

THE GREAT VICTORY AGAINST ENEMIES OF THE FAITH: THE BATTLE OF LE- PANTO (1571) IN GERMAN NEWS AND PRINT

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In 1453, the Ottoman Empire took the Byzantine Empire's capital city of Constantinople, sending shockwaves through the Christian world. The Ottomans' westward expansion continued into the Balkans and the Mediterranean region. There, they met opposition from European powers in several theaters who wanted to preserve their territory and trade routes.³¹ Ottoman growth and dominance over the eastern Mediterranean was challenged in 1571 by a joint Venetian, Spanish, and Papal fleet off the coast of the Greek city of Lepanto.³² Though the two sides were fairly evenly matched, each with about two hundred galleys, the Christian forces won an overwhelming victory over the Ottomans on October 7.³³ Nearly

³¹ Europeans and Ottomans met at battles throughout the early modern period such as those at the Negroponte in 1470, Vienna in 1529, and Malta in 1565. Baki Tezcan, "Introduction," in *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 1-13.

³² Andrew C. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History," *Past & Present*, no. 57 (1972): 53, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650416>.

³³ *Ibid.*

two weeks after the battle, on October 19, news reached Venice of the Christian victory via sailors returning from the battle.³⁴

Venice rejoiced, and word was immediately sent out along news networks to spread the joyful reports.³⁵ Across Europe, both elites and commoners celebrated a high point in the sustained conflict against their common enemy. Immediate manuscript reports were followed by printed works in prose and verse. A study of a range of news and print sources about the Battle of Lepanto reveals contemporary European attitudes towards the Ottomans, indicating that as German sources become further removed in the chain of transmission from the Battle of Lepanto, they display more pronounced prejudices against the Ottomans.

European Views of Ottomans

To identify European views of Ottomans in early modern texts, one must first establish which attitudes were present at the time. Most scholars of the period emphasize the medieval belief that Muslims were heretics and natural enemies to Christians. This attitude had been developed through crusade rhetoric, but it held strong through the early modern period and was still present even after the Enlightenment.³⁶ For early modern Europeans, the “fall of Byzantium,” when the Ottomans took Constantinople in 1453, shook them

³⁴ Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 139.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

³⁶ Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) 413.

to their core.³⁷ In the years following, this event was profound in shaping the West's definition of the "Turk" in relation to itself.³⁸ Europeans saw the Ottomans as a threat not only to the Christian religion, but to Western culture as a whole.³⁹ The fear of the outside threat of Ottoman expansion was an important identity-building tool for Europe's people to understand themselves as Europeans.⁴⁰ In other words, it gave Europeans an "other" to define themselves against.

New sources of thought emerged in the early modern period which had not been present in the medieval period. The role of humanist writers in shaping early modern European thought is especially emphasized. Humanists were scholars who emphasized rhetoric and human-based perspectives. In the Renaissance, humanists had a great interest in antiquities and in the emerging print industry. Many humanists were staunchly anti-Ottoman and used the traditional Crusader arguments to justify their attitudes, while other humanists added nuance to the established perceptions. Humanists did not necessarily re-examine the old stereotypes because they were more tolerant or open-minded than their

³⁷ Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Off-and-on throughout the period, religious figures and political writers urged leaders for a new crusade against the Ottomans to stop their expansion or to take back lost Christian territory such as Constantinople. Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 413; Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "Crusade Propaganda in Word and Image in Early Modern Italy: Niccolò Guidalotto's Panorama of Constantinople (1662)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (2014): 503–43, <https://doi.org/10.1086/677409>.

⁴⁰ Joop W. Koopmans, "A Sense of Europe: The Making of This Continent in Early Modern Dutch News Media," in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Brill, 2016), 597.

contemporaries, but because they wanted a more secular approach to their Ottoman studies rather than a religious-based one.⁴¹ In the secular and antiquarian view of some humanists, the Ottomans had destroyed the heritage of Rome. Other humanists believed that the Ottomans had inherited Rome's legacy.⁴² The antiquarian view deepened the perceived differences between European nations and the Ottoman Empire and contributed to a sense of European superiority over the Ottomans: where Ottomans were archaic and warlike, Europeans were innovative and harmonious.⁴³ The perception of great difference also led European countries to recognize similarities among themselves, contributing to the development of a pan-European identity.⁴⁴

The cultural and economic expansion of European nations also led to more complex views of Ottomans in these areas. Western European nations like England, France, and the German Empire developed favorable diplomatic and trade relations with the Ottomans during this period.⁴⁵ These

⁴¹ Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 187; Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 411-412.

⁴² This dualistic view was promoted by sixteenth-century humanist visitors to Constantinople who printed works about their experiences. Amanda Wunder, "Western Travelers, Eastern Antiquities, and the Image of the Turk in Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no. 1/2 (February 2003): 89-119, doi:10.1163/157006503322487368.

⁴³ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 187.

⁴⁴ Iver B. Neumann, "Making Europe: The Turkish Other," in *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 40, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/furman/detail.action?docID=310434>; Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 25.

⁴⁵ Lisa Jardine, "Gloriana Rules the Waves: Or, the Advantage of Being Excommunicated (and a Woman)," in *Transactions of the*

practices created what some scholars have identified as a shared cultural space that spanned Europe and Ottoman areas, suggesting that the polarized “us versus them” narrative of European-Ottoman relations is overly simplified.⁴⁶ Other research suggests that the early modern period was merely a transitional time in polarized European attitudes toward Muslims, as attitudes transformed from medieval to modern, which is familiar in imperialist, Orientalist attitudes. Some scholars have identified a Eurocentric sense of hierarchy that emerged as early as the early modern period which construed Ottomans and other non-Europeans as the “other” at a level below Europeans.⁴⁷ This sense of Ottoman “otherness” and European superiority is a fundamental characteristic of the later-emerging concept of Orientalism. Yet, the early modern attitudes were fluid and had not yet developed into the well-defined Orientalism of later centuries.⁴⁸ Additional key characteristics of modern Orientalism, such as a European colonial interest, are not present in the early mod-

Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series, XIV (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2004), 209-222; Detlef Haberland, "Die Perzeption des südosteuropäischen Grenzraums in Türkei-Reiseberichten der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Osmanisches Europa und Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Robert Born and Andreas Puth (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 47-61.
<https://www.periodicals.narr.de/index.php/zmg/article/download/1895/1874>.

⁴⁶ Tobias Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Gerhild Scholz Williams, *Ottoman Eurasia in Early Modern German Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021), 4-5.

⁴⁷ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 187; Carina L. Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and Mexicans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁸ Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); 44.

ern era; early modern Europeans were more interested in protecting themselves from the successful, violent Turk than they were in civilizing him.⁴⁹ Though the groundwork for Orientalism was laid, the attitude itself was not yet fully developed.

The Ottoman threat was an important identity-building tool for Europe's people to understand themselves as Europeans.⁵⁰ Christian crusader ideology, antiquarian humanist thought, and European supremacist ideas mingled during the early modern period to create a notion that the Ottomans were an inimical and insatiable threat to Europeans and to Christianity. This notion only grew stronger during times of conflict, such as the campaign leading up to the Battle of Lepanto.⁵¹

News Networks

News networks played an integral role in allowing both physical documents and attitudes to spread. Ottoman military campaigns, especially those involving Europe, prompted flurries of European news reports. Many of the reports were written by civilian eyewitnesses to the Ottoman campaigns, meaning that they offered unflattering commentary about the Ottomans. News from the beginning of the early modern period, such as reports about the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, was spread through eyewitnesses and messengers.⁵² The Ottomans took Constantinople almost

⁴⁹ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 415.

⁵⁰ Koopmans, "A Sense of Europe," 597.

⁵¹ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 414.

⁵² Initial news of the Fall was carried by traders to port cities, by trading cities to inland areas, and by Christian refugees fleeing north from Ottoman expansion. More detailed reports of the Fall came in the months following. The origin of the sources influenced their portrayal of events; Italian messengers saw it as a defeat for

concurrently with the invention of the printing press, and news of later major events was dispersed through print. In fact, some of the first printed material in several European countries reported on Ottoman activities.⁵³

Recent studies of news networks, which emphasize the pan-European flow and spread of news over case study methods, demonstrate the importance of the printing press in the development of news, as short papers could be printed for a relatively low cost and spread to a wide audience.⁵⁴ News networks grew to span northern, western, and central Europe in the early modern period, and great strides were made in the speed of news transmissions. In 1400, a courier service could carry news from Constantinople to Venice in about 40 days.⁵⁵ By 1700, news from Constantinople could reach Haarlem in North Holland in the same amount of time.⁵⁶ News reports were flying around early modern Europe, making them perfect vessels to transmit and develop attitudes toward the Ottoman Empire. Thus, a sampling of several genres of news reports following the 1571 Battle of Lepanto will

Christendom while refugees were more concerned with their personal well-being. Schwoebel, *Shadow of the Crescent*, 1-7.

⁵³ One of Johan Gutenberg's early pamphlets warns about the Ottoman threat following the Fall of Constantinople; Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 61-62. Published in Mainz in 1454, the so-called "Turkenkalendar" with the top line "Ein Manung der Cristenheit widder die Durken" is the oldest surviving complete book to come off the Mainz printing presses.

⁵⁴ Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, "News Networks in Early Modern Europe," in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 7.

⁵⁵ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 44.

⁵⁶ Joop W. Koopmans, *Early Modern Media and the News in Europe: Perspectives From the Dutch Angle* (Leiden: Brill, 2018) 203. <https://search-ebshost-com.libproxy.furman.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1913487&site=ehost-live>.

enhance our insights into factors shaping European attitudes toward the Ottoman Turks.

Manuscript and Print Sources

Manuscript Newsletters

During this period, elites such as traders and bankers subscribed to receive their news in handwritten packages personally delivered to them. The handwritten news sheets, called *avvisi*, were tailored for the recipients' interests, usually political and economic.⁵⁷ Wealthy merchants like the Fugger family in Augsburg used *avvisi* to cultivate impressive news networks to keep up with business interests in far-flung holdings.⁵⁸ The Fugger family also had their local agents curate packages of printed news-sheets and handwritten summaries of printed texts.⁵⁹

Source 1: Fugger newsletter

The first source examined is a manuscript newsletter sent to the Fugger family. The Fuggers probably received

⁵⁷ The service originated in the trade-rich states of Italy and was offered by various companies as the practice spread throughout Europe. Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 97, 114.

⁵⁸ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 114; Victor Klarwill, *Fugger News-Letters, First Series* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970) xvii.

⁵⁹ One sixteenth-century patriarch, Count Philip Edward Fugger, realized the letters' historical value and collected them, leaving a giant collection which has been the subject of much study. Klarwill, *Fugger News-Letters*, xvii.

several reports about the Battle of Lepanto.⁶⁰ The one presently studied is attributed to a member of the “Christian Armada,” and was likely transmitted through Venice before being copied and sent to the Fugger recipient.⁶¹ The letter is approximately three printed pages long and purportedly written by an eyewitness to the battle. It contains a limited scope of both coverage and perspective. The letter briefly mentions preparations for battle and the spoils captured after the battle, but mainly concerns itself on the battle itself. It reports from a Christian perspective, and does not attempt to rationalize Ottoman battle tactics or decisions. This limited scope is to be expected from an eyewitness report which was written to break the news to high-paying elites, but is distinct from the printed news pamphlets to follow, which assume a broader and more omniscient perspective.

The Fugger manuscript letter uses little harsh rhetoric against the Ottoman forces. They are described throughout the letter as the “enemy,” which is not indicative of disrespect; the Ottoman and Christian forces were, indeed, enemies at the battle.⁶² There are few other characterizations of the Ottomans in the newsletter, focused as it is on the Christian perspective. An exception comes when the letter describes pre-battle encouragement given by Admiral Don Juan of Austria to the Christian forces. According to the letter, Don Juan “exhort[ed] the crew to fight valiantly against the arch-enemy of the Christian Faith.”⁶³ This brief polemic is as overtly negative as the newsletter gets, and it originated

⁶⁰ Klarwill, *Fugger News-Letters*, 14-17. This newsletter was selected for analysis in this essay because it was included in a collection of Fugger newsletters edited by Victor Klarwill. Klarwill translated the letters in this collection into English, easing the study of them. The letter included in this paper is the only one in the collection reporting on the Battle of Lepanto.

⁶¹ Klarwill, *Fugger News-Letters*, 14.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 14-16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

as a quotation from an outside party rather than from the letter-writer.

There are several possible explanations for the dearth of prejudiced language against the Ottomans. It is possible that the author of the newsletter did not hold strong prejudices against the Ottomans. This view is perhaps overly optimistic. It is also possible that the author felt that negative attitudes towards the Ottomans could be assumed and did not need to be made explicit. Perhaps the negative rhetoric circulating in Europe was prevalent enough that the author did not feel the need to parrot them. Lastly, the dearth of prejudiced language could indicate that *avvisi* writers were expected to keep their reports dry and factual, with minimal opinionated language or colorful descriptions.

This possibility is less likely when one examines the language used when describing the Christian forces. Christian soldiers are described as “valiant and brave,” “gallant,” and full of “courage.”⁶⁴ Such descriptions create a strong characterization of the Christian forces; but inverse negative descriptions are not used to characterize the Ottoman soldiers. The one-sided nature of characterizations is more emblematic of a lack of feeling toward the Ottomans than it is of a genre-specific norm against biased language. Further complicating the issue is the clear sense of providence displayed in the letter. The author believed that the Christian forces had God on their side, writing that Christ was “the Patron of this Armada” and that “the Christians had achieved victory with the help of the Lord.”⁶⁵ The author believes that the Christians are right, but does not explain why the Ottomans are wrong.

Another notable aspect of the manuscript newsletter is a description of a woman captured in the battle. The letter reports:

⁶⁴ Ibid., 15-16.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

“On several galleys there were also found a large number of Sultanas and Zechines and on Caragoggia's galley a beautiful young woman, a Christian. She was daintily and richly attired and her neck adorned with large pearls and other precious stones and jewels. She offered to buy her release with 60,000 ducats.”⁶⁶

The letter gives no further explanation of how the woman came to be on a warship, the source of her personal income, or if she was allowed to purchase her release. She is objectified but not exotified in the way that later Orientalist writers would describe Ottoman women. This could be because this woman was a Christian. Desire for the woman was not subversive or lewd because she was familiar rather than foreign and was free from the taint of being a Muslim “heretic.” Still, her freedom from captivity from the Christians is not assured; she is not pure enough to be rescued rather than captured. In this light, a lack of exotification might reveal the same attitude that lies behind the lack of description of Ottomans in the letter.

Printed News Pamphlets

At the same time that these news networks were expanding, the print industry was also booming. The printing press was instrumental in the development of news, because short papers could be printed for a relatively low cost and spread to a wide audience. Some of the first printed works were about Ottomans, and the foreign threat remained a topic of interest for the whole period.⁶⁷

Poems and pamphlets about major events like the Fall of the Negroponte were common from the beginning of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 17-18.

⁶⁷ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 61-62.

print, but starting in the mid-sixteenth century a different format of news pamphlet dominated the market in northern Europe.⁶⁸ This new genre of news documents were not merely intended for the elite like *avvisi* were, but were marketed to a broader audience. The pamphlets were called *Neue Zeitungen*, or “New Tidings,” and were common starting in the 1530s through the rise of the newspaper in the early 1600s.⁶⁹ Like newspapers and *avvisi*, source reliability was valued in *Neue Zeitungen* and pamphlet authors would utilize dry but credible reports over sensationalized ones.⁷⁰ Unlike the newspapers of later years, *Neue Zeitungen* were single-issue rather than periodical and would report on only one event.⁷¹ Ottoman news items were especially popular, given the public’s enduring anxieties about an Ottoman invasion.⁷² *Neue Zeitungen* usually came in a quarto pamphlet format, were typically written in prose, and sometimes featured a woodcut, usually a generic battle scene that could be reused for several different pamphlets.⁷³ *Neue Zeitungen* were a favorite among printers because of both their popularity and because of the ease at which they could be published – a 500-copy edition could be completed in as little time as one day.⁷⁴

Source 2: Nuremberg news pamphlet

⁶⁸ Margaret Meserve, “News from Negroponte: Politics, Popular Opinion, and Information Exchange in the First Decade of the Italian Press,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (2006): 456, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ren.2008.0312>.

⁶⁹ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 72.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

The second source studied is a printed news pamphlet entitled “News from the Great Christian Victory on the Ionian or Ausonian Sea, against the Turks, by which the Porto Le Pante (previously named Naupactus) was received by a peculiar act of God, The 7th of October, in 1571” (*“Zeitung Von dem Großen Christen-Sieg auff dem Ionischen oder Ausonischen Meer, wider den Türcken, so bey den Porto Le Pante [sonsten Naupactus genandt] auff sonderbarer schickung Gottes erhalten worden ist, Den 7. Octobris, Im 1571 ”*).⁷⁵ The pamphlet was published in Nuremberg, a center of *Neue Zeitungen* production, in 1571 by Wendelinum Borsch, and it is sixteen pages long.⁷⁶ It features a woodcut image on the title page of overlapping warships colliding and figures jumping into the water (Figure 1).⁷⁷ The image was probably not custom made, as it does not feature the distinctive imagery associated with Lepanto, opposing fleets arranged in a half-moon.⁷⁸ Instead, the woodcut simply conveys that the pamphlet reports on a dramatic sea battle.

The pamphlet takes a more holistic view of the battle, beginning with a summary of the Ottoman campaign leading up to Lepanto, then overviewing the Ottoman and

⁷⁵ Wendelinum Borsch, *Zeitung Von dem Großen Christen-Sieg auff dem Ionischen oder Ausonischen Meer, wider den Türcken, so bey den Porto Le Pante (sonsten Naupactus genandt) auff sonderbarer schickung Gottes erhalten worden ist, Den 7. Octobris, Im 1571* (Nuremberg: Wendelinum Borsch, 1571) Ai, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00026869?page=,1>. Translations of the included excerpts from German to English were made by Amelia Spell.

⁷⁶ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 74; Borsch, *Zeitung Von dem Großen Christen-Sieg*, Ai.

⁷⁷ Borsch, *Zeitung Von dem Großen Christen-Sieg*, Ai.

⁷⁸ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 142-144.

Christian preparations for the sea battle.⁷⁹ A great deal of detail goes into describing the Christian battle plans and strategies of attack, but the pamphlet-writer also seems to have knowledge of Ottoman strategies and movements.⁸⁰ The pamphlet also includes the European leaders discussing whether they should even engage with the Ottomans, and uses reasoning to justify their participation in the battle.⁸¹ This inclusion is significant because the writer could have easily glossed over this portion and portrayed the conflict as inevitable, but instead decided to explain the choice to engage the Ottomans. Following an account of the battle, the pamphlet reports on the spoils taken by the Christians.⁸² Casualties on both are also estimated, giving more quantitative evidence of a Christian victory.⁸³ The pamphlet then gives a conclusion to the battle by describing celebrations in Venice after the victory was announced.⁸⁴ Lastly, the pamphlet lists significant Christian casualties.⁸⁵

Though the pamphlet offers a multifaceted account of the battle in comparison to the manuscript newsletter, it contains more biased language against the Ottomans. They are described as “merciless” and “tyrants” (*“unbarmhertzig,” “Tyrannen”*), and as “common enemies of the Christian faith and Christian will (*“gemeinen Feinden des Christlichen glaubens, und Christichr willen”*).⁸⁶ The descriptive prose of the pamphlet, too, highlights the violence of the Ottoman sol-

⁷⁹ Ibid., Aii - Aii v.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Aiii - Aiii v.

⁸¹ Ibid., Aiii.

⁸² Ibid., Bi v.

⁸³ Ibid., Bii.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Biii.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Biii v - Biv.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Aii, Aii v, Aiv v.

diers against Christian soldiers and civilians in previous conflicts.⁸⁷ These descriptors of the Ottomans as violent and anti-Christian are strong signs that a traditional, Crusader-like view of Muslims is held by the pamphlet's author.

In contrast to the portrayal of Ottoman soldiers, the character traits of the Christian soldiers are described favorably. They are portrayed as measured, when deciding if they should join the battle; praiseworthy, when showing bravery in battle; and joyous, when celebrating their victory. Praise for the Christian soldiers as "chivalrous and well" (*"Ritterlich und wol"*) is in line with the manuscript newsletter's descriptions of the Christians, showing a consistent narrative across these sources.⁸⁸ The sense of providence has also been retained from the manuscript newsletter to the printed pamphlet. Here, the pamphlet describes that at the end of the battle, "almighty God finally bestowed the victory on the Christians" (*"hat endlich der Allmechtig Gott, den Christen den Sieg verliehen"*). Moreover, the pamphlet closes with a prayer thanking God for the victory:

"So now the Almighty God, without a doubt, has responded to this sensible and glorious call upon so many thousands of poor imprisoned Christians who have resisted this mighty enemy, and in the utmost need those who call are able to help. An example should also be taken here. Place all your confidence and hope in the Lord Christ, and patiently await the Lord, who, when we cry out to him from the heart, can rescue us from all troubles. Amen."

("So nun der Allmechtig Gott, one zweifel, auff dz Senlich und Herrlich anruffen, so vil Tousand Armer gefangener Christen, disem gewaltigen Feindt widerstandt gethon hat, unn in der euffersten noth

⁸⁷ Ibid., Aii.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Bi.

*den anruffenden zu hilff kummen ist, So soll auch meniglich hierab ein Eyempel nemen, Alle seine zuversicht und hoffnung auff den Herrn Christum zustellen, und in gedult des Herrn zu er warten, welcher do wir zu ime von hertzen Ruffen werden, auß allen nöten uns erretten kan, Amen.”*⁸⁹

With this addition, the battle’s ideological component takes the foreground and the European victory shifts into a religious lesson meant for all of Christianity.

Printed Poetry and Religious Tracts

Devotional lessons were more commonly found in religious tracts, one of early modern period’s most popular print genres, along with ballads, poems, and the aforementioned news pamphlets. Ballads were popular partly because they served a social purpose; they were written in verse and were meant to be sung to a particular tune.⁹⁰ Similarly, poems could be recited to a crowd. Most ballads and poems were printed in broadsheet form, making all lyrics visible on one page, but some were printed as pamphlets.⁹¹ Unlike *Neue Zeitungen*, which focused on political and military news, ballads and poems featured more sensationalized topics such as natural disasters and the supernatural.⁹² Monumental current events would also result in a flurry of poems and songs.⁹³ Both Italian and German authors produced ballads after the initial wave of news pamphlets about the Battle of Lepanto.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Ibid., Biv.

⁹⁰ Pettegree, *Invention of News*, 121.

⁹¹ Ibid., 123.

⁹² Ibid., 74.

⁹³ Ibid., 143.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 143-144.

Another common genre was *Türkenbüchlein*, or Turkish pamphlets, defined by John W. Bohnstedt as “popularly written tracts concerning the Turkish threat to Germany and Christendom.”⁹⁵ *Türkenbüchlein* lay at the intersection of religious texts and Ottoman news. Unlike *Neue Zeitungen* or ballads, they did not usually report on specific events, but rather gave general warnings about the Turkish threat to Christianity. Their authors were mostly theologians, and the publication of *Türkenbüchlein* is heavily tied to the Reformation.⁹⁶

Türkenbüchlein both evidenced and promoted stereotypes, further driving anxiety about Ottomans, while also giving their Christian readers actionable advice on how to counter the threat. The uniting theme of *Türkenbüchlein* was concern over the looming, violent threat of the Ottomans to Christians and their religion.⁹⁷ The authors decided that the concern was worth fostering. *Türkenbüchlein* featured violent imagery – Ottoman soldiers impaling babies, for example, was a common motif spread through *Türkenbüchlein*.⁹⁸ This fear of extreme violence was somewhat tempered by an

⁹⁵ John W. Bohnstedt, “The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era.” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 58, no. 9 (1968): 3.

⁹⁶ Martin Luther famously wrote *Türkenbüchlein*, along with several of his colleagues and the protestant Swiss writer Theodore Bibliander. *Türkenbüchlein* have mostly been studied in Protestant contexts.

Bohnstedt, “Infidel Scourge of God,” 3; Thomas Kaufmann, »Türckenbüchlein«: *Zur christlichen Wahrnehmung »türkischer Religion« in Spätmittelalter und Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008) 5-6; Rudolph Pfister, “Das Türkenbüchlein Theodor Biblianders,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 9, no.6 (1953): 438-454. <http://doi.org/10.5169/seals-879018>.

⁹⁷ Bohnstedt, “Infidel Scourge of God,” 3; Kaufmann, *Türckenbüchlein*, 5.

⁹⁸ Kaufmann, *Türckenbüchlein*, 86, 102-103.

equally-prevalent belief that the Ottomans were militarily inferior to Europeans.⁹⁹ European victories like that at Lepanto only cemented this attitude. Many *Türkenbüchlein* authors also promoted the Deuteronomic idea that the Ottomans were tools of God's punishment to Christendom, and that Christianity should repent and address its errors in order to prevent further attacks from the Ottomans.¹⁰⁰ Depending on the author, the pamphlet would then prescribe that all European Christians should convert to either Protestantism or Catholicism or that all Christians should reunify the splintered Church.¹⁰¹ This would earn them God's forgiveness and ensure that Christianity could continue unhindered.¹⁰² Though *Türkenbüchlein* were a somewhat niche genre, certain elements displayed in them were common across much of early modern European writing about Ottomans.

Source 3: Bavarian Religious Poem

The last source examined is a poem entitled "A Christian Comforting Word against the Turks, put to dear and Honor in Rhyming Manner" (*"Ein Christlicher Trostspruch wider den Türken, zu lieb und Ehren inn Reimenweiß gestelt"*).¹⁰³ The poem was written by "Gregorium Franckenmann, von Hall, Poet," who appears to have been a city official in Eggenfelden, a town in current-

⁹⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁰ Bohnstedt, "Infidel Scourge of God," 3.

¹⁰¹ Pfister, "Türkenbüchlein Theodor Biblianders," 442-443.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Gregorium Franckenman, *Ein Christlicher Trostspruch wider den Türken, zu lieb und Ehren inn Reimenweiß gestelt* (1572) Ai, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00007563?page=,1>. Translations of the included excerpts from German to English were made by Amelia Spell.

day eastern Bavaria.¹⁰⁴ His pamphlet is eight pages long and written in iambic tetrameter with an AABB rhyme scheme. While the poem does not explicitly mention the Battle of Lepanto, it was written in 1572, shortly after the battle, when the conflict was still fresh in many Europeans' minds.

The poem is religious in nature, looking much like a sermon or *Türkenbüchlein* written in verse. It begins by chastising Christians for their various sins: "gorging, boozing, playing, vows," "adultery, fornication," "war, murder, envy, hate," and more ("Fressen, Sauffen, Spilen, Schweren," "Ehebruch, Hururey," "Krieg, Mord, Neid, Haß").¹⁰⁵ The writer worries that, if Christians do not improve their behaviors, God will send an Ottoman invasion as punishment:

Lay Turkish vices away from you,
 "Then God would also give his blessing.
 "Because if one doesn't do the same as us,
 I worry that the Turk will become our rod."
 ("Türkische laster von dir legen,
 "Darnach so gäb Gott auch sein segen.
 "Weil man dasselb bey uns nicht thüt,
 "Sorg ich der Türck werd unser Rüth.")¹⁰⁶

Christians should earnestly repent in order to prevent this eventuality.¹⁰⁷

After this admonishment, the writer comforts his readers by giving Biblical examples of God's punishments

¹⁰⁴ Franckenman is described on the title page as "The Earnest, Reputable, Long-Sighted and Wise Gentleman, Chamberlain and Councillor of the famous Marcks Eckenfelden, &c." ("*Den Ehrnthafften, Achtbarn, Fürsichtigen und Weisen Herrn, Cammerer und Rathe des berühmten Marcks Eckenfelden, &c.*"). Franckenman, *Christlicher Trostspruch*, Ai.

¹⁰⁵ Franckenman, *Christlicher Trostspruch*, Ai v, Ai v, Aii.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Aii.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

and rewards. Across several pages, he retells the stories of Pharaoh and the Red Sea, David and Goliath, and the Assyrian siege on Jerusalem, and mentions several other figures from the Old Testament.¹⁰⁸ These examples support the writer's argument that God will save the righteous and the true believers. Christians should not despair (*"verzagen"*), because there is Biblical precedent indicating their eventual success.¹⁰⁹ Because the Christians, though they have sinned, are righteous and chosen, their triumph against the Ottomans is and has been inevitable. In fact, the writer argues, Christians have little reason to fear the Ottomans, even in the event of an invasion. While God can condemn one's soul to eternal damnation, an Ottoman can only kill you:

"Do not be very afraid of man,
 "But be much more afraid of God.
 "The soul and body together alike,
 "May be thrown into the bright ditch.
 "And thereafter burn eternally,
 "The Turk can only take your body.
 "He cannot spoil the soul,
 "Through Christ it will inherit heaven.
 "There it is peaceful and quiet forever,
 "The Turk is a help to you."

(*"Vor dem Menschen fürcht dich nicht sehr,
 "Sonder fürcht dich vor Got vil mehr.
 "Der Seel und Leib zusammen gleich,
 "Mag werffen in der Helle deich.
 "Und darnach ewigliche bremmen,
 "Der Türck kan dir den Leib nur nehmen.
 "Die Seel die kan er nicht verderben,
 "Durch Christum wirdts den Himmel erben.
 "Da hat sie Ewig frid und rüh,*

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Aii v – Aiii v.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Aiv.

*“Der Türck ist dir ein hilff dazu.”*¹¹⁰

More significant than the pamphlet’s sense of Christian exceptionalism is its assertion that conflicts between Christendom and the Ottoman Empire are caused by Christian sin. According to the poem, the Ottomans are a holy punishment directly sent from God. The Ottomans are the “scourge of God,” to borrow a phrase from Bohnstedt’s study of *Türkenbüchlein*.¹¹¹ Because of this framing, the Ottomans are stripped of their agency as human beings. Their actions are the result of a predetermined punishment for a more special people, rather than their own ambitions or motivations. They are portrayed as a looming threat and as the worst-case scenario of where a life of sin leads someone. In this light, the lack of negative descriptors about the Ottomans does not indicate that the writer felt little prejudice about them. On the contrary, the lack of descriptors, beyond their roles in providing divine punishment to sinful Christians who will be ultimately victorious, might indicate that the prejudice is so profound that it did not need to be put into words, or that the writer did not believe that the Ottomans were worthy of being carefully examined and described.

As these three sources have shown, more narrative distance from the Battle of Lepanto to the source describing it results in heavier prejudice being displayed in the sources. Religious-based animosity, in particular, grows stronger along the chain of transmission. Explanations or diatribes for Ottomans’ motivations or natures, however, are not found in any of the three sources. Overall, the portrayal of Ottomans changes from worthy opponents, to enemies of the faith, to inhuman instruments of divine punishment.

Though these three sources show a clear trend, examining more early modern manuscript and print sources

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Aiv v.

¹¹¹ Bohnstedt, “Infidel Scourge of God.”

would strengthen this argument. Additionally, applications of theories from psychology and other social sciences could help explain the findings of this study and guide future research.¹¹² The findings also raise a few more questions: if anti-Ottoman bias is not strong in firsthand manuscript news reports, which are first in the chain of transmission, where do the biases originate? How are they disseminated, if not from manuscript news reports? Further study of this topic could help uncover how prejudice spread in early modern German society. Questions of intended audience and social class may also play a role: did social elites, who read manuscript newsletters, hold fewer anti-Ottoman attitudes than the masses, who read printed news pamphlets and poems? The effect of media consumption on prejudices is an especially-important one here, as the attitudes found in these sources would later develop into a heady and powerful colonial and Orientalist mindset.

¹¹² The intergroup contact theory, which proposes that increased contact between groups can reduce prejudice between them, is especially applicable. Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "Preface," in *When Groups Meet: The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact* (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2011).



Fig. 1: Woodcut illustration on the title page of the news pamphlet.¹¹³

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¹¹³ Borsch, *Zeitung Von dem Großen Christen-Sieg*, Ai.

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