



## **'Auf, Auf, ihr Christen'**

### **Representing the Clash of Empires, Vienna 1683**

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***Auf, Auf, ihr Christen* – Representing the Clash of Empires, Vienna  
1683**

Peter Madsen

**An Enemy in Silk and Feathers**

Three decades before he initiated work on his translation of *Les Mille et une nuits*, Antoine Galland spent a number of years in Constantinople as a secretary for the French ambassador. During this time, he wrote an extensive journal, jotting down notes on various subjects. There were days that only occasioned a note that nothing particularly interesting had happened, yet there were also days when what he witnessed prompted him to write elaborate accounts of his experiences. On one such day, Saturday the Seventh of May 1672, Galland witnessed the departure of the Grand Seigneur from Adrianopolis for a campaign against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. “I have never”, Galland wrote, “seen anything that even approached the beauty, the splendor and the surprising display of his Majesty’s departure from Adrianopolis on his way to the battlefield on this day” (Galland 2002 I 122-144). His attempt to articulate what he saw – “a march that started out before sunrise and continued until 10 o’clock in the morning” – is the longest entry in the journal, yet it does not satisfy the author: “it would demand an angelic intellect to communicate and understand this wonder such as the angels communicate and understand everything among them”. The epitome of the sublime spectacle is le Grand seigneur, “he effaced all of the radiance and splendor of the ranks that had come before him” – “just like the planets and the stars are deprived of all their radiance and brilliance when the sun is there”. This particular entry in the journal elaborates on the description with a view of a potential future readership; there is a polemical touch to the image of le Grand Seigneur:

The pagan Mars was a god who was always presented as furious and covered with blood and dust, rather than inspire respect and veneration he would seize the hearts with fear and terror. The Mars of the Turks was entirely different. His air and apparel of a warrior together with the brilliance of the big precious stones and pearls shining on him, on the rein, saddle and blanket of his horse whose rump was covered with the hide of a leopard, together, I say, with all these things and the order and harmony of his entire equipage constituted a unity of ornaments of war and celebration that in a pleasant manner filled the minds with at one and the same time surprise, astonishment, admiration and enchantment.

Galland does not hide that his view might – in case of future readers of his journal – provoke protests. Readers might find “that it is impossible to see anything so beautiful in a country that is considered by the entire world to be barbaric”. To Galland this is not simply an aesthetic issue, he insists that the present “Monarch of the Turks” is quite different from his predecessors. They were hiding in secrecy, whereas Murad IV “who is all good and more human, follows another method and there is no outrage when someone has a chance to see him”.

Two contrasts are conspicuous here, both in opposition to the current view of the Grand Seigneur and by extension the ‘Turks’. First, Roman representation of the frightening warrior covered by dust and blood, which would correspond to a widespread image of Turkish sultans and their warriors, is opposed to the splendidly outfitted spectacle of the procession, the ugly is opposed to the beauty bordering the sublime that cannot really be expressed. Second, secrecy is opposed to the appearance in the open, “tout bon et plus humanisé”. Galland is charmed by this “dovetailing of ornament of war and of celebration”.

Still, le Grand Seigneur is on his way to a military campaign. Galland’s journal is interspersed with notes about rumors and news concerning the ups and downs during the Turkish-Polish war. A particularly dramatic point is the surrender of the main Polish stronghold Kamianets-Podolskiy. *Le Grand Seigneur* has decided to destroy the city and put the inhabitants under the sword, despite their surrender, yet his grand vizier urges him to abstain from these measures, on one hand as a gesture of clemency, “to listen to the requests from those who came to bow down before him”, on the other hand as a pragmatic foresight, since these people could be of use to him, when they became his subjects (Galland 2002 I 207-8).

Such highlighting of an in some sense humane version of the Turkish enemy is not the only theme in Galland’s journal, he is also concerned about the way in which a Polish defeat would be a “disaster for Christianity that was more than ever before exposed to the impudence of the Turks” (I 211). Kamianets was, Galland notes, considered “the bulwark of Christianity” (I 225).

Only parts of his journal have survived and what we do have does not reach as far as the outcome of the prolonged Turkish-Polish war. The first campaign did end with a Turkish victory, but it did not last long, before the failed second Turkish attempt in 1683 to conquer Vienna heralded the decline of the formerly so overwhelmingly powerful Turkish Empire.

Decisive battles in the Polish-Ottoman wars took place in South-Western Ukraine, at the time a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This is where the fortification at Kamianets-Podolskiy, which was taken by the Ottomans during the campaign in 1672, is located. Nearby Chocim was the contested fortification not only during renewed confrontations the following year, but also during an important campaign in 1621. This campaign ended in stalemate, yet the Poles took the fact that the Polish-Lithuanian forces managed to hold the Ottoman forces back as a victory. A recurrent theme in writings

about these battles was the idea that Poland was a bulwark for Christianity, *antemurale Christianitatis, boulevard de la christianité* as Galland wrote. In Poland this idea was linked to what was called Sarmatian qualities of the nobility, on one hand qualities that were thought to be inherited from ancient inhabitants of the area, on the other hand qualities the Polish nobility ought to demonstrate (cf. Mrowcewicz 1989, Davies 2005).

After the battle at Chocim in 1621, the author Samuel Twardowski took part in a diplomatic mission to Constantinople. About this voyage, he wrote a versified journal as an attempt to create “a national heroic epos”. In his opinion, the confrontation with the Turks was of world historical significance: “You will not manage to build the walls that fast, nor to create the ramparts – this fatherland must be defended with blood and bodies in order to prevent the heathen from pushing right to the farthest end of Europe”. This actualization is literally an embodiment of the metaphor of the bulwark. The Polish army must defend Europe at the border to the Ottoman Empire, the fortification at Kamianets-Podolskiy was “Europe’s outermost fortification” – in other texts it was the fortification of Christianity, build by the hand of God. Whether it is this particular fortification, the border to the Ottoman Empire, the Polish army, or the Polish Crown that is seen as the bulwark of Christianity, Poland as historical pivot is a recurrent theme – “all of Europe” is protected by “the Polish crown as if behind trenches and Chinese walls” (Gall 2012 is the source of the account of Twardowski’s work).

Based on the journal of one of the leaders of the Polish defense in 1621 Waslaw Potocki (1625-1696) wrote an epic depiction of the battle at the time of the renewed confrontations. The short title is *The Progress of the War of Chocim* (1669-1672, Potocki 1996). The original, very long, title relates how Sultan Osman’s united forces from Africa, Asia and Europe were defeated thanks to the Grace of the Lord as well as, on one hand the Polish commanders’ alertness, foresight, and wisdom, and on the other hand the courage of the Polish noblemen, in sum “The Bloody Deeds of the Polish Mars”: “The Pole has enough heart to face a Turkish warrior, / His chest shielded with plates, helmet guarding his head, / Though he is stung, though slashed, he doesn’t feel affected”. The Ottoman warriors appear in an entirely different outfit: “You could not see cuirasses or any armour, / Each attired in samite, in silk, and in feather; / Enormous wings of vultures, plumes, panaches, crests, / Flutter about their heads, but they are all pretexts / And paltry ornaments for showing here unfit, / Since people use such things as scarecrows in millet!” The same features that inspired Galland’s enthusiastic description are here – as indeed in many other polemical contexts – taken as manifestation of decadence and weakness.

Potocki shares Twardowski’s view, that only *Polish* unity could stop the Ottoman attack, yet the unity of *Christian Europe* was the precondition for stabilization, for avoiding a destruction of the bulwark: only by defending Poland could the European powers defend Christianity. This line of reasoning

became decisive when the Ottoman army under the command of grand-vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha was approaching Vienna in 1683. The defense of Vienna was established by a coalition including the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire – with the Polish king Jan Sobieski in a leading role. It was under his command the Poles in 1673 had a renewed confrontation with the Ottomans at Chocim. His victory there was one of the reasons that he was elected king the following year.

### The Turkish Saber at the Door

During the time the Ottoman army was on its way towards Vienna in 1683, the popular Viennese preacher Abraham a Sancta Clara was busy writing a book that should incite to defense of the city. The book was published during the siege under the title *Auff, auff ihr Christen* and became widely read. In sermons and in writing Abraham was a linguistic virtuoso, he had learned from Luther's writings to exploit everyday language, and he was no less harsh in polemical tone than Luther, yet his linguistic playfulness added to the effect – and made it a challenge to translate from the text (Abraham à Sancta Clara 1683, on the author cf. Schillinger 1993).

Since "God's blessing will not rout out the enemy without human sword", Abraham urged by the threatening situation wrote his book as an appeal to unity among the Christian powers, to repentance of the sinners, to courage among the soldiers, to hope among the frightened, and to everybody's prayers. The repeated *Auf, Auf* in the title – and at numerous occasions in the text – stems from Latin *consurge* and *elevare* as in the Book of Isaiah, "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem" (51:17). Depictions in Isaiah of confrontations between Israelites and Assyrians provide a suitable soundboard for Abraham's text, since God's punishment for sins as well as God's help in fights against the enemy are thematized in many variations in this Book. The second Book of Kings may similarly have been on Abraham's mind, engendering wishful thinking about a similar fate for the Turks, "the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (as King James' Bible has it, 19:35). Abraham did not think in terms of sheer providential miracles though, in his view victory depended on both "blessing" and "sword" – "Gottes Seegen ohne Menschen Degen will nicht den Feind jagen".

Abraham first provides an account of Muhammad's life and the origin of the Qur'an. According to Abraham the "renegade and perjuring monk Sergius", the Arian John, and "a terrible and sly Hebrew and zealous Talmudist" provided material to the "damned Qur'an", a book packed with "fanciful fabrications and unfounded falsities". Such references to Muhammad's alleged collaborators go back at least to the Christian Arabic dialogue *Apology of al-kindī* (*Risālat al-Kindī*, Tartar 1985). This important polemical treatise was included in

Peter the Venerable's twelfth century compilation of material related to Islam known as *corpus toletanum* (Burman 2007). In mid-sixteenth century, Theodor Bibliander included this material in a three-volume compilation that became an important source for future knowledge of Islam and anti-Islamic polemics (Miller 2013). Abraham reproduced a series of commonplaces from this tradition, and material included in Bibliander's 'compendium' may (probably indirectly, since Bibliander's publication is not among the sources indicated in Abraham's introductory note) be among his sources, yet the formulations were his own, "Mohammad was such a Devilish cook, who cut diverse pieces from various beliefs, the Old and the New Testament, the Arian and Nestorian sects, and boiled them together in a pot, so that the Turks are still licking their fingers after this mixed dish". Another popular theme was Mohamad's alleged insatiable erotic desire, "Mohammad was such a stinking kind of goat that he had forty wives for himself, and even by special privileges and admissions from God, as he godlessly pretended, had even more women to his disposition according to his beastly desire". This again follows the polemical tradition in reference to Sura 33.50 in the *Qur'an* that provides Muhammad with explicit privileges – one of the favorite references in the anti-Islamic tradition. This "satanic man" has no less disgusting visions of Paradise where the deceased can "forever enjoy all sorts of lasciviousness", he has in the *Qur'an* brought such "shameless stupidities [...] that a decent pen must refuse to put it down".

Abraham's overview of the history of Islamic expansion culminates in the Turkish conquests with particular attention to the Fall of Constantinople, "Oh, miserable fall! Constantinople formerly queen of the world, now a slave girl of the Turks. Constantinople formerly bride of Christ, now Mahomet's miserable harlot". And now Vienna is in danger to meet a similar fate: "Auff, auff ihr Christen! The Turkish saber is at the door".

Yet who are these Turks? The Turk is, as Abraham has it, "a copy of Anti-Christ, he is a conceited potbelly bailiff, he is a gluttonous tiger, he is an incarnated Satan, he is a darn world-assaulter, he is an atrocious never-full, he is a revenge-avaricious beast, he is an unscrupulous crown-thief, he is a murderous falcon, he is an insatiable lecher-bastard, he is an oriental throat-poison, he is the unleashed hell-hound, he is a never satisfied voluptuous, he is a tyrannical monster, etc."

This is what is said about the Turks and it is all so, Abraham assures his readers, yet there is one more denomination to add, i.e., "God's scourge". This Old Testament theme goes back to the earliest Christian reaction to the Arabic expansion in the 7th century and is like a bass line in interpretations of confrontations with Islamic enemies since then. In Abraham's version the Turk may seem "spurred by thirst for glory, fired by thirst for money, agitated by blood thirst", yet perhaps he is sent by God "to chastise our sins".

Strange as it may seem Abraham not only accumulates investives in his depiction of the Turks and their religion, he does also underscore positive aspects. Here again he follows a line in the tradition, important examples are

Riccoldo da Monte Croce's account from around 1300 of his own first hand experiences (Riccoldo 1997) and George of Hungary's from 1480 (Georgius de Hungaria 1993); the Austrian ambassador Busbecq's more recent *Turkish Letters* (from mid-sixteenth century, Busbecq 2005) is among the texts Abraham indicates as sources. "Even if the Turks' ungodly precepts were forged on a hellish anvil", Abraham writes, "there is something in their ways that makes us as Christians blush with shame". Abraham enumerates such virtues and he points to manifestations of these virtues in early Christianity and in the world of the Old Testament, whereas to the contrary these virtues are absent in his own time. First and foremost, the Turks honor their God and his name, and they go so far that even a scrap of paper is in high respect because God's name so often is written on paper. Here Abraham probably refers to an anecdote in Busbecq account in his *Turkish Letters*. Respect for God and his name is also shown in the attitude to their "temples". They are only entered after ablution, and behavior in "temples" is characterized by such "discipline and decency" that neither coughing nor spitting are accepted, whereas "we Christians often turn God's houses into simple taverns". Respect for paper as well as rejection of spitting are among the features highlighted by Riccoldo da Monte Croce, and cleanliness was one of the features George of Hungary highlighted. Further, there is a *social* side to the virtues of the Turks. Even if they are usually seen as barbaric, they nevertheless manifest "a remarkable compassion for the poor and the needy" - corresponding to their "eighth commandment: Everybody shall give alms according to his means". The Turkish system of justice is also among the positive aspects, and here Abraham explicitly refers to Busbecq. In general many countries would be happier and God would much more frequently "offer grace from his bosom of grace", if only true Christianity and its precepts were observed to the same extent as the false belief of the Turks is actually observed. Abraham presents these various virtues as positive without qualifications, as it is the case in Riccoldo's and George of Hungary's firsthand accounts. Yet the handling of the paradoxical contrast between the general strongly polemical attitude on one hand and the depictions of Muslim virtues on the other hand is not the same in these authors. Riccoldo simply presents his account as a provocation, "in order to confuse the Christians", i.e. as an appeal to Christian virtuousness; George of Hungary takes the apparent virtues as part of a strategy of deception from the side of the Turkish anti-Christ, it is the beautiful appearance of the false Christ; in Busbecq's and other 16th century accounts of the Ottoman Empire, like Pierre Belon's, depictions of such positive aspects stem from level-headed curiosity. Corresponding to his virulent rhetoric, Abraham takes another road at the end of the presentation of apparent Turkish virtues, an excuse for asking his readers to take Turks as a mirror image of their better selves, "We are, after all advised in the Divine Scriptures to learn from the ant and other animals that are deprived of reason". Aspects of Turkish behavior may seem exemplary, yet the Turks are like ignorant animals.

The conclusion of Abraham's book is an appeal to prayer, he even provides the *text* for a prayer directed to his "stronger, greater, and more frightening Heavenly God", asking God to bring help as he did when Moses left Egypt chased by the Pharaonean army, "you looked down at their army, and it was exhausted by darkness, the abyss held back their feet, and the water covered them". Yet only the courage, God is asked to instill in the soldiers can bring victory, "In you, Oh God, we will achieve great deeds, and you will destroy the Turks, who afflict us". Abraham points out in a final note that the entire text of this prayer consists of formulations from the Bible, except for the word *Turks*. This is the ultimate manifestation of the will to see the looming clash of empires towards the end of the seventeenth century in terms of primarily the Old Testament.

*Auff, auff ihr Christen* became a very popular text, it was reprinted numerous times. Beyond churches and the court, where Abraham was preaching, his book participated in the expanding book market, his fusion of clerical frame of reference and vernacular popular formulations appealed to the public (cf. Eybl 1992, Roth 1944). *Auff, auff* included a considerable amount of - more or less reliable - information, the combination of historical survey and elaborate critique of Islam in a single volume responded to a broad spectrum of needs in this tense historical situation. The message was about abandoning sinful ways and return to Christian virtues, yet the frame of interpretation reached beyond the general idea of God's punishment - and an expectation of mercy when the requirements were satisfied. There are hints of the idea of *translatio imperii*, transfer of rule, of imperial power, based on interpretations of the Book of Daniel. In this view Leopold, the Austrian emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, governed the last of the four empires, "the last monarchy, that is the Roman monarchy, where Leopoldus Primus already carries the scepter". Leopold is an Austrian Alexander. In Abraham's book, there are no extensive eschatological elaborations, yet he does seem to hold a view of Austria's pivotal role in the providential plan known from more elaborate versions in other texts from the time. He points to specific traits like noblesse, honesty, reliability, and courage as well as strong religious faith as arguments for the role of the Germans and, politically speaking, the Austrian emperor. Victory over the Turks in what is seen as holy war will realize the divine providential plan. At the threshold of the decisive confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and European Christianity headed by the Holy Roman Emperor Abraham's book in many respects summarizes a series of motives and themes in intellectual and publicist polemics against Islam and the Muslim Empires through the centuries since the initial Arabic expansion in the seventh century.

### God's Victory

Abraham depicted the Austrian Emperor as the head of Christianity, yet in

the real battle, the leader of the decisive attack on the Ottoman army was Jan Sobieski, the Polish king. "We came, we saw, and God was victorious" – these are the first words of Sobieski's letter to the Pope immediately after the victory outside Vienna: "Might Your Holiness, I ask you in the greatest affection, also as yet another testimony of my filial humility, graciously accept the notification of the glorious victory, God's majesty allotted the whole Christianity, at Vienna, where I managed, in a very short time, to annihilate the majority of the Ottoman army, 180.000 soldiers is the number" (Hermes 1991 214-215). Here again the dual *agens*: God gave the victory that was realized by Sobieski. A more elaborate articulation of his understanding of what was at stake appears from the meticulously designed rhetoric of the speech he gave to his army before the battle (Sobieski 1683):

Brave and Valiant Gentlemen of *Poland*, it is not here only requisite to make good the Glory which your Ancestors Valour have acquir'd [the Sarmatian aspect], in making us consider'd as the Bulwark of Christianity against the Arms of the *Ottomans* [the religious aspect]: It is not only sufficient at this present to defend your Country [the national aspect], which the loss of Vienna would expose by a necessary consequence to the Invasions of those infidels [religion again], with whom we are to Fight. Here it is necessary to defend the Cause of God [religion one more time], and to preserve the *Western Empire* [the imperial, and religious, aspect, stressing the East-West dimension], which has done us the Honour to have recourse to our Assistance; an Honour which our Ancestors dust never aspire unto, and was reserved for your Valour [the particular historical, contemporary aspect]. Entertain therefore no other thoughts at present, but either to Conquer, or Nobly to end your Lives in this Just Cause [the holy war aspect], the which the Glory of our common Master [i.e. God] is annexed; Think now that you are to Fight in the fight of so many Brave Commanders who are engaged in the same Cause and Peril [the collective aspect, unity of forces]; reflect also that your King Fights at the Head of you [true royalty], whereby to have a share both in your Glory and Danger [the king as soldier]; and withall be confident that the God of Battles whose Cause we defend will undoubtedly Fight for us [the ultimate religious dimension, God at our side].

In his letter to his beloved Queen from the night after the battle Sobieski enumerated the various parts of the army and added that it corresponded to the army "the great Godfrey headed in The Holy Land" thereby inscribing the battle of Vienna in the tradition of crusades (Sobieski 1986 108-119).

The fleeing Turkish army left enormous treasures to the victors. Sobieski wrote that he became Kara Mustapha's "successor", "since most of his splendors were left in the camp". The battlefield was not only a display of valor and riches, though, Sobieski briefly inserts information of an entirely different kind in his letter, "We had to pass two miles in the uttermost hurry because of the heavy stench of corpses, horses, cattle, and camels". Yet the predominant theme is joy at the victory, "Might all rejoice and thank God the Lord that he did not allow heathendom to ask: "And where is the Lord, your God?" A question Islamic victories during the centuries gave the enemy of Christianity occasions

to ask, thus also provoking doubts among Christians, if they really did have God on their side. The passage from Micah (7.8-10), where the question is directed to Jerusalem, fits the situation both retrospectively with a view of Ottoman former victories and with a view of the Christian victory at the gates of Vienna:

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. (Book of Micah 7.8-10)

During the campaign Jan Sobieski was accompanied by his 'privileged historian' Wespazjan Kochowski (1633-1700), who not only wrote an account of the victory in Latin, but also poetry in Polish on the same subject. Ten years after the event he wrote a book entitled *The Proper Offering of Thanksgiving to the Giver of All That is Good or A Polish Psalmody Giving Thanks for God's Good Deeds*, published in 1695, a work that holds a prominent place in Polish national literature. The style of the psalms follows the Book of Lamentations, and each has a motto from that book, in general Old Testament references abound. Psalm IX celebrates the election of Sobieski as king - a good Sarmatian and a Pole (in contrast to predecessors from outside the country) Sobieski was elected by the free Polish nobility, yet he was also selected by God, "through the free election we have chosen the well-pleased of the heaven" – "Flourish now and shine Polish fame, / When the sign of salvation is elevated above the Musselmanic moon!" Of God's "volition an angel shall beat the forces of Sennacherib" - the reference is to the Old Testament account of the failure of the Assyrian king Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem, when an angel "cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria" (2 Chronicles 32.21). This reference is a suitable prelude to Sobieski's victory at Vienna, the confrontation was even of the same scale, since - according to the second Book of Kings - 185.000 enemies were killed. In psalm XXI Kochowski's thanksgiving for the victory takes as points of departure on one hand the destruction of the Pharaonic army during Exodus and on the other hand – again – the defeat of the Assyrians, "Thy hand, not man's, O Lord, hath smitten the heathens; before it the swaggering Assyrian hath fled, who had come for our devastation with hardened heart". In specific relation to the Ottoman enemy, he brings three of the most widespread perceptions together – Muhammad as false prophet, repeated ablation, and excessive sexuality, "The false prophet helped them not in their trouble, and their constant washings have not cleansed the whoremasters of their sins". To the contrary, they are now lying "strewn about the field like fatted cattle after the slaughter".

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

This is a reference to Book of Judges chapter 5, where Jael kills Sisera, Jabin's army commander, who is threatening the Israelites, like Kara Mustapha, the Ottoman vizier, is threatening Christianity. Jehovah has once again proved his almightiness, as he did when he threw "horses and riders in the sea", "Behold the Lord, the conquering hero. Behold His Triumphant Name, before which the army and chariots of the Pharaohs were cast into the Red Sea". The poet concludes, that "Not unto us, Lord, the lowly mob, let there be praise, but onto Thy Holy Name", yet it is Sobieski who enacts the will of God. As the poet in another psalm implores God, "Let your hand destroy through this instrument the nations that hate you. / He that does not call with his tongue the sweetest name of Jesus, let him be cut down from this earth by the sword of the fighting king" (Psalm XXII, italics mine). God is asked to strengthen Sobieski's hands, to let a guardian angel follow him, and to go in front of him "in a pillar of fire". The angel and the pillar of fire situate Sobieski in the role of Moses through yet another reference to Exodus. Such references and the repeated articulation of the – as Kochowski takes it – Polish victory as similar to Old Testament Israelite victories situate the Poles as God's chosen people.

What comes to the fore in the majority of these texts is thus a representation of confrontations with the Ottoman enemy that is permeated by on one hand references to Old Testament themes and events, and on the other hand themes from the long tradition of anti-Islamic polemics. Abraham's text is a kind of collage, not only in the explicit case of the final prayer, but also in the main text when it comes to the elements from and allusions to the Old Testament as well as topoi from the long anti-Islamic tradition. His is a late and not overly coherent version of this tradition at the threshold of transformations of representations of 'Turks' and Islamic cultures following the defeat in 1683. Antoine Galland's work is an important factor in these transformations, to him it was not at all "impossible to see" something positive in the empire that was "considered by the entire world to be barbaric".

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