of letters of his time, wrote a letter to Pope Adrian VI in 1522. A classic of Croatian neo-Latin literature, this brief but powerful letter described the sufferings of the Croatian victims of Ottoman raids and called upon the Pope to lead all Christian nations against the Ottoman Turks. “You could do nothing at this time”, Marulus wrote to the Pope, “which would be more salutary for your Church, nothing that would bring more praise to you, nothing that would please God more”⁴⁷.

Georgievich’s works on the Ottoman Turks generally included appeals for a Christian counter-offensive. However, one of his entire works, entitled *Exhortatory Epistle against the Infidels*, published in 1545 in Antwerp, was a call to arms. Originally addressed to Archduke Maximilian of Austria, its later editions included all Christian monarchs. Indeed, in Philip Lonicer’s edition of 1578, Georgievich even proposes how the victorious Christian allies

43. *Bernardini de Frangepanibus, comitis Segniae, Vegliae Modrusiique, Oratio pro Croatia (Nürnbergae in sonatu principum Germaniae habita XIII Cal. Decemb. an. Ch. MDXXII)*.

44. *Oratio (ed Memoriale) ad Adrianum Sextum, pont. mx., Christophori de Frangepanibus... MDXXIII septimo Kal. Julii*.

45. *Oratio ad serenissimum Carolum V. ... ac ad illustrissimos et potentissimos principes Romani imperii. Facta ex parte regnicolarum Croatiae per Vuolffgangum de Frangepanibus comitem etc. oratorem ipsius Croaciae, Augustae XXIII Augusti anno 1530 habita.... (Augustae Vindelicorum, In officina Alexandri Weyssenhorn, 1530)*.

46. *Oratio revmi. in Christo patris d. Francisci comitis de Frangepanibus, archiepiscopi Colocen. et episcopi Agrien., oratoris regni Hungariae, ad caesarem, electores et principes Germaniae (Augustae Vindelicorum, Per Henricum Steyner, 1541)*.

47. “Epistola ad Adrianum VI. Pont. Max.”, in *Hrvatski latinisti*, I, p. 313.

might divide the spoils: the Holy Roman Emperor would recover Hungary and take Thrace; the French king would take Asia Minor; the English, Scots and Portuguese would divide up Egypt; the Spaniards would possess Africa; and the Italians would take over much of the Mediterranean coast and islands⁴⁸. Students of more recent history will note a certain resemblance between this 16th-century program and certain events in the 19th and 20th centuries with the decline and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire: Georgievich's appeal was aimed not only at Christian charity but imperialist ambition.

7.

Croatian Humanists wrote of the Ottoman invasion of their homeland not only in tracts, histories, travel accounts, and official memoranda and addresses, but in their poetry. Educated in classical Latin literature, these Humanists prided themselves on being able to write Latin poetry in the style of the ancients. As with Italian writers of the Renaissance, some of the Croats also chose as a literary theme the encounter between Christendom and Islam.

Georgius Sisgoreus Sibenicensis (Juraj Sižgorić, ca. 1420-1509), a native of Šibenik, a graduate of Padua, a canon of his native city's beautiful cathedral, is best known for his Latin poetry. In his collection of elegies and lyric poems, published in Venice in 1477, several poems express his anguish over the afflictions visited upon his homeland by Ottoman incursions⁴⁹. His elegy on the death of his two brothers points out that one of them died at the age of twenty from wounds received while "fighting for his fatherland and for his hearth"⁵⁰. Sisgoreus's elegy on the devastation of the plain of Šibenik is a bitter lament over the destruction brought to his region and to Christendom by the Turks, whom he calls an accursed and faithless race detested in all the earth. The poem gives a vivid description of the fighting around his city and how the invaders took away their captives as slaves⁵¹.

We have already referred to the anti-Ottoman Latin oratory of Andro-

48. *Exhortatoria contra Turcas Ad illustrissimum principem Maximilianum archiducem Austriae* (Antverpiae, Cura et impendio Bartholomaei Georgievits, typ. Eg. Copenii 1545). We are citing a later edition: *Exhortatio contra Turcas Bartholomaei Georgieviz* in the third volume, *Liber Tertius, De Rebus Turcicis, ex Bartholomaei Georgieviz Peregrini Hierosolymitani Epitome desumptus* of *Chronicorum Turcicorum* of D. Philip Lonicer (Francofurti ad Moenum: S. Feyerabend, 1578), p. 112v.

49. *Elegiarum et carminum libri tres* (Venetiis 1477).

50. "Elegia de duorum obitu fratrum", in *Hrvatski latinisti*, I, p. 124.

51. "Elegia de Sibenicensis agri vastatione", in *ibid.*, pp. 139-143.

nicus; however, he was also the author of a heroic poem called *A Player to Almighty God against the Turks, the Common Enemy of Christians*⁵². In 264 lines of heroic Latin verse the author presented a catalog of the lands conquered by the Ottoman Turks, all given with their ancient classical names as befits Humanist writing, and a pathetic description of the sorrows which Ottoman arms have inflicted. Andronicus wrote and published the poem in 1518, at the same time as his oration before Emperor Maximilian and the Imperial Diet in Augsburg.

Marulus wrote not only in Latin but in his Croatian mother tongue. Among his works in the vernacular there is also a *Prayer against the Turks* as well as a *Lament by the City of Jerusalem* under Moslem rule which the Croatian literary historian Mihovil Kombol has characterized, along with Marulus's letter to Pope Adrian VI, as the beginnings of the whole genre of Croatian patriotic poetry directed against the Turks⁵³. Marulus's two great epic poems, one in Latin and the other in Croatian, both have the same theme: the triumph of the oppressed and just over the tyrannical and unjust. His Latin epic *Davidias* has as its hero the young David who slew Goliath⁵⁴. His Croatian epic *The History of the Holy Widow Judith* has as its heroine another Old Testament figure, Judith, who slew the dread Assyrian general Holofernes in defense of her threatened Jewish people⁵⁵. Both of these religious poems are moralistic and allegorical, and no doubt their theme was a reflection of the contest between the Christendom of Southeastern Europe and Ottoman Islam⁵⁶. While the Croatian poem was meant to give courage to the embattled Croats, the Latin poem *Davidias*, which Marulus dedicated to Cardinal Domenico Grimani, Patriarch of Aquileia, was, in the spirit of Marulus's letter to Pope Adrian VI, a token cry for help addressed to the West.

52. *F. A. Tranquilli Parthenii Dalmatae contra Thurcas Communes Christianorum Hostes ad Deum Optimum Maximum Oratio*. The edition used here is in *Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Opera*, edited by Eduardus Böcking, Vol. V (Leipzig, 1861), pp. 205-236.

53. *Molitva suprotiva Turkom and Tuženje grada Hjerolimima*; see Mihovil Kombol, *Povijest hrvatske književnosti do narodnog preporoda*, 2nd ed. (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1961), p. 89.

54. Marko Marulić, *Davidias*, ed. by Josip Badalić, *Stari pisci hrvatski, Knjiga 31* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti, 1954). Also *M. Maruli Davidias libri XIV*, ed. by Miroslav Marcovich, *Publicaciones de la Direccion de Cultura de la Universidad de los Andes* (Merida, Venezuela, 1957).

55. *Istorija svete udovice Judit u versih hrvacki složena* (Venice, 1521). See Kombol, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

56. Josip Badalić, "Marulićeva Davidijada", in Marko Marulić, *Davidias*, ed. by Josip Badalić, p. 39.

The poet Ludovicus Pascalis (Ludovik Paskalić, Paschale, ca. 1500-1551) of Kotor had a very personal encounter with the forces of Islam in his youth as a captive of the Berber pirates of North Africa. A graduate of the University of Padua and a Venetian officer on Crete, he wrote poetry in both Italian and Latin. His excellent Latin poems, published in Venice after his death in 1551, include various occasional poems on current events dealing with the West's encounter with the Ottoman Turks such as the naval victories of Andrea Doria and the campaigns of Emperor Charles V against the forces of Süleyman II, the expedition to Tunis, the battles with Haireddin Barbarossa in the author's Bay of Kotor, and also the author's appeals to the West to unite against the Ottoman Turks⁵⁷.

8.

Perhaps these examples of the writings of the Croatian Humanists in the 15th and 16th centuries will suffice to show that the confrontation of their nation and religion with the Ottoman Turks was a very important theme. Though these writings differed in genre and circumstances, nevertheless certain common patterns emerge.

Most of the writers vividly portray the Ottoman invaders as the bearers of death, destruction and degradation. In his letter to Pope Adrian VI Marulus speaks of the ruin of monasteries, the rape of maidens, the abduction of boys who are then circumcised and turned into Moslems, and the desecration of churches. Bishop Niger tells not only of the enslavement of maidens and boys, but of "vices that shun a name" and of atrocities committed even against babes in arms. Verantius included in the account of his journey from Budapest to Adrianople in 1533 a detailed description of an Ottoman slave caravan in northern Serbia. Georgievich's whole work *On the Affliction of Captives and Christian Tributaries Living under the Turks* is a painfully detailed description, in eighteen chapters, of how Christian captives and subject peoples were treated, or rather mistreated, by their Ottoman captors, according to the various roles and tasks assigned to them. Andronicus included similar descriptions in his *Prayer to Almighty God against the Turks*. One could cite many more examples.

Yet there is another side to the story. Many of these Croatian Humanist writers betrayed or openly admitted a certain respect for the Ottoman Turks. Even Georgievich, with all his bitterness, described an Ottoman society that was well ordered, that took its religion seriously, that encouraged education

57. Kruno Krstić, "Paskvali, Ludovik", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, VI, p. 434.

and charity, whose soldiers were brave and disciplined, a society that valued personal cleanlines, that believed in meting out justice fairly, and so on. Indeed, he was not above making comparisons between certain Ottoman virtues and Christian vices, in order to put his European readers to shame and to inspire them to emulate the unity and vigor of the Ottoman Turks. Georgievich made a special point of praising the order and discipline of Ottoman military camps while disparaging the carousing and lechery to be found in Christian camps. The Turkish soldiers, he observed, left their vices at home; the Christian soldiers brought their vices with them. In his admonition to the Polish nobles, Andronicus observed that ancient Rome became supreme thanks to its acceptance of excellence from whatever quarter, and he found that the Ottoman Turks were doing likewise. "They count not race but character", he observed, "not origin but ability. Military discipline, honor and love itself has abandoned us for the barbarians"⁶⁸. In his address to the Germans, Andronicus even portrayed the Turks as a scourge of God sent to punish the Christian world for its immorality and disunity⁶⁹. Cepio's account of the Venetian campaign against the Turks in 1474-77 does not hesitate to describe Venetian plunder, rape, and selling Turkish captives into slavery, while it does not vilify the Ottoman enemy. Indeed, one even finds that just as the Byzantine notable Lucas Notaras uttered the famous opinion, before the fall of Constantinople, "It is better to see in the city the power of the Turkish turban than that of the Latin tiara"⁶⁰, so Verantius's brother Mihovil (1507-ca. 1571) argues in an *Address to the Men of Transylvania* that it was better to submit to the Ottoman Turks than to run to the protection of a Habsburg⁶¹. If Bishop Niger opposed the Turks, he also opposed Venetian rule.

This, then, was the fate of Croatia in the 15th and 16th centuries, to be caught between a rising and disciplined Ottoman might from the east and a disunited and dissolute Christendom in the west. None felt the consequences

58. *Tranquilli Andronici Dalmatae. Ad Optimates Polonos admonitio. Cum praefatione Iacobi Gorscii...* (Cracoviae, In officina Lazari... 1584), p. 32. Translated by Dr. Matt Hogan, in manuscript.

59. *Oratio Tranquilli Parthenii Andronici Dalmatae Contra Thurcas ad Germanos habita* in Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Opera, ed. by Eduardus B'ocking, Vol. V (Leipzig, 1861), especially pp. 222-223. Translated by Dr. Matt Hogan, in manuscript.

60. Michael Ducas, *Historia Byzantina*, XXXVII, Bonn ed., p. 264, cited by A. A. Vasiliiev, *History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), p. 647.

61. *Oratio ad Vires Transilvanos*; see Miroslav Kurelac, "Vrančić, Mihovil", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, VIII, pp. 535-536.

or expressed them more eloquently and poignantly than the Croatian Humanist writers of that troubled time.

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