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Piotr Tańkowski

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Résumé de l'article

Cet article se donne pour fin d'analyser et de confronter les deux conceptions – polonaise et hongroise – de l'Antemurale Christianitatis développées à la fin du XVe siècle. Il se base, dans la première partie, sur la correspondance publiée entre le roi Matthias Corvinus de Hongrie (1458-90) et le pape Sixte IV (1471-84). Ces documents sont intéressants, car ils nous permettent de suivre la duplicité des politiques pratiquées par Matthias. Profitant de son implication dans la lutte contre les Turcs, le roi hongrois cherchait à atteindre d'autres buts. La deuxième partie de l'article s'appuie sur les travaux politiques d'un humaniste italien vivant en Pologne, Philippus Buonaccorsi, dit Callimaque. Nous comparons l'attitude de deux royaumes alors ennemis, qui furent plus tôt (à l'époque de Władysław Warneńczyk, décédé en 1444) et demeurèrent plus tard (à l'époque de Władysław Jagiellończyk, décédé en 1516, et de son fils Ludwik, décédé en 1526) liés par une union personnelle et des liens dynastiques respectivement, face au problème de l'Antemurale.

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Hungary and Poland: The Two *Antemurales* in the Late Fifteenth Century

PIOTR TAFIŁOWSKI

University of Warsaw

The aim of this article is to analyze and confront the two conceptions—Polish and Hungarian—of Antemurale Christianitatis developed in the late fifteenth century. It is based, in the first part, on the published correspondence between King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1458–90) and Pope Sixtus IV (1471–84). These documents are interesting because they allow us to follow the duplicity of the policies practised by Matthias. Taking advantage of his involvement in the struggle against the Turks, the Hungarian king sought to attain other goals. The second part of the article is based on the political works of an Italian humanist living in Poland, Philippus Buonaccorsi, called Callimachus. I compare the attitudes of two then-hostile kingdoms, which earlier (in the time of Władysław Warneńczyk, d. 1444) and later (in the time of Władysław Jagiellończyk, d. 1516, and his son Ludwik, d. 1526) were connected by personal union and dynastic ties, respectively, towards the problem of Antemurale.

Cet article se donne pour fin d'analyser et de confronter les deux conceptions – polonaise et hongroise – de l'Antemurale Christianitatis développées à la fin du xv^e siècle. Il se base, dans la première partie, sur la correspondance publiée entre le roi Matthias Corvinus de Hongrie (1458–90) et le pape Sixte IV (1471–84). Ces documents sont intéressants, car ils nous permettent de suivre la duplicité des politiques pratiquées par Matthias. Profitant de son implication dans la lutte contre les Turcs, le roi hongrois cherchait à atteindre d'autres buts. La deuxième partie de l'article s'appuie sur les travaux politiques d'un humaniste italien vivant en Pologne, Philippus Buonaccorsi, dit Callimaque. Nous comparons l'attitude de deux royaumes alors ennemis, qui furent plus tôt (à l'époque de Władysław Warneńczyk, décédé en 1444) et demeurèrent plus tard (à l'époque de Władysław Jagiellończyk, décédé en 1516, et de son fils Ludwik, décédé en 1526) liés par une union personnelle et des liens dynastiques respectivement, face au problème de l'Antemurale.

Introduction

A large portion of the published correspondence between Pope Sixtus IV (an Advocate of crusading ideology and supporter of the king of Hungary¹) and King Matthias Corvinus dealt with Turkish affairs.² There are 107 letters all together, of which thirty-seven (35 per cent) concern the struggle against

1. Pilat and Cristea, *Ottoman Threat*, 135–42.

2. See *Monumenta Vaticana*, vol. 1, bk. 6.

the Turks.³ For the purpose of this article, I have selected the fourteen most important and relevant letters in which the king's role as a defender of Christendom is most strongly emphasized. This correspondence, examined below, covers the period from 30 August 1472 to 10 March 1484, with four letters of indeterminate date falling between 1480 and 1484.

The same argumentation and rhetoric sometimes also appears in other letters of King Matthias, including letters written in German and addressed to the princes of the Reich.⁴ All together, "Matthias wrote about 140 crusading letters, mostly to the papacy, the kings of France and Naples, the Holy Roman Emperor and the Imperial Diet, and Venice."⁵ I do not discuss this wider body of letters, however, as they do not contain any new information not already found in the letters that form the basis of my analysis. Moreover, the aforementioned collection of letters is more heterogeneous, and the information I am interested in is scattered throughout various printed volumes, making analysis more complicated. Besides, there is not enough space in this article to analyze them all in more detail. The collection of letters from the *Monumenta Vaticana* is the most coherent and cohesive in terms of its presentation of the ideology of the *Antemurale Christianitatis* and the propagandistic application of the ideology of war against the Turks. It is for this reason that I have decided to take it as the basis for the following discussion.

In his letters, King Matthias reported on his campaigns against the Turks, cunningly using this trump card to gain political assistance and financial subsidies. He emphasized his immense commitment to the defence of Christianity and his total obedience to the Holy See in his fights against the infidels and heretics.⁶ From the end of 1480 and beginning of 1481, Matthias wrote mainly that he would like to attack the Turks, but that he was prevented from doing

3. See Tafiłowski, "Anti-Turkish Correspondence." The first section of the present article is partly based on this earlier paper.

4. See *Magyar Diplomáciai Emlékek; Mátyás király levelei; Vetera monumenta historica*. See also Nehring, "Quellen zur ungarischen Aussenpolitik"; "Angaben"; "Die Bestände."

5. Bárány, "Crusading Letters," 574.

6. On the concept of *Antemurale*, see, for example, Borkowska, "Ideology"; Cieszyński, *Polska przedmurzem chrześcijaństwa*; Gałaj-Dempniak, *Propaganda wojenna*, 117–22; Graciotti, "Polskie przedmurze"; Knoll, "Poland"; Kolodziejczyk, "Entre l'*antemurale Christianitatis*"; Konarski, *Polska jako przedmurze*; Krzyżaniakowa, "Polska"; Niemczyk-Wiśniewska, "Ideologia"; Olszewski, "Ideologia Rzeczypospolitej"; Tazbir, *Polskie przedmurze chrześcijańskiej Europy*; Morawiec, "*Antemurale christianitatis*"; Tazbir, *Polska*

so by the constant threat to Hungary on the part of Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg. This theme became the leitmotif of the king's letters.

It should be observed that Matthias was criticized, among others in Poland, for pretending to be a crusader and thereby obtaining subsidies, which he subsequently used to fight against the state of the Jagiellonians and against the Habsburg Empire.⁷ Attempts to counteract the papacy's support for Matthias Corvinus were made by Philippus Buonaccorsi, called Callimachus, an Italian humanist settled in Poland, who even formulated an appropriate political program against Matthias, discussed below.

It must be acknowledged at the outset that the royal letters and Callimachus's speech are different types of sources. While in historical analyses it is usually most appropriate to compare sources of similar types, in this case we unfortunately do not have that option. It should be emphasized, however, that I do not compare the sources themselves—that is, in matters of their composition, form, or style—but rather attempt to confront certain political ideas presented in them. Moreover, Callimachus's project is to a large extent a response to the political program pursued by the king of Hungary. For these reasons, I believe that the approach adopted here is correct: I present a comparison between the expression of the concept of *Antemurale* in diplomatic correspondence—the royal letters—on the one hand, with its expression in political and polemical writings—treatises or orations—on the other.

A second major objection could be made to the fact that I analyze Matthias's letters to Sixtus IV, and not those to his successor, Pope Innocent VIII, to whom Callimachus's speech was actually addressed. Unfortunately, relatively few of Matthias's letters to Innocent have survived (twenty-two appear in *Monumenta Vaticana*, nos. 175–97), and they do not address the issue I am interested in here. They cannot, therefore, provide a basis for analysis in the area that interests me. It must also be remembered that Innocent VIII, from 1486 onwards, having Sultan Djem in his hands,⁸ was no longer such a sympathetic supporter of organizing an anti-Turkish expedition and, moreover, was not on such friendly terms with King Matthias as was his predecessor.

przedmurzem Europy; Weintraub, "Renaissance Poland." See also Bremer, *Religion*; Srodecki, *Antemurale Christianitatis*; "Antemurale-Based Frontier Identities"; "Władysław III"; "Jagiellonian Europe."

7. See, for example, Baczkowski, "Maciej Korwin."

8. Tańkowski, "Issue of Intercultural Communication."

I am aware of the fact that the correspondence between Matthias and Sixtus only dates up to the year 1484, while Callimachus's works treat the second half of the 1480s and the beginning of the 1490s (with the exception of one work of 1478). The international situation had changed over the intervening years, especially after Hungary treated for a new peace with Sultan Bayezid II in 1483,⁹ and Poland had to look for a new ally in Eastern Europe and on the Black Sea coast after the defeats of Voivode Stephen the Great against the Turks (discussed further below).¹⁰ The fundamental circumstances of Matthias's papal correspondence and Callimachus's works are utterly diverse. Let us note, however, that all this indicates how enduring the concept of *Antemurale* was. Callimachus attempted to use it in very different circumstances, considering it an effective tool for achieving political goals. This article is therefore also a contribution to the study of the phenomenon of the international circulation of *Antemurale* ideas.

King Mathias's letters

Already the second letter sent by Pope Sixtus IV to King Matthias on 30 August 1472 (no. 68)¹¹ was about the Turkish threat. The king was convinced that it was the pope's foremost concern to preserve peace among Christians, in particular in the regions that required defence and protection against vile intentions of the Turks, who increasingly threatened Christian dominions and were about to invade Italy at any moment. Unfortunately, the conflicts between Croatian barons were growing stronger. Not only did they take every opportunity to fight one another, but they even prayed for more horrid misdeeds on the part of the Turks.¹²

The next year, in 1473, Matthias was reprimanded by the pope for attempting to reach an agreement with the Turks (no. 69). The pope learned that Matthias had sent to the Turks—the enemies of Christ—two envoys: Antonio Catharensis of the Order of Friars Minor, abbot of the monastery near Buda, and Bosnian Jan Humschi. They were seen on 16 April, crossing the Danube near Belgrade. Their mission on behalf of the king was to offer peace to Sultan

9. See Artner, *Hungary as Propugnaculum*, no. 111.

10. Simon, "Ottoman–Hungarian Crisis." See also Papp, "Stephen the Great."

11. All letter numbers cited in parentheses in text refer to those found in *Monumenta Vaticana*, vol. 1, bk. 6.

12. Tafiłowski, *Mohács*, 40.

Mehmed II and the promise of an alliance if he ceded Bosnia and Serbia or other territories to Hungary. Corvinus also promised help against King Uzun Hassan (the sultan of the Aq Qoyunlu state), provided he receive Turkish subsidies for the purpose.¹³

The pope argued that Matthias must not forget the battles fought against the Turks by his father, a voivode, and by himself, nor the many defeats inflicted on both of them by the Turks.¹⁴ The Turks first of all knew the valour of the Hunyadi, because of which they had failed to gain as many acquisitions as they would have liked, which is why the Turks hated the Hunyadi and wished for the death of the Hungarian king. The letter then ended with assurances of recognition of the king's previous services, his greatness, his resistance to the Turks, and his struggle against heresy in Bohemia—all of these virtues and achievements being highly praised. Why then, Sixtus wondered, did Matthias wish to destroy his fame, reject the name of Christ's soldier, and become a benefactor of the infidels? The pope's recognition of Matthias's services and acclaim for his deeds in defence of Christianity (for many countries he was a real bulwark, *Antemurale*, against the Turks) are also contained in a letter dated 20 July 1474 (no. 70).

Some historians attribute to Matthias Corvinus's ineptitude his indifference towards Turkish conquests, the long-term consequence of which was, they believe, the defeat of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1526.¹⁵ The king devoted considerable energy to fighting against the Habsburgs; he also planned to gain the imperial crown. In 1485 he captured Vienna and even transferred his capital there. He also took control of a part of Lower Austria and a part of Styria and Carinthia. These are events that occurred later than the correspondence in question; nevertheless, peace with the Turks secured Matthias's rear while his forces were turned towards what he deemed a more important target. Starting from 1464/65, the Hungarian–Turkish war was essentially confined to border skirmishes for the next ten years, whereas a constant source of turmoil was the Hungarian–Austrian frontier.¹⁶

13. On the subject of the maintenance of peaceful relations between Matthias Corvinus and the Ottomans, see İşiksel, "Friendship." See also Schmitt, "Matthias Corvinus."

14. See Elekes, *Hunyadi János*; Held, *Hunyadi*.

15. For an overview, see Tafiłowski, *Mohács*, 11–14.

16. Rázsó, *Die Feldzüge*; Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus*; Bárány, "Matthias' European Diplomacy"; Szende, "Matthias Corvinus and Vienna."

On 14 January 1476, Matthias received a papal brief of 18 October 1475. Among other things, it contained an admonition that he should not give up the work already begun, and that he should continue to actively protect the principality of Moldavia, which he accepted to defend the Christian faith against the Turks. Two days later, the king wrote a response to the pope (no. 81), saying that he did not need additional incentives from His Holiness in order to continue the work of defending the faith against the Turks. As could be confirmed by the papal legates, Matthias argued that he had always been obedient to the Holy See in everything and was always ready to act against the Turks and heretics without hesitation. As he details, in his appointment by the Holy See to combat heretics (in Bohemia), he spared no pains or effort to carry out this work for all these years, defending the Catholic people against heretic attacks. Fighting on this front, he says, he could not split his forces to combat both the Turks and the heretics at the same time. Nevertheless, the extent to which he has been able to contribute to the defence of Christendom against the Turks could be corroborated by the testimony of the Venetian doge and German princes. The more so now, since he was freed from the duty of fighting against heretics,¹⁷ he promised to assign as many forces for defending Christianity as he could withdraw from the fighting.

At the same time, Matthias complained that for so many years of hard work, which he had done in obedience to the papacy—standing up in defence of Christianity and incurring the highest costs, sometimes more than he could bear, spilling his and his brothers' blood, sparing no efforts and facing a great threat—he received too little compensation from the Holy See, and even to the contrary, that he was sometimes in trouble with the pope. Therefore, he was humbly asking Sixtus to accept in good faith what he was writing from

17. George of Poděbrady, the Hussite King of Bohemia from 1458 to 1471, was excommunicated by Pope Paul II on 23 December 1466. King Matthias, called in by the Catholic opposition, was elected the Bohemian king in Olomouc on 3 May 1469, which was only recognized by the lesser provinces of the Bohemian crown (Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia). After that there was a war for the Bohemian crown, which, after the death of King George, took the form of a lasting conflict with Poland. On 8 December 1474, the meeting in Wrocław (Breslau) called for a three-year truce, and on 12 February 1475, the Prague Diet decided that the Bohemian crown would remain in the hands of Ladislaus the Jagiellonian (Władysław Jagiellończyk). It was because of this war that Sixtus IV reproached Corvinus for fighting as much against heretics as to satisfy his own ambitions. It was from that time on that the Hungarian ruler devoted more attention to fighting against the Ottomans. See Artner, *Hungary as Propugnaculum*, no. 100; Baczkowski, *Między czeskim utrakwizmem*.

the bottom of his heart. He went on to complain of the lack of subsidies he had been given to maintain the army that defended Christianity against the Turks, and that he did not receive the promised revenues from the jubilee year, which was brought about by the chicanery of Corvinus's enemies. But he argued that these actions were not so much detrimental to his own interests as to the whole of Christendom. Those receiving money now would not utilize it in defence against the Turks but rather use it against the Hungarians and so harm the whole of Christendom. He continued to try to persuade the pope that it was only he who was worth supporting as a truly faithful son and defender of Christianity. The next letter, dated 2 February 1476 (no. 82), is similar in content. But the same arguments were in fact used by Corvinus's opponents, arguing that financial subventions that he had obtained for fighting the Turks were used against Austria and Poland (see below).

In reply to these complaints, the pope wrote on 2 February 1476 (no. 84) that although the envoys of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, king of Poland, requested much, he granted the Polish king nothing but jubilee indulgence funds from a monastery, the money being intended for defence against the Tartars. Sometime later that year (no. 85), the pope informed Matthias that his plenipotentiary sent to him with money reported that he stayed in Senj in Croatia, because he heard rumours that about 6,000 Turks were approaching, which temporarily prevented him from fulfilling his mission. The king was expected to provide a stronger escort so that the money would not be exposed to open danger. Corvinus was also promised further subsidies from tithes. That was enough for the king to assure Sixtus on 27 March 1476 (no. 86) of his zeal to fight against the Turks in defence of Christianity, for which he wanted to win victories.

Equally courteous was the next papal letter of that year (no. 90). The pontiff confirmed that he knew of Corvinus's utmost respect for the Holy See as well as the fervour in brave spirit with which he had been engaged, and still was, in the fight against the most ignoble enemy, the Turks. He had performed deeds most worthy of the name of a true Christian ruler. The most suitable epithet, Sixtus said, would be the invincible and most magnificent defender and champion of the Catholic faith.

At the same time (no. 91), the envoys of the Moldavian voivode, Stephen the Great, arrived in Rome. Among other things, they asked the pope to grant the voivode a subvention to fight against the Turks, who were a constant threat to his country. The pope told them that the subsidy for the year had already been

promised to Matthias. However, in view of the fact that they were allies, the pope believed that Matthias would undoubtedly use the money appropriately to also defend Moldavia. And as far as the next levy was concerned, the Holy See would do Stephen a favour and grant him direct assistance.

Shortly afterwards (no. 96), the pope confirmed that he had received Matthias's letter with a sealed copy of a note from a Hungarian commander, which clearly outlined how the cruel Turks, who had oppressed Stephen with brutal war and laid horrible siege to his castles, had been repulsed, not even by force of arms but only by the name of the king, so dangerous to his enemies. According to the report, the Moldavians were freed from siege while the Turks retreated and were put to the most ignominious flight.¹⁸ The next papal letter (no. 97) was in the same vein: Matthias performed excellent exploits defending Christianity and defeating the Turks. His army was far better than the Ottoman troops and those of all other infidels.

In the letter dated 11 March 1481 (no. 127), Matthias raised the issue of the 100,000 ducat subsidy promised by the pope.¹⁹ He insisted on getting this money, saying that it would allow him to undertake further actions against the Turks, recruit an army, and defend Bosnia. In this noble work, however, he was again hindered by Emperor Frederick III, who provoked armed clashes. In order to defend against him, Matthias had to deploy troops that he could otherwise have sent against the Turks. The emperor had received a 50,000 ducat subvention to fight against the Turks, yet he used the money to the detriment of Matthias.

Alarming overtones appear in the letter of 14 April 1481 (no. 129). Matthias wrote that he had always fought against the Turks, who were now directing their fury, all their troops, and their intentions against him. The king had been informed by some friends at the Sultan's court (in other words, spies or agents; we know that Poland also had them at the Sublime Porte somewhat later²⁰) that a decision was made there to take revenge on Corvinus for the damage and harm he had caused: several Christian lords would be persuaded to attack him and his territory. This information was also confirmed by commanders

18. Papp, "Stephen the Great," 371: "Between July 26, 1476, and May 3, 1481, the sources, including the Ottoman ones, do not recall any major military clash between the Porte and Moldavia."

19. On the promised subsidy, see *Monumenta Vaticana*, nos. 103–4.

20. A payment receipt for *exploratores* (scouts) can be found in *Liber quitanciarum*, 177.

and spies returning from Turkey. By the day of St. John the Baptist (24 June), Mehmed II intended to invade Hungary in person with all his might. The news was substantiated almost word for word, *inter alia*, in a letter of Stephen, the Moldavian voivode. The whole Turkish power would be sent against Matthias and Stephen.

Matthias continually emphasized his services in the battles against the Turks, which should be regarded as a clever propaganda ploy and an element of his building a self-image as a defender of Christianity. The aim of skillfully playing the Turkish card as an element of Corvinus's international policy was done in an effort to gain the pope's political support and financial assistance.²¹ Facts show, however, that Matthias's overriding aim was to defeat Emperor Frederick III, who was repeatedly accused of acting to the detriment of all Christendom. As Attila Bárány writes:

Matthias skilfully used the instrument of the anti-Turkish war to gain the favor of the Holy See and exploited it to his full benefit. He extolled himself as though he were continuing steadfastly to deliver blows against the Turks. [...] This kind of propaganda was not uncommon for the time, and rulers were not averse to slogans such as "taking pains assiduously for the *negotium Dei*," so Matthias' "innate desire to fight" was in line with contemporary rhetoric.²²

Peace with the Holy Roman emperor, or rather the fact that Matthias had to fight constantly against him, is the second most important motive running through the correspondence. According to the Hungarian king, it was the emperor who continually attacked and provoked the Hungarians, causing Matthias to have to defend his country, which in turn drew him away from the more important task he would have liked to carry out and what he called his greatest desire—that is, fighting against the Turks and building the most important bulwark of Christianity.²³ This rhetoric cannot, however, obscure the fact that by decking

21. Such proposals are formulated also by Hungarian historians, including the greatest researcher of this period in the history of Hungary and the author of many publications devoted to it, András Kubinyi: see Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*; "Matthias Corvinus."

22. Bárány, "Crusading Letters," 575. On this same issue, see Housley, "Matthias Corvinus and Crusading."

23. See also Artner, *Hungary as Propugnaculum*, nos. 102, 107, 109.

himself out in the borrowed plumes of the defender of Christianity, Matthias was pursuing his own particular goals, which seldom had anything in common with his high-flown declarations.²⁴

Bárány's assessment of the royal agitation is somewhat different: "It might seem that Matthias' determination was feigned, a tool of propaganda machinery designed to deceive. Yet it was not only a rhetorical device with which to blackmail the Holy See. He faced unceasing confrontation and recognized that Hungary could not withstand a substantial assault alone, so he sought defence alternatives. One of these was this wide-scale correspondence to raise funds and find allies."²⁵ But, without denying the real threat that Hungary was facing, it must be remembered that Matthias's letters played a primarily propagandistic role.

Philippus Callimachus

There are no Polish sources of the kind discussed above. Polish diplomacy hardly tried to use the threat posed by the Muslim world to persuade the papacy to pay the special war subsidies in favour of the Polish king. And the Polish king, Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, did not write letters to the pope depicting himself as a great defender of Christianity. In fact, officially, Polish diplomacy never tried to prevent Corvinus's propaganda. Philippus Callimachus was the only one who tried to take action in this regard, though he ultimately failed to counter it effectively. The Kraków court was not able to successfully present itself as a defender of Christian Europe in order to partake of papal subsidies. Diplomatic victories were hard to achieve even when Matthias Corvinus was interfering in Poland's internal affairs.²⁶ The Roman Curia, in conflict with the Polish king, supported King Matthias decidedly,²⁷ regarding him as the only guarantor of the expected anti-Turkish crusade—and Matthias was perfectly

24. A similar opinion was expressed, for example, in Rázsó, "Die Türkenpolitik Matthias Corvinus"; and Pilat and Cristea, *Ottoman Threat*, 152–57.

25. Bárány, "Crusading Letters," 576.

26. Between 1477 and 1479, Matthias declared himself a protector of the Teutonic Order, which supported a candidate for bishop of Warmia rivalling the one put forward by King Kazimierz. See Bárány, "Matthias' European Diplomacy," 375; Biskup and Labuda, *Dzieje Zakonu Krzyżackiego*, 462–65; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, 490–91; Górski, *Zakon*, 181–82.

27. Biskup and Górski, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk*, 133–34, 232–33; Pilat and Cristea, *Ottoman Threat*, 139.

able to take advantage of these sentiments. Changing this attitude was a very difficult undertaking that ultimately proved impossible.

The abovementioned Philippus Buonacorsi, called Callimachus, was an Italian humanist who fled Rome and spent over twenty-five years in Poland (from 1470 to 1496). In 1469, after his escape from Italy, he cooperated with the Turks who were planning to occupy the island of Chios. There is a lot of evidence that Callimachus started a conspiracy on the island with the aim of handing it over to Turkish rule. In connection with this plot, he left for Constantinople, where he was probably given a hearing with the Sultan.²⁸ Thanks to this experience, he was later considered to be an expert on Turkish–Tartar policy during his stay in Kraków.

The 1470s was a period in which the Turkish issue was particularly relevant in Poland, with King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk devoting much attention to it. These were the times of the Turkish invasion to the north. The Polish king received new pleas for help from the voivode of Moldavia, Stephen the Great, who also sent the same requests to Rome and Venice. Finally, in 1475, the Ottomans conquered an important port in Crimea: Caffa.²⁹ A further consequence of this was that the Crimean Tatars, the dangerous neighbours of the Jagiellonian state to the southeast, came under their sovereignty. To make matters worse, in the same year the Turks defeated the aforementioned Moldavian Voivode Stephen in battle. These developments made Hungary and Venice also feel directly threatened by the Ottomans.

King Kazimierz did not intend to come to terms with the situation on the Black Sea after the Ottoman state conquered two important Moldavian ports. Although in 1486 he led the preparations for a war expedition against Turkey, in the end nothing came out of these plans. Also, the international situation did not give hope for the recovery of the two important harbors that had been lost to the Ottomans, Kiliya and Ak(k)erman (Latin *Album Castrum*, Romanian *Cetatea Albă*). Therefore, Polish diplomacy made an attempt to regain them by peaceful means. In 1487, Marcin of Wrocimowice and Philippus Callimachus went to the Sultan, Bayezid II on behalf of the king. And a year later, Mikołaj

28. See the apology of Callimachus in his letter to Dzierżław of Rytwiany, the Sandomierz voivode, written from Dunajów on 13 April 1471: *Acta Tomiciana*, Appendix 1:1–6; Callimachus, *Epistulae selectae*, ed. Lichońska, Pianko, and Kowalewski, 23–45.

29. The issue was also important for Hungary and the papacy. See Artner, *Hungary as Propugnaculum*, no. 101; Pilat and Cristea, *Ottoman Threat*, 157–61.

Firlej from Dąbrowica went to Ottoman Turkey. He brought back to Kraków a two-year truce, sworn by the Sultan on 22 March 1489, which was constantly extended for the next hundred or so years.³⁰ Of course, neither the unconditional return of the Black Sea harbors (which was initially the aim of Poland) nor their redemption by King Kazimierz was an option.

In connection with these events, Callimachus's work entitled *De his quae a Venetis tentata sunt Persis ac Tartaris contra Turcos movendis* (On Venice's attempts to incite the Persians and Tartars against the Turks) was composed (between 1487 and 1492).³¹ Venice was one of the countries particularly interested in the issue of establishing an anti-Turkish coalition and sought allies throughout Europe. When the Turks began the conquest of Bosnia in the spring of 1463, the Venetian doge, Christophoro Moro, turned to the Polish king to help him defend himself against the Ottoman threat. A Venetian message was sent to Bohemia and Germany for the same purpose.³² Callimachus wrote that he himself was in favour of turning the arms of Venice against Turkey. However, when the Venetians came to understand that there was no possibility of obtaining help from Christian states to fight the Ottomans because these requests and messages did not bring any tangible results, they took the initiative to win against the common enemy the Tartars as well as the Turcoman leader, Uzun Hassan, considered in Europe as the king of the Persians.³³

One of the most interesting parts of the work is a detailed argument made by Callimachus about the Tatars. Polish diplomacy was also involved in the project of including them in the fight against the Turks. It is worth noting that

30. Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Relations*, 108–10; Tafiłowski, "Włoskie i łacińskie dokumenty"; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, 496–98; Korczak, "Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie"; Czamańska, *Mołdawia i Wołoszczyzna*; "Mołdawia i Wołoszczyzna"; Spieralski, *Awantury mołdawskie*; Garbacik, "Problem turecki; Małowist, *Kaffa*; Górka, "Białogród i Kilia"; Stachoń, *Polityka Polski*.

31. Callimachus, *De his quae a Venetis tentata*, ed. Kempfi. According to the bibliography of Karol Estreicher, this work was never independently edited in the sixteenth century and was published only as part of the work of Petrus Bizaro's *Rerum Persicarum historia* (two of Callimachus's works are to be found on pages 371–431). Andrzej Kempfi claims that the *editio princeps* of *De his quae a Venetis tentata* was the edition of 1533, published in Hagenau. However, this is a mistake, for it was the second edition of the speech addressed to Pope Innocent VIII (see below).

32. *Matricularum Regni Poloniae summaria*, nos. 628, 630; Gawęda et al., *Rozbiór krytyczny*, 167.

33. For more on this topic, see Meserve, *Empires of Islam*, 223–31; Quirini-Popławska, "Próby nawiązania"; Babinger, *Z dziejów imperium Osmanów*, 323–28; Gawęda et al., *Rozbiór krytyczny*, 291–92; Stachoń, "Polska." See also Contarini, *Viaggio*.

Polish diplomacy tried to play the Turkish–Tartar card against the enemy of the Jagiellonians, Matthias Corvinus, a trace of which can also be found here.

Polish historian Janusz Smołucha, writing about another work of the humanist Callimachus, *Ad Innocentium VIII de bello Turcis inferendo oratio*, says the following:

Callimachus as early as 1490, in a memorial prepared for the anti-Turkish congress in Rome, considered Poland as the only force capable of defeating the Ottomans and clearly pointed to Prince Jan Olbracht as the future leader of the expedition. At the same time, he was constantly understating the economic and military potential of the Turkish state.³⁴

In this speech, Callimachus presented a controversial thesis that Poland, if properly prepared, would be able to drive the Turks out of Europe on its own. There was no need to engage the forces of other Christian countries for this purpose, as the opponent was not as powerful as it was commonly believed, as Callimachus had the opportunity to see for himself during his journey to Turkey. The Slavic people living in the countries conquered by the Turks were supposedly only waiting for a signal to grab their weapons and rise up against the common enemy. Callimachus devoted a lot of space to presenting the readiness of the Jagiellonians to go to war with the Muslims. He considered Prince Jan Olbracht to be the most suitable leader of the general crusade. As proof, the writer recalled the last great victory over the Tatars, which had not been rewarded by the pope with any signs of favour or gratitude. As Smołucha notes, Callimachus suggested that a proper distinction for the Jagiellonians would be a cardinal's hat for Prince Frederick Jagiellon.³⁵

It seems, however, that things were far different from what Smołucha believes. Of course, it must be admitted that, without a doubt, Callimachus did not seriously consider the possibility of defeating Ottoman troops with solely Polish-Lithuanian forces. At the same time, it seems more than likely that the military forces, the economy, and the state of the Ottoman Empire were described in such a disrespectful way in order to convince the pope that he

34. Smołucha, *Papiestwo*, 50–51.

35. Smołucha, *Papiestwo*, 50–51. See also Smołucha, "Między Warną a Mohaczem," 467–68. Krzysztof Baczkowski also comes to a similar conclusion (Baczkowski, "Państwo," 232), and Józef Skoczek had the same opinion (Skoczek, *Legenda*, 34).

unnecessarily subsidized Matthias Corvinus to fight such a weak opponent. We can probably assume that Callimachus's speech (or, perhaps it would be more appropriate to say the political program formulated in the literary form of the speech, regardless of whether it was actually meant to be delivered to the pope, or to remain merely as a guideline for Polish diplomacy) was another element in the Jagiellonians' struggle against the king of Hungary. It was supposed to achieve more than one goal, and its essential part (about the Ottoman Empire's weakness and war with this state) cannot be combined in a cause-and-effect manner with the final one, mentioning the merits of Polish kings for the defence of the Christian world and the solicitation of the cardinal's hat for Prince Frederick. Therefore, it does not seem right to assume that this speech was calculated only to obtain the cardinal's dignity for Frederick Jagiellon, as Janusz Smołucha states. This was at most a secondary goal.

Let us remember that while diminishing the strength of the Turks, Callimachus at the same time emphasized the power, strength, wildness, and horror of the Tartars, with whom the Jagiellonians fought relentlessly to defend the Christian world, becoming the bulwark of it—a real *Antemurale*. (This issue had been strongly stressed by the Polish diplomats in Rome since the mid-fifteenth century,³⁶ but inconsistently and without much success.) The Turks, in

36. See also the speech of Mikołaj Strzępiński addressed to Pope Nicholas V in April 1450: "Quo fit in nobis, nunciis et ambasiatoribus serenissimi domini regis et regni Poloniae, ad pedes sanctitatis tue consistentibus, spes, fiduciaque non mediocris suboritur, quod sanctitatis tua preces et vota ipsius serenissimi domini regis nostri exaudire dignabitur, qui non minus inter ceteros reges catholicos, fines contingentes infidelium, se murum proteccionis adversus eorum sevientem rabiem constituit, eos persepe dei fulcitus presidio debellando, prout et in precedentis anni decursu hoc ipsum per eum factum esse, ut conicimus, non est incognitum orbi, qui recuperatis castris et dominiis per Tartaros occupatis, conflictisque turmis validis hostium Christi, eciam usque ad intericionem plurimorum milium, acta bellica cede cum victore exercitu feliciter ad propria remeavit" (Therefore, in us, messengers and ambassadors of the Most Reverend King and Kingdom of Poland, standing at the feet of Your Holiness, there is awakened a not inconsiderable hope and confidence that Your Holiness will deign to listen to the requests and wishes of our Most Reverend Lord and King, who, no less than other Catholic kings, bordering on infidel states, has himself established himself as a protective wall against their raging fury, defeating them constantly with divine assistance. This is what he had done the previous year, which we suppose is not unknown to the world. Having recaptured the castles and lands occupied by the Tartars and having fought against the vast throng of Christ's enemies, slaughtering many thousands of them, he ended the hostilities victoriously and returned home happily). *Codex epistolaris*, no. 38; my translation. See also "Peroratio Joannes Ostrorog coram papa Paulo II an. 1467," in Pawiński, *Jana Ostroroga żywot i pismo*, 182–91.

turn, out of fear of Polish kings, incited all Tartar tribes to war against Poland.³⁷ This was nothing less than a clear signal that the sympathy and support of the papacy (and of the whole of Europe) as well as financial subsidies should be transferred from Hungary to Poland in order to stop the much more dangerous enemy. The underestimation of the power of the Turks was a propaganda blow against Matthias Corvinus, such a glorified defender of Christian Europe against the Turkish invasion, and the exaggerated emphasis on the power of Poland was also a rhetorical trick designed to achieve this goal.

What was said earlier can be complemented by information from two additional documents. Callimachus was also the author of a political analysis, presenting the international situation in the Central European region. This document, dated from Lublin on 7 May 1478, was addressed to Zbigniew Oleśnicki, archbishop of Gniezno and vice-chancellor of the Crown.³⁸ His thesis may have been somewhat shocking: Callimachus advised that—in view of the emperor's indifference and lack of help from the pope (who supported Matthias Corvinus in the hope that he would deal with the Hussites in Bohemia)—Poland should form an alliance with Ottoman Turkey against the king of Hungary, even if it was to be only an ostensible one.³⁹ According to him, this would be the only opportunity to defeat the “usurper,” “intruder,” and “peasant son” hated and despised by the Kraków court,⁴⁰ the same motif that I believe played the most important role in Callimachus's speech to Pope Innocent VIII. Callimachus strongly emphasized that such a solution was dictated by *dura necessitas* and the idleness of those whose help Poles had the right to expect. The inability of Poland to use the Ottoman card was strongly criticized, as the Hungarian case could be won with this asset. Callimachus knew that Venice or Lorenzo the Magnificent played out many political issues in Italy in this way, and he did not shy away from such unconventional solutions. According to him, Poland should have taken advantage of the Turkish offer of alliance and supported

37. Callimachus, *Ad Innocentium VIII*, ed. Lichońska and Kowalewski, 77.

38. See *Acta Tomiciana*, Appendix 1:10–15; and Callimachus, *Epistulae selectae*, 69–89.

39. On relations between Poland and Ottoman Turkey in this period, see Tańkowski, “Włoskie i łacińskie dokumenty.”

40. See, for example, Baczkowski, “Maciej Korwin”; “Stosunki”; *Walka o Węgry*; Nehring, “Bemerkungen.” On the subject of the legitimacy of the power of Matthias Corvinus, using “the motive of the defence of faith or the *topos* of the righteous and educated ruler who emulated a mix of biblical as well as ancient models supplied an effective basis for persuasion,” see Srodecki, “Panegyrics.”

the Sultan, maintaining formal neutrality. Not giving a positive answer to the Turkish proposals of anti-Hungarian alliance was in his opinion a big mistake. The content of the source confirms my earlier assumption about the main goals of Callimachus's political program.

In another report, without a known date or addressee, Callimachus argues that joining the war against Turkey at the side of Venice would be an expensive mistake.⁴¹ He was convinced that all rulers who declared to take part in the war expedition would quickly withdraw from it, and then Poland would find itself in an extremely difficult situation. Therefore, there was no better solution than maintaining a truce or peace with the Sultan. Thanks to this truce, it would be possible to keep peace in Prussia, Wallachia, and with the Tatars, as well as keep Matthias Corvinus in check. Without peace with Ottoman Turkey, all this could not be achieved. What was more, if the Roman Curia took the side of the Hungarian king, who was an enemy of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, then Kazimierz would necessarily pursue an anti-papal policy and come together with Matthias's enemies—that is, not only with the Holy Roman emperor but also with Ottoman Turkey. This was known in Poland, but only Callimachus was able to put this issue into a literary form and thus contribute to the later expansion of this view in the country.

From what has been said above, a certain picture emerges of Callimachus's views on the question of the Turks and the concept of *Antemurale Christianitatis*. Only at first glance do they look inconsistent and contrary to common sense. In fact, we can observe a certain "Machiavellianism" in the political agenda of this humanist. In relation to Ottoman Turkey, he consistently proposed to run *realpolitik*. While in his speech to Pope Innocent VIII he argued that Poland itself was capable of defeating the Turks and pushing them out of Europe, in subsequent writings he completely discouraged armed struggle; on the contrary, he suggested ways in which Poland could take advantage of the Turkish threat to Europe, and, what is more, he pointed out the need to maintain peaceful relations with the Ottoman Empire, and even to form alliances with it. In each case his proposals are deeply thought out, one might even say cynical, and are intended to serve one overriding purpose: the welfare and prosperity of the Kingdom of Poland. In this, Callimachus approached the political concepts of

41. *Acta Tomiciana*, Appendix 1:15–18.

some Italian and French humanists.⁴² He was the only one to propose a coherent political program on Turkish–Hungarian issues, but it must be emphasized that the successors of Polish politics did not follow his thought.⁴³ Probably to some extent it was because King Kazimierz had no confidence in him.

Conclusion

Both Matthias and Callimachus relied strongly on the symbolic frontier concept of Hungary and Poland, respectively, as the *scutum et antemurale totius Christianitatis* (shield and bulwark of Christendom). Both policies, Polish (we could call it semi-official, as in fact Callimachus's political program, as outlined here, was never implemented) and Hungarian (carried out very vigorously), were aimed at the same goal: to introduce their respective countries as the defender and bulwark of the Christian world and to benefit from this vision. But the attitudes were different, and therefore it was not possible to unite the aims of the two kingdoms ruled by mutually hostile sovereigns. What was beneficial to one of them became a loss to the other wherein Polish diplomacy was weaker than the Hungarian one.

The problem for both kingdoms was also that the European states not directly threatened by the Ottoman Empire were not really interested in the ideology of fighting the infidels. Some popes, such as Pius II and Sixtus IV, were most energetic in this field. For this reason, Callimachus, taking a very pragmatic approach to the problem, proposed solutions that he judged to be beneficial to Poland, moving away from utopian pan-European projects. The ideology of the bulwark of Christianity was therefore steered onto a completely different track from that of Matthias Corvinus in the previous decade. The idea of *Antemurale Christianitatis* turned eventually into two hostile *Antemurales* and became ultimately just a tool of political struggle in Central Europe without taking into account the common good. It turned out that there was no friendship or sense of community when money was at stake.

42. On Callimachus as a diplomat, see Baczkowski, "Callimaco"; Skoczek, *Legenda*, 18–44; Ptaśnik, *Kultura włoska*, 189–245; Bujak, "Kallimach."

43. For more on Polish and European anti-Turkish literature, including political writings, see Tańkowski, "Imago Turci"; "Anti-Turkish Literature."

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