

**Captive Greeks and Deluded Europeans:
Notes on Juan Luis Vives's *De conditione vitae Christianorum sub Turca* (1529)**

Edward V. George
(Texas Tech University, Emeritus)

The purpose of this essay is twofold: to explicate the use of “Greece” and “the Greeks” under Ottoman sway in Juan Luis Vives’s *De conditione vitae Christianorum sub Turca* (*On the Condition of Christians’ Life under the Turks*) of 1529, as an example of his rhetorical method in dealing with the Turks; and complementarily, to examine his European Christian target audience, including how he characterizes them and just who, if anyone, it is in the Mediterranean world that he has particularly in mind.

The *De conditione* delivers both less and more than its title promises. “Christians’ life under the Turks” occupies only part of the work, and is only partially covered; meanwhile, the treatise deals more extensively with the germane issues of the deficiencies of European Christians’ faith, and their faulty political awareness. The core of his target audience is composed of European Christians, disgruntled with their Christian rulers, who think Ottoman suzerainty would be an improvement. (I distinguish between “target audience”, referring to those whom he feels compelled to caution and instruct, and “intended readership”, which includes the target audience along with others who may share the author’s concern.) Also addressed, albeit much more briefly, are Christian rulers themselves who abuse their subjects or who might find Ottoman overlordship appealing. In general, Vives leans away from actual description of “Christians’ life under the Turk” and toward exposure of moral and religious weaknesses that would leave European Christians vulnerable to exploitation, whether social, economic, or religious, in the event of Ottoman domination.¹

An outline of the *De conditione* exposes the imbalance.² McCully (1967:194) states accurately that “the main subject of the tract was the *prospect* of domination by the Turks” (emphasis added). What the outline emphasizes is Vives’ primary attention to European Christian attitudes that render this prospect forbidding.

Table: *De conditione vitae Christianorum sub Turca*: Outline

I. Preliminary: Christians’ False Concepts of Liberty and Spiritual Weaknesses (447.4-454.32)

A. Unrealistic Christian disdain for current rulers

¹ I am indebted to previous work on the *De conditione* by McCully (1967:193-213), Calero in Vives (1997), and Colish (2009). I am particularly grateful to Dr. Colish for generous criticism in correspondence, and to Dr. Gabriella Erdélyi for sharing her insights and scholarship. I also thank Stavros Anestidis for access to a remote article; Peter Barta for contacts with scholars; my wife Cecilia for conversations and suggestions; and Nancy Bisaha, Eric R. Dursteler, Peter Mazur, and James D. Tracy for kind and helpful correspondence. All mistakes and omissions, of course, are my own.

² References in the outline are to pages and line numbers in Vives (1782-1790; hereafter abbreviated as *VOO*) volume 5. All translations of Vives are my own.

1. Christians' hostility toward Christian regimes leads to hankering after Turkish rule. Princes and subjects are equally at fault. (447.4-28)
2. Merchants, soldiers, and athletes suffer hardships for gain: our trials as subjects are small in light of our true destiny, eternal felicity. (447.29-448.27)
3. Scripture and Cyprian of Carthage counsel obedience even to unjust princes. (448.28-449.8)

B. Liberty ancient & modern

1. Imagined liberty under Turks is a total fantasy. Utterly unrestricted freedom is impossible; not even Greece or Rome had it. (449.9-29)
2. Notions of liberty: (449.30-450.18)
 - a. *libertas summa* = to be a law abiding citizen
 - b. *una libertas vera* = to live well, i.e. virtuously
 - c. *proxima libertas* (after b.) = civil obedience, toleration of a faulty ruler
3. Freedom and community: antiquity. (450.19-451.13)
 - a. Rome suffered worse than we, even in the Republic.
 - b. Athens: punished good citizens.
 - c. Conclusion: even Greeks & Romans did not have unrestricted liberty.

C. Poor modern intra-Christian record of harmony or reasonable submission

1. Example: Italians who would die or, even worse, submit to degrading [Turkish] hegemony before living under Germans, Spaniards, etc. Romans forget that ancient Rome devastated other peoples. (451.14-32)
2. Italians have even despised each other and abused Italy itself (see Marius & Sulla). History argues against absolute opposition to a foreign ruler. Cf. harmonious Spanish rule of Naples but not Milan. After hatred of European foreign rulers, why opt for the even worse Turk? (451.33-452.22)
3. Shallow Christians would be in serious religious peril under Turks. Vives will write some day to counter illusions about Turkish rule. (452.23-453.13)

D. Early Christian history: pre- & post-Constantine eras

1. Resolute ancient Christian martyrs defeated Roman persecutors' tortures by indomitable faith. (453.13-454.2)
2. When Constantine privileged Christianity, religion and virtue languished; the malady persists. Princes disgrace themselves entering church. (454.3-32)

II. Hypothetical Turkish Rule: Focus on Turks' Attitudes and Actions (454.33-457.37)

- A. Turkish hegemony will be sadder than the rise of Constantine. Christians are regarded not even as human beings but cattle for the Turks' benefit, with no rights. Evidence: treatment of defenders of Rhodes. (454.33-455.20)
- B. Turkish attitude toward Mamluk slaughter bodes ill for Christians; bogus honors conferred by Turks are meaningless. (455.21-34)

- C. Grief of the Greeks, whose land is a prison (stream of fugitives noted). (455.35-456.21)
- D. Christian rulers beware: initial Turkish honors > servitude. (456.22-34)
- E. Argument that material affairs are unimportant is rejected. (456.35-457.4)
- F. Spiritual constraints under Ottoman rule: Christianity despised, criticism of Islam forbidden, boys impressed into Janissary corps. (457.5-37)

III. Hypothetical Turkish Rule: Focus on Christians' Moral and Spiritual Vulnerability (458.1-460.13)

A. Christians' weakness in the face of prospective Turkish cultural and religious environment

1. Greeks' and Romans' intellectual arts promoted spiritual understanding until ravaged by the barbarians. (458.1-22)
2. Turks are famed for ignorance of all culture. Christendom's arts & disciplines (all learned from the now captive Greeks) promote piety. How will we, venal as we are despite life in a flourishing Church, resist when Turks entice us to desert our ways? (458.23-459.4)
3. Under the Ottomans, danger will arise from our religious associates' weakness (even if we ourselves are strong) and from persistent questioning of religious convictions. Prone to depravity, we have already defected from God to the devil. (459.5-33)
4. We are spiritually weak despite the aid of props, incentives, and encouragements. Corrosion will accelerate if these are removed. Liberty, letters, *pietas* will be gone or at risk. Respect for Christ is already among our lowest priorities. Will other priorities not simply grow even stronger? New order under Turks = sham liberty; the rulers get all the benefits. (459.34-460.13)

B. Conclusion

To fervent Christians: neither expect weaker brethren to bear burdens equal to yours, nor presume that you yourselves can resist opposition. Scripture warns even the strong. Let us beware lest Turkish rule happen to us! (460.14-32)

Part I, roughly 56% of the total, despite brief Turkish references, is concerned with “the condition of the life of Christians under the Turks” only tangentially by way of setting the social, political, and religious backdrop. Parts II (c. 23%) and III (c. 21%), do treat said “condition,” but with persistent oscillation between what the Turks are likely to do and how morally and spiritually weak and vulnerable Christians would be if faced with life in the Turkish regime. Potential Turkish actions dominate only in Part II, while Christians' prior susceptibilities draw the main attention in Part III. Hence the decidedly limited accuracy of the ordinary title. The common title appears at the head of the text proper in the 1529 edition (Antwerp: Hillen). The edition's cover page, however, exhibits an alternate title which says it somewhat better: *Quam misera esset vita Christianorum sub Turca* (*How Miserable the Life of Christians Would Be under the Turk*: emphasis added), acknowledging the hypothetical emphasis of the treatise.

Selectivity: The Greek Orthodox Church Disappears

Part II reveals the ways Vives chooses to arraign Turkish process and conduct. His accusations mostly take the form of general categorizations, without specific details:

It behooves all of you, who set such store by the names of immunity and liberty, to consider that to the Turk you will play no role other than cattle, which he nurtures for his own utility and benefit, not for [your] participation in any advantages, or public offices, or in sum, any of those things which citizens hold in common; since to him we would not be counted in the number of citizens, or even human beings. He would not permit us to increase in wealth, grow in power, flourish in public office, or exercise influence in dignity. He would hold suspect any advancement of ours, being hostile to us in law, hostile in religion, hostile in his own and his ancestors' hatred. Nor would he consider himself bound to us by any law or any right; not by treaty, not by any commonality, not by the very human nature that we all share. Whatever pleased him, he would reckon that it must be allowable, both by right of conquest and because he would not think that there are any laws, any sworn promise, any sense of duty by which his unbridled inclinations could be restrained or the violence of his assault mitigated and withheld. For the Rhodian knights are witnesses to what kind of fidelity he would exercise; save for their immediate withdrawal, he had determined to cut them off most cruelly.³

The reader would have little clue from this description that even with the relegation of Christians and other populations to subordinate status, the Turks administered the division of subject populations by *milet*. The *milet*, an institution of Persian origin, was a religious population in an Islamic land from among the “people of the Book”, whether Christian or Jewish. “The main millets were the Greek Christians, the Armenian Christians, and the Jews” (Runciman 1968:77-81; cf. Itzkowitz 1972:59). The *milet* maintained a standing in the Empire however limited, and was led by a responsible and recognized authority of its own. This applied to the Greek Orthodox community, embracing the majority of the Greeks, under the official leadership of the Patriarch of Constantinople. It was accorded a subordinate status under Muslim rule: taxed more heavily, subject to humiliations and other constraints, but preserving its identity and its entitlement to conduct its own affairs, as long as it acknowledged the suzerainty of the ruling Muslim power. Brady, Jr., et al. (1994) cites the need for caution in studying the experience of the *milet*: “... the [Ottoman] treatment of religious minorities apparently better accords [than Europe's record] with modern expectations of religious toleration.” Yet

[The subject] is dangerously open to either abuse or romanticization of the Ottoman legacy. Thus, while Balkan nationalisms have in general tended to portray Ottoman rule as an unqualified

³ “vos qui immunitatis, qui libertatis nomina tanti facitis, reputare decet vos omnes Turcae non alio futuros loco quam pecudes, quas ad utilitates modo et fructus suos alit, non ad participatum ullum commodorum, honorum, non denique earum rerum quae communes sunt civibus inter se, cum illi non simus futuri nec civium numero, ac ne hominum quidem; non pateretur augere opibus, potentia crescere, vigere honoribus, pollere dignitate; incrementa nostra omnia haberet suspecta inimicus nobis lege, inimicus professione, inimicus odio et suo et avito, nec ulla se nobiscum crederet devinctum lege, nullo iure, non foedere, non communione, non humanitate et natura ipsa omnibus communi; quidquid ipsi liberet, existimaret licere oportere, et iure victoriae, et quod non censeret ullas esse leges, ullum iusiurandum, ullam fidem, qua soluti affectus possent alligari, aut vehementia impetus retardari ac impediri; nam qua fide victoriam exsequatur, testes sunt Rhodiani milites, qui nisi se mature subduxissent, crudelissimo illos dolo statuerat omnes intercipere.” (VOO 5.455)

yoke, Jewish history has lent itself to images of the Ottoman empire as a pluralist utopia. The truth, needless to say, lies somewhere in between. (Brady, Jr., & al., 1994:624)

The “worst hardship” for the Orthodox was the forcible separation and conversion of Christian boys for military service as Janissaries (Runciman 1968:79). Vives reports the fortunes of these abducted Christian youths in generalization which are accurate as far as they go, but which leave out significant variations:

What of that severest and harshest of all [offenses], whereby little children are carried off to the farthest regions, so that there, after denying the name of Christ and having their entire religion swallowed in oblivion, they may be enslaved to a master sunk in filth and impiety? Who among us would endure it? Who would not die a thousand times rather than witness or even hear of it? Nor in the midst of these practices do the Greeks dare to correct, admonish, or castigate their sons’ transgressions, or form them in virtue and in passion for what is honorable [...] And since among all animals man alone, depraved by his sinfulness, has strayed from his nature, for he has strayed from God, it comes about that he is left to his own devices; no animal ends up more savage, no animal more barbarous and out of joint. Nor is any wild beast so possessed of monstrous and inhumane morals, so like a wild beast, as is man. What, then, can one believe will be the personalities of boys who mature and get their education under that system: turned loose, unrestrained, at liberty to indulge all vices with impunity, with discipline gone? What religious faith can abide in souls of that kind?⁴

For this custom there is ample evidence; the wrenching heartbreak of its execution need not be doubted, and the abductees’ divorce from Christianity will surely have been for Vives the ultimate misfortune. Still, there are further considerations.

The *devşirme*, or the levy of Christian boys and youths for an army force, was an idea that long preceded the Ottomans (Goodwin 1994:32-33). The process was designed to select the most promising recruits from the Christian population. To those who qualified, a youth’s Janissary career provided opportunities for education in letters, arms and culture, and advancement to positions of power. Status as a “slave” of the Sultan’s household was actually a source of envy. “The title of *kul* [slave of the Sultan] was felt to be an honor. Boys longed to bear it.” (Lyber 1966:114.) Vapopoulos (1976:35-42) describes the pain of the *devşirme* but also the economic and career opportunities it provided for some. While “Some households dreaded the thought of a son being carried off to war and becoming a Muslim, ... the parents of the tribute boys did not all feel alike.” (Goodwin 1994:34; see Lyber 1966:53.) Goffman (2002:67-68) comments further on the compensations of the Janissary’s life. “Many parents were glad to have their sons chosen, knowing that they would thus escape grinding poverty, receive a first-rate training suitable to their abilities, and enter upon the possibility of a great career.” (Lyber 1966:54.)

⁴ “Quid illud omnium gravissimum et acerbissimum, abduci liberos parvulos in remotissimas regiones, ut ibi abnegato Christi nomine, et tota pietate in oblivionem missa, serviant domino spurcissimo ac impio? Quis id nostrum perferret? Quis non mallet mori millies quam id videre, vel etiam audire? Neque inter haec audent Graeci filios suos obiurgare, reprehendere, castigare flagitia, formare ad virtutem et studium honesti [...] et cum inter animantia omnia solus homo scelere suo corruptus a natura sua discesserit, quia et a Deo, fit ut sibi relinquatur, nullum animal efferatius evadat, nullum magis barbarum atque incompositum, nec ulla fera belua tam sit immanibus moribus et inhumanis, tam beluae similis ac homo. Quales ergo illic adolescere atque educari pueros est credibile, solutos, effrenes, in licentia atque impunitate vitiorum omnium, semota disciplina? Quae potest in eiusmodi animis esse pietas?” (VOO 5:457.18-37)

The Janissaries of the early sixteenth century may be considered from two viewpoints: as a class with opportunities for high education, training, and authority, or as a collection of military units whose power made them potentially dangerous, politically and militarily, to those who nominally regulated them. Education and strict supervision of the elite Janissaries in training could entail advancement to positions of prestige and power (Goodwin 1994:43-50). On how Janissaries might get out of control:

since a large portion of them were in comparative idleness in time of peace, they were liable to act as an organized and very dangerous mob. [...] They could not be easily restrained from plundering cities which had capitulated or from violating terms of surrender. [...] They demanded donatives at the succession of a new ruler with such increasing rapacity as to embarrass the treasury. (Lyber 1966:92.)

On the other hand Suleiman, who ruled from 1520 to 1566, “succeeded, on the whole, in keeping the Janissaries in hand, and he was able to lead them further east than could his father Selim. They never revolted against him.” (Lyber 1966:97.) But see Vaughan (1954:112), asserting that among Suleiman’s incitements to a Balkan campaign was a life-threatening mutiny of the Janissaries, “always resentful of prolonged peace.” In any case, Vives’s sketch of young men “turned loose, unrestrained, at liberty to indulge all vices with impunity, with discipline gone”, falls short of an accurate description of the possible destinies of a Christian boy turned Janissary.

Examples of alternative fortunes of victims of early abduction occur, such as that of Mehmet Sokullu (1506-1579), a Bosnian Orthodox Christian who was sent to the Palace School, entered the Ottoman administration, and ultimately served as Grand Vizier to Suleiman the Magnificent and his successors until 1579 (Donia, & Fine 1994:45-48; Finkel 2005:134, 151-58). His career does not fit Vives’ intimation of oblivion of his homeland or his religion. “Mehmet remembered his hometown, Višegrad, which he honored by ordering and carrying out the building there of the magnificent bridge over the Drina, linking the province of Bosnia with that of Serbia” (Donia, & Fine 1994:46). Later, in the 1550’s, he intervened in a power struggle between two Orthodox bishoprics that had stemmed back to the 1520’s, and restored the autocephalous stature of the Archbishopric of Ohrid and the Serbian Patriarchy of Peć (Donia, & Fine 1994:47). Bono (1982: 207-12) cites similar instances of successful Christians in Ottoman careers whose stories begin prior to 1529. Hasan Sardo, or Hasan Agha, a Sardinian captive in an Ottoman sea raid, rose to governor of Algiers in 1535 and directed the city’s defense against Charles V’s ill-fated 1541 attack on the city. The Calabrian ‘Ulūg ‘Alī (born 1520), “One of the most fortunate, capable, and powerful men of his age” (Bono 1982:210), also governed Algiers (1568-1577), distinguished himself at the battle of Lepanto, and was ultimately named grand admiral of the Ottoman Empire.

The change in Orthodox life wrought by the overthrow of the Byzantine Emperor and the taking of Constantinople in 1453 was “not quite as complete as it might seem at first sight” (Runciman 1968: 165). For already by that time most of the Patriarch’s flock was already under Turkish rule. Eastern Christian communities in Byzantine territory conquered by the Turks before 1453 were in a peculiar situation: they maintained their connection to the Patriarch of Constantinople by Turkish sufferance even though politically subject to the Turks. Further, prior to 1453, “It seemed to [the Turks] natural that the Orthodox in their dominions should continue to regard the [Byzantine] Emperor

as the ultimate sovereign; and they did not object to it, so long as the Orthodox *milet* did not take up arms against them in support of the Emperor” (Runciman 1968:79).

Mehmet II, the conquering Sultan, installed the Patriarch Gennadius as the head of the Orthodox *milet*, which was free to live under its own laws. The sad history of Eastern Orthodox experiences with the Western Latin Church and European crusaders promoted a tradition in which compliance with Ottoman rule was often seen as better for the Orthodox than exposure to Latin hegemony. “Better to see the Turkish turban than the Roman Catholic tiara within this city”: these words were attributed to the Grand Duke Loukas Notaras from within Constantinople under siege in 1453. They encapsulate a longstanding attitude, explored compellingly by Zachariadou (1991, esp. pp. 51-54).

In this treatise purporting to describe Christians’ life under the Turks, Vives makes no mention of the Eastern Orthodox communities or their role.⁵ Incorporation of the Eastern Orthodox Church would weaken his argument by spoiling his picture of unrelieved Christian oppression, suffering, and loss of identity in the Ottoman Empire. It would be hard to argue that the Eastern Church is simply not in the purview of a Latin Christian like Vives: both because the Orthodox were the prime examples of Christian life under the Turks; and because Vives himself directs so much attention to the Greeks, who by and large were Orthodox. Donia and Fine report a situation that occurred during the course of the growth of Sarajevo in Bosnia in the early sixteenth century:

Unsurprisingly, considering the city’s glamour and vital Islamic institutions, many Christians in the region converted to Islam. Many other Christians in and around the city, however, did not, and between 1515 and 1530 the Orthodox were allowed to build their own church in town. Both of these impressive sixteenth century buildings [*i.e. this church and a mosque*] were still standing and active until 1992. (Donia. & Fine 1994:52.)

One remarkable aspect of Vives’s diatribe on Christian life under the Turks is how, with two striking exceptions, he tends to avoid *specific* examples of Turkish conduct. This matter takes us away from the otherwise prominent Greeks, for he backs up his account of their trials by reference to no particular events involving them directly. The main disabilities to which Vives alludes, namely the abduction of children for the Janissary corps, the punishment meted out for public criticism of Islam, and other economic and social constraints, are described only in general terms. For specificity, we find him reaching back seven years to the Turks’ Rhodian conquest, and even further into the past to the previous Ottoman overthrow of the Mamluks in Egypt. In 1522, after an

⁵ A clarification is needed at this point. At *VOO* 5:449 Vives envisions Christians who, “When they should lose hope of attaining [liberty] under a Christian ruler, ... would on that account even prefer [the regime of] the Turk, *as if he would be more benign in conferring this liberty than a Christian* (*“quasi is benignior sit in largienda libertate hac”*). Colish (2009:6) translates the italicized clause as: “since he may be kinder in granting this liberty than is the Christian.” In her interpretation, here “Vives flags the fact that the Turks are more supportive of religious diversity than are European Christians.” However, *quasi* (“as if” rather than “since”) actually opens a skeptical proposition, indicating sarcastically that Turkish tolerance defies probability. Several similar sarcastic uses of *quasi* occur in Vives’s *Sullan Declamations* of 1520 / 1538. For example, a speaker defends the choice of Marius for a military command: “But, you insist, Marius was an old man. As if youth and strength were the priority in a general as in a soldier, rather than a judicious mind and the skills of a general!” (“At senex erat, inquis; quasi in imperatore sicut in milite aetas et vires desiderantur, ac non consilium potius, imperatoriaeque artes!”) (Vives 2012:134-35 = *VOO* 2:409). See also Vives 2012:242-43 = *VOO* 2:454; 2012:68-69 = *VOO* 2:382; 2012:52-53 = *VOO* 2:375; 2012:130-31 = *VOO* 2:407; and, in the *De Europae dissidiis et bello Turcico* of 1526, *VOO* 6:469.

earlier abortive attempt (in 1480) and a siege of several months, the Turks finally dislodged the Knights of St. John from their stronghold on the strategic island of Rhodes (Brockman 1969:111-55). The siege ended with a formal capitulation, in which the Knights were free to depart, as were any of the Rhodians who wished to join them.

Suleiman the Magnificent specified a deadline by which the Knights were to leave; but the impression conveyed by Vives that Suleiman's real hope was to waylay them if they did not hurry is not part of the story. Suleiman's generosity, however, is. In a December 10 letter, the Sultan "demanded the surrender of the city, and promised that the Grand Master [of the Knights] and all his Order would be allowed to leave in peace, taking with them all their personal property and any citizens who wished to follow them." (Brockman 1969:150.) Capture and slaughter were the alternative. After the December 15 deadline passed with the Knights seeking time for deliberation, the Turks reopened fire claiming Christians had broken the truce by repairing defenses. The Rhodian population, breaking with the leadership, sent envoys to Suleiman, and on the 24th the shooting ceased again.

Suleiman was now willing not only to let [the Knights] depart with honour, but to furnish them with ships if their own did not suffice. He repeated his promises to protect the life and property of the citizens, and added that they should be free to leave his domain at any time up to three years hence. Twelve days were allowed within which the Order and its followers and dependents must leave. (Brockman 1969:153.)

... partly to save the town itself from the horrors of sack, the Grand Master accepted Suleiman's surprisingly generous terms. The island was to remain tax-free for five years and to be exempt from the tribute of children. The survivors of the Order were to leave unharmed, and the young sultan treated the aged Grand Master with deference. The Knights sailed away [...] (Vaughan 1954:110.)

Further, Bisaha (2004:176) cites Francesco Guicciardini's commendation of Suleiman's leniency at Rhodes.

Even more enigmatic is that if Vives had chosen to put the Turks' conduct at Rhodes in a bad light, he had at his disposal reports of the episode of plunder committed by Turkish troops in temporary violation of the implementation of the Sultan's promises (Brockman 1969:153-54); or the conversion of Latin churches in Rhodes into mosques (Brockman 1969:157). In any event, for evidence of his claims of Ottoman abuse of Christians Vives resorts to a questionably pertinent seven-year-old episode, occurring offshore on newly seized territory, rather than enlarging specifically on the abuse of Christians, the spotlighted Greek Christians in particular, within the Empire. By citing the fall of Rhodes Vives is employing shorthand to make his point, since that defeat ran like a shock wave through Europe and would be widely familiar to any European readership.

Immediately afterward Vives offers yet another example, oddly phrased, of Turkish conduct which reflects only remotely and indirectly on actual treatment of Christians:

But [the Turk] exercises no better fidelity to his very own fellow peoples, and to those initiated in his own faith: after defeating and capturing their Sultan, he slaughtered the Mamluks to the last man although he had accepted their surrender when they were ready to defend themselves. Seeing

that he took this bold action in the face of some measure of feeling among his own subjects, how do you think he will treat us when he enjoys the advantage of their endorsement and acclaim?⁶

In 1516 and 1517, in a series of military successes, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I “The Grim” destroyed the Mamluks’ regime centered in Egypt and added their lands to the Ottoman Empire (Winter 1998:490-504). For this event Vives harks back to a sultan whose attitude toward Christians was much harsher than that of Suleiman, reigning in 1529. “In about 1520 Sultan Selim I, who disliked Christianity, suggested to his horrified vizier that all Christians should be forcibly converted to Islam.” Thwarted in this proposal, he sought the surrender of all Christian churches. Negotiations involving the Patriarch of Constantinople warded off this prospect, though “several more churches were annexed during his reign.” Under his successor Suleiman “no more churches were taken over” (Runciman 1968:189-90; see also Brady, Jr., et al. 1994:616). There was indeed an Egyptian episode in which “The Ottomans executed 800 mamlūks who had surrendered after promise of quarter” (Winter 1998:504). However, Vives’s expression “*non sine aliquo populi sensu*” (“in the face of some measure of feeling among his own subjects”, presumably negative) is decidedly muted alongside the vigorous hypothetical “*secundo suo populo et applaudente*” (“with the advantage of their endorsement and acclaim”), imagining future Turkish enthusiasm over possible future domination of Christians. The point is made in remarkably mild terms. Selim’s brutal betrayal confirms Vives’s accusation of Ottoman duplicity: the Turkish populace’s moderately characterized disapprobation, on the other hand, would seem to argue for the opposite. Winter (1998) makes no mention of the Ottoman populace’s reaction to Selim’s conduct against the Mamluks. Sources that describe an Ottoman population rueful over Selim’s conduct are unknown to me. One is left wondering, then, why the two most concrete pieces of evidence Vives offers for European Christians’ poor prospects as Ottoman subjects come from two events that are geographically and chronologically peripheral, somewhat outdated, and of dubious persuasiveness. Possibilities that occur are that his actual knowledge of Christians’ status under the Ottomans was slim; or that the knowledge he did possess was too interlaced with information complimentary to the Turks; or that he was hard put to find details of Christians’ treatment by the Turks that would resonate with his European audience’s knowledge, as would the evocation of Rhodes and Egypt.

Elsewhere in the *De conditione* we find a relevant curiosity which brings the Greeks back into focus, but by means of a rather disturbing image. When alluding to Constantine’s fourth century arrival on the Roman scene and his pernicious ecclesiastical interference, Vives chooses an astonishing illustration that imaginatively confuses Ottoman rule and Orthodox Christianity. While the blood of Christ had been still warm and the Christian faith strong, he says, life under impious and hostile princes (the persecuting emperors) had worked to the advantage of the ancient Church; for that situation produced the marvelous, irresistible phenomenon of the martyrs, their faith

⁶ “Sed nec ad ipsos suos populares, et eisdem initiatos sacris, meliore utitur fide: victo et capto Sulthano, Mamelucos paratos se defendere, cum in fidem accepisset, universos contrucidavit. Id cum ausus sit non sine aliquo populi sui sensu, quin eum facturum in nos censemus, secundo suo populo et applaudente?” (VOO 5:455.)

immovably grounded, their blood efficacious to draw more heroes by the hundreds in their wake (*VOO* 5:453.14-454.2). But then,

[Constantine] came into the house of Christ accompanied by the devil, and – a thing which could in no way have been brought about – wanted to unite the two houses or the two cities, of God and the devil. This is a feat that he could no more easily have achieved than joining Rome and Constantinople, which are separated by such wide expanses of land and sea: “What agreement does Christ have with Belial?” says Paul. Still, ardor cooled, faith nodded, all piety degenerated.⁷

Yet however black the day of Constantine, continues Vives, that day which subordinates a people to the Turk or to any ruler who by name and profession is alien to our faith will be much worse, nay will live in infamy, will inflict endless night (*VOO* 5:454.33-455.2).

Fichtner (2008:23) remarks on the symbolism of Constantinople as the “emblem of the Turkish threat to Europe”. Its use here, however, embedding an obvious echo of Augustine’s City of God / Earthly City dichotomy, conveys an arresting further series of polarities: virtuous early Church vs. corrupt era of Constantine; Rome vs. Constantine’s capitol; City of God vs. City of the Devil. Whose City of the Devil is it: the Turk’s or Constantine’s? The now Turkish capital is thus additionally tainted by its historic association with Constantine the corrupter of Christianity, who however was and remains today a saint of the Greek Orthodox Church. In view of Vives’s general dismissal by omission of that Church in the *De conditione* as a whole, one is struck by the desultory and dark evocation of one of the Greek Christians’ great heroes. An examination of Vives’s writings for evidence of his attitude (if any) toward Greek Orthodoxy might be useful here.

Diversion: Encomia to Greeks of the Past

Vives’s silence regarding the Orthodox Church community is doubly noticeable in view of how voluble he is about Greeks as special victims of Ottoman rule on account of their historical associations. They are identified as the descendants of the great thinkers and freedom fighters of the classical past rather than as members of the Orthodox Church. When we first meet them in Part I of the outline proposed above, it is to note that their ancient forebears’ society, like that of the Romans, did not have completely unrestrained liberty free of laws, trials, courts, and punishments (*VOO* 5:449.10,25). Later, however, in the course of arguing that modern subjects are wrong to demand completely perfect government, Vives points out the turbulence, unpredictability, and ingratitude of the Athenians and the martial inhumanity of the Spartans, presumably despite the lofty qualities ascribed to them elsewhere (*VOO* 5:451.7-13). Further on, the Greeks along with the Romans are credited with the preservation of culture until its decay under the Goths (*VOO* 5:458.17-22).

⁷ “[Constantinus] venit in Christi domum comitatus diabolo, et, quod fieri nullo modo poterat, voluit duas domos aut duas civitates conjungere, Dei et diaboli, quod non magis potuisset efficere quam Romam et Constantinopolim, quae tanto et terrarum et maris tractu separantur: ‘Quae communio Christi ad Belial?’ inquit Paullus: refrixit tamen ardor, nutavit fides, degeneravit tota pietas.” (*VOO* 5:454.25-31. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:15, “Quae autem conventio Christi ad Belial?”)

Vives laments: Would that we had not had the dismal experience of *Graecia* as an awful example!

Or has any nation -- even any member of the human race -- ever endured such extreme condition of servitude as now suffered by the legendary Greece? What slave ever endured more wretched bondage than that land of Greece, which once in defense of the mere name of liberty spilled so much blood, and armed such a force of soldiers who without hesitation marched off to sure and certain death in the cause of liberty? See how, today, no one is born in that exceptional region with a spirit even moderately free or intolerant of servitude, who does not decide that before all else he must abandon Greece in flight as from a prison of ultimate slavery, [...] taking with him wherever he goes the weighty evidence for what those living under the Turk are obliged to suffer.⁸

And in contrasting feckless European Christians to the captive Greeks: “Will any of us be so spiritually firm and resistant in spirit toward the consciousness of all the fortunes of this life that they will be able to suffer and withstand what must be swallowed daily by the Greek?” (*Eritne adeo spiritalis quisquam nostrum tam obfirmo atque obdurato animo ad sensum rerum omnium vitae huius, qui perpeti ac tolerare possit quod est Graeco quotidie devorandum?*” *VOO* 5:457.5-8.) At *VOO* 5:457.24, as we have seen, the “Greeks” will lose the entitlement to rear and discipline the boys who are taken away for the Janissary corps.

By holding up the valiant ancient Greek warriors for liberty, Vives diverts the reader from the role of current Orthodox communities in the Ottoman lands. The troops he cites who willingly fought to the death are surely the doomed fifth century BCE heroes of Thermopylae in battle against the Persians (Herodotus 7:201-228). Lewis (1993:25), writing on the Turks as portrayed in Renaissance writings, notes that along with the increasing use of the term “barbarian”,

the struggle against the Turk is no longer presented as one between true believers and infidels but, rather, as a continuation of the ancient struggle between Hellas and Persia – between the inheritors of Greek civilization and the remote Asian successors of the great kings of Persia, whom the ancient Greeks had held back but to whom the modern Greeks had succumbed.

Also pertinent is Scipio’s evocation, in Vives’s Lucianic dialogue *De Europae dissidiis et bello Turcico* (*VOO* 6:475.25-26), of the ancient Greek victories of Marathon and Salamis as confirmation that Greek warriors are superior to Turks or any Easterners. Likewise, Vives here holds up the luckless Greek descendants of ancient heroes as a worthy alternative model to the potential defectors in his envisioned European audience, and as a dreadful example of what an Ottoman-dominated future would hold for these latter.

In short, if Vives leaves the Orthodox Church out of account, it is remarkable how he can do so while simultaneously lavishing praise and empathy on the Greeks whose lives were in substantial measure shaped and affected by that Church. One might note in

⁸ “An ulla gens, aut ullus omnino hominum, tam extremam est servitutis aliquando conditionem passus, quam nunc patitur incluta illa, et ingeniis et litteris et armis, Graecia? Quod mancipium miserius servit quam illa Graecia, quae olim pro solo libertatis nomine tantum effudit sanguinis, tantum armavit militum qui ad certissimam atque indubitam mortem ire non dubitarent pro libertate? Ut nunc nullus in tanta regione nascatur ingenio paullo liberiore aut impatienti servitutis, qui non primum omnium Graeciam sibi relinquendam et fugiendum ducat, velut ergastulum ultimae servitutis, [...] magnum secum, quocumque eat, circumgerens documentum quid patiendum sit viventibus sub Turca.” (*VOO* 5:456.1-13)

addition the continuation of Orthodox monastic activity under the Turks. We find, for example, St. Dionysios of Olympos, founder in 1542 of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity on Olympos, who under the Ottomans traveled and preached to encourage Christian fidelity (Vacalopoulos 1976:139).

In the last section of the *De conditione* (VOO 5:458-60), continuing the focus on Christian weaknesses that would prove morally and socially disastrous in the event of a Turkish takeover rather than on life under the Turk, the Greeks continue to play a role. It begins with Vives's argument that within Christendom, the tradition of the liberal arts (and here, of course, the Greeks are critical), bracing the soul's cultivation of earthly realities in pursuit of wisdom, puts one but a step away from divine matters. Paul says things invisible are known through the visible: Philo Judaeus claims that Abraham's approach to the truth began with knowledge of the cosmos and its reliable order (VOO 5:458.1-22). Vives repeats the argument, employing the same details, in 1531 in the *De tradendis disciplinis* (VOO 6:257). The tradition of secular learning founded and cultivated by the ancient Greeks and Romans nearly died at the hands of the Goths and other barbarians. "But who does not know even by hearsay how foreign the Turk, the bloody Scythian, is to any cultivation of the soul? Let us learn even from Greece what [little] respect, what vigor, is accorded to the disciplines under him." (VOO 5:458.23-25.) If that pristine ardor which has subsided were still abiding among us, Vives continues, perhaps Christians could live piously under the Turk; but when we see that among us the name of the Lord is already perjured cheaply and repeatedly, how will Christians withstand when the rewards for betraying the faith are immensely magnified? (VOO 5:458.23-459.4.)

Later, Vives adds that "Greece" can teach us how poverty-stricken the disciplines are under the "Scythian" Turk, who is utterly bereft of spiritual attainment. Dare we think, Vives asks, that we are more intellectually fertile or better suited to accomplishment in the disciplines than the Greeks, to whom we *owe* the origin of these achievements, and that we could thus withstand Turkish rule better than they? (VOO 5:458.23-32.) Colish (2009:13, n.17) alludes to sources on Turkish non-acquaintance with the arts and sciences. Close examination of the cultural attainments of the Ottomans is beyond the scope of this essay. However, Rogers surveys "the arts" under Suleiman the Magnificent, citing *inter alia* looted art works; Suleiman's patronage of poets and his own poetic production; Ottoman verse chronicles; cartography; architecture; and in particular the well known multi-talented Matrakci Nasuh, a Bosnian Janissary trained in the palace school during sultan Selim I's time (1512-1520), mathematician, war games expert, and historian. (Rogers 1993:256-72.) Brady et al. (1994:618-21) cites evidence of Ottoman activity in science, technology, literature and learning, extending beyond 1529. The westward brain drain of Greek scholars who had so much to do with the Italian Renaissance, while undoubtedly reflecting Turkish antipathy, was natural enough when these scholars were no longer the carriers of the newly dominant culture in their native land.

Vives's Target Audience: How Constructed?

Vives's reduction of Christians' life under the Turks to nearly uniform misery is interlaced with a companion theme: careful delineation of the confessionally weak and

politically naive target audience to which the *De conditione* is directed. Thus far I have examined the judiciously truncated exposition of Greece and the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. Alternatively, what of those to whom he purports to offer urgent counsel? Does his way of defining them and their situation betray similar qualities of limitation or selectivity? Do they exist as he describes them, or are they in some degree constructs of his fears about shallow Christian allegiance? The question is complicated by the fact that save for references to Italy, Vives avoids specific identification of who it is that he has in mind or where they are to be found.

The *De conditione* is narrowly aimed at disgruntled Christian subjects of Christian rulers who would prefer Muslim domination, and secondarily (as noted above), Christian princes inclined to think that submission to the Turks would have its advantages. Vives employs striking brevity in calling to account Christian rulers, on two grounds only: either they fail to recognize that abuse of subjects will promote popular desire for Turkish rule (*VOO* 5: 447:23-26), or they think vassalage to Ottoman rule will improve their own situation (*VOO* 5: 456:22-34). These specifications appear to sidestep the conduct of European powers, such as the Venetians and the French, who carry on accommodations or agreements with the Turks without offering submission. See for example Shaw (1976:91) on Venetian trade privileges bestowed by Suleiman, and France's support of Ottoman military expansion in the Balkans against the Habsburgs, the rivals of the French for European domination. Setting aside such European powers, Vives's remaining target audience -- European Christians disillusioned with their rulers -- is even more exclusive, implicitly discounting anyone who has submitted to Islam under compulsion, such as captive slaves of the Turks, or populations such as those caught in Ottoman Balkan campaigns who have come under Turkish domination simply by conquest. It is significant, for example, that there is no direct allusion in the *De conditione* to pirate raids, which turn out to be a fertile resource for archival stories of apostates desiring to return to the Church. Vives's boundaries also rule out people who are religiously attracted to Islam! Although he predicts that capitulation to Islam will be tempting to Christians once they have come under Ottoman control, he evinces no worry that Christians might harbor prior attraction to Islamic religious doctrine or practice. This exclusion finds an echo in Rostagno (1983:22) regarding the records of the later Roman inquisition of Catholic renegades to Islam: "La configurazione giuridica della possibilità di una spontanea adesione all'islam è un po' atipica nella manualistica inquisitoriale italiana."

Vives describes the people in this target audience as seriously deluded, both because their notions of liberty are so fanciful and because they trust that these notions can be realized under Ottoman rule (Outline, II.B). On Christians of doubtful civic allegiance:

Some have imagined for themselves a certain silly counterfeit of liberty, one not even named in the ancient Greek and Roman monuments, let alone delineated, that allows anyone to do whatever they wish without consequences. When they should lose hope of attaining it under a Christian ruler, they would on that account even prefer [the regime of] the Turk, as if he would be more benign in conferring this liberty than a Christian.⁹ What are you saying! Does liberty consist in

⁹ On the interpretation of *quasi*, "as if", see above, n. 5.

this, that you should pay the state coffers nothing toward the public good, nothing to the ruler's treasury? [...] What people, what state, could survive such liberty for even a minute?¹⁰

Vives here claims that there are Christians who desire total immunity from *any* imposition of law, responsibility, or taxation. He envisions this fantasized liberty in hypothetical abstractions (subjunctives: *desperant, mallent, sit*, posited of indistinct third person plural people), then switches to an emphatic, second person indicative (*Quid tu dicis?*) implying assumption of an envisioned individual reader's actual guilt. He also used this rhetorical device, which I have labeled the gratuitous invective apostrophe, in the *De institutione feminae Christianae* (George 1996). He employs it again here in the *De conditione* (VOO 5:456.20-21): "So then you, to treat a freckle or a bruise, are drinking poison, and because your eyesight is not very clear you put out both your eyes." (*Tu ergo, ut lenticulam aut intertriginem sanes, hauris venenum, et quia parum acute cernis, utrumque tibi lumen extinguis.*) The indicatives vivify the culpability of the addressee. The tactic is a form of talking down to the reader. The pernicious attitude toward liberty is a desire so foolish, extreme, and unbounded that – as Vives himself suggests -- it would be hard to find a population that in his time was actually insisting on it. His claim of Christians' futile wishes is so excessive as to be itself dismissed as fanciful. He reassures the reader that not even ancient Athens, Sparta, or Rome ever experienced this extreme of *maxima libertas*, a condition devoid of laws, magistrates, courts, rewards and punishments (VOO 5:449.25-29).

Vives proceeds to assert (Outline, I.C) that there are those, "such as some of the Italians" (*ut Italorum quidam*, VOO 5:451.18), who would sooner be ruled even by the Turks than by foreign European princes. They hate the French, the Germans, or the Spanish so intensely that rather than accept them as overlords, "they would die a hundred times over, or, what is worse than death, do the degraded and wicked bidding of anybody else before living under those [masters]." (*ut malint centies mori, et quod morte est peius, indignissima et nefaria cuiusvis imperata facere, quam sub illis vivere*): VOO 5:451.20-21). "*Cuiusvis*" is an undoubted reference to the Turks, or at the very least, to the Turks' client princes.

I have come across one instance of the kind of thing Vives fears from over thirty years earlier that affects Italy (Croce 1965:92-93): After Naples' capitulation to the French Italian campaign in 1494-95, "the Neapolitans ... were playing with a fire that might have engulfed all of western Europe. Alphonso II in 1494 and Ferrante II in 1495 had invoked the aid of the Turks against the French, and in 1499 King Frederick offered them Taranto." Croce follows with a gloomy Neapolitan ditty from around 1501:

If I see no peace or truce

¹⁰ "Alii speciem sibi quandam confixerunt stultam libertatis, ne nominatam quidem in vetustis Romanorum ac Graecorum monumentis, nedum expressam, ut cuique impune liceat quantum libeat; quod cum sub Christiano consecuturos se desperent, ideo vel Turcam mallent, quasi is benignior sit in largienda libertate hac, quam Christianus. Quid tu dicis? Sita vero est in hoc libertas, quod nihil ad publicum bonum aerario civitatis pendeas, vel principis fisco? [...] Quis populus, quae respublica vel punctum posset temporis in tali libertate consistere?" (VOO 5:449.9-21.) The sentiment is quickly reinforced: "To live wickedly and by means of harm done to others is not liberty, but headlong and uncontrolled license to do whatever one wants; it is immunity from punishment for outrages and crimes." (*male et per alienam iniuriam vivere libertas non est, sed effusissima atque effrenis quidvis agendi licentia, ac flagitiorum et scelerum impunitas.* VOO 5:450.7-10)

I shall call by land and sea
The Great Turk, with his war,
Like a Kingdom in despair ...

This, so far, seems to me to be an exception to the general picture; perhaps it indicates that more information of the kind is waiting to be found.

To return to the *De conditione*: Foreign rule, Vives admonishes, can *sometimes* be beneficial:

The Neapolitans' experience of the Spanish is unlike that of the Milanese. In Naples everything runs under law. Citizens share with aliens and soldiers the same forum, the same judge; justice is administered for all alike according to laws and lawcourts. Between enemies no community of laws is recognized; toward enemies, people believe it is permissible to do whatever one wishes. "To put up with a foreign ruler is impossible" is an excessively demanding, not to say insolent, dictum. After all, the world once tolerated Roman magistrates for so long, and we know that in each nation, devastated and nearly destroyed societies were raised up and restored by the care and foresight of a foreign prince -- in Spain, in Germany, Britain, France, and even in Italy herself. As for these people who hate foreigners so much, why do they hurl charges, when they will not be the equals of the one they soon invite from abroad? And if they loathe and recoil at a Spaniard or a German or a Frenchman, why do they not despise the Turk and the Scythian, model of utter savagery and barbarity, different, diverse, and contrary in habits, language, intercourse, and religion?¹¹

"The years 1526-1529 are among the most miserable in Italian history, and no State suffered more cruelly than did the Duchy of Milan." (Ady 1907:236.) Ady (ibid. 236-41) sketches grimly Milan's humiliation, wretchedness, and impoverishment at the hands, by turns, of French and imperial partisan armies. Plague, warfare, and famine reduced Milan to exhaustion. Francesco II Sforza (ruled 1515-1535), who survived between imperial and French assertions of power in Milan, ended up as Duke in name only under Spanish control (Rabil, 1988:235-36, 250-51). Meanwhile, "Naples belonged to the dynasty of Aragon after Ferdinand secured it successfully in 1504." (Kamen 2003:65.) After Ferdinand's death (1516), it was ruled by a succession of Spanish viceroys (Charles de Lannoy, 1522-27; Philibert de Chalons, Prince of Orange, 1527-30; Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, 1530-32). Lannoy and Orange "were busy with the Emperor's Italian wars and had little time for the internal affairs of the kingdom"; Colonna was judged "venal and incompetent"; and although "By reputation, the barons of Naples were notoriously

¹¹ "Non tales experiuntur Neapolitani Hispanos quales Insuberes: Neapoli statur legibus, habent cives cum peregrinis, cum militibus idem forum, eundem iudicem; omnibus ex aequo ius dicitur secundum leges et iura; inter hostes nulla putatur legum communio, licere in eos credunt quidquid lubeat. 'Principem vero non posse pati extraneum' nimis est delicatum, ne dicam insolens, cum et olim mundus tam diu passus sit Romanos magistratus, et in unaquaque natione scimus res collapsas et prope perditas exteri principis cura esse ac providentia erectas et restitutas, in Hispania, in Germania, Britannia, Gallia, in ipsa eadem Italia. At qui ab extero tantopere abhorrent, cur ipsi accersunt non futuri mox accito pares? Et si Hispanum, vel Germanum, vel Gallum sic fastidiunt et oderunt, cur Turcam et Scytham, extremas feritatis ac barbariei, non abominantur, differentibus, diversis, contrariis moribus, lingua, commercio, religione?" (VOO 5:452.7-21.) The meaning of "At qui ab extero tantopere abhorrent, cur ipsi accersunt non futuri mox accito pares?" is not entirely clear. Riber (Vives 1947:2:67B), as often, leaves a puzzling passage untranslated. I take "Turcam, et Scytham" as a hendiadys. Vives refers to the Turks as Scythians more than once, evoking the culturally inferior nomadic origins of the Ottomans. See Calero in Vives 1997:382 n. 27.

anarchic,” under Charles V they “came to be known for loyalty to the dynasty”, as proven by their conduct in the perils of the French siege of 1527-28 (Tracy 2002:274). Sakellariou (1995:345-53) sketches a process under Charles V’s viceroys of “a consensus between the (foreign) monarchy and local social groups”. The Neapolitan *popolo minuto* (lower class craftsmen and laborers), who “bore the greatest part of the increasing fiscal burden”, were left out of the consensus. Still, “In return for support of the Spanish cause ... Naples had its degree of self-government increased, and secured the participation of its highest municipal institution, the *Tribunale di San Lorenzo*, in state administration” (Sakellariou 1995:351-53). True to Vives’s claim, the contrast to the turmoil in Milan at the time is striking.

From Vives’s litany of hypothetical European immigrant overlords, all of them participants in contention for Italian domination, and from the specific allusion to Naples and secondarily Milan, one can infer that Vives has subject Italian Christians in mind. This inference merits a pause for consideration. First: the record of the decades leading up to 1529 provides no compelling evidence for a movement among Italian *populations* of the kind hypothetically addressed by Vives, i.e. Christians under no compulsion from the Turks who are inspired by Christian overlords’ abuse to wish for a Turkish alternative. The evidence gathered by Nancy Bisaha (2004) is a pertinent illustration. She has produced a study of some thirty fifteenth and sixteenth century humanists’ responses to the phenomenon of the Ottoman Turks and its manifestation of Islam. These writers reflect a wide gamut of attitudes, either adopted by themselves or observed among the population, ranging from outrage and belligerence, to fear and panic, to tolerant attention, careful analysis, and even qualified respect. But nowhere in this assortment of reactions does any evidence occur of worry that oppressive or negligent Christian rulers are driving their subjects to hanker after a Turkish overlord. Aside from pirate forays, which surely did not generate sympathy for the Turks among the victims, the main Turkish irruptions onto Italian soil prior to 1529 were a series of raids around Friuli on the Adriatic between 1470 and 1478, and the brief occupation of Otranto on the Italian heel in 1480-81. On Friuli see Soykut (2001:54-59), especially the first-hand account of a raid. On Otranto, Schwoebel (1967:131-34) sketches the slaughter of Christians and the panic in Italy before the recovery of the city. These events generated fear, panic, and revulsion in Italy, but hardly a groundswell of desire to cross over from Christian to Muslim rulership. Nevertheless, the idea of commoners with errant thoughts puts Vives in mind of an Italy potentially more xenophobic toward *European* than Turkish overlords.

On the other hand, confirming Vives’s worries, there would have been evidence for the experience of “renegades”, or Christians who for various reasons converted to Islam and accepted Ottoman authority. “The period from 1500 to 1650 represents the golden age of the renegade [...] scholars generally agree that in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, renegades numbered into the hundreds of thousands.” (Dursteler 2006:112; see also Scaraffia 1992:4.) “[R]umors of a more open society” drew attention, as well as belief in opportunities for successful fortunes (Dursteler 2006:114). Rostagno’s study of Christians who “turned Turk” around the Mediterranean addresses evidence that becomes abundant only after Pope Paul III’s 1542 “universal inquisition” for “the entire Catholic world” (Rostagno 1983:12). The first apostate to Islam recorded

in an *Italian* inquisitorial tribunal does not occur until 1562. Rostagno cites three apostates from earlier, in 1506, 1513, and 1527 (*ibid.* 14).

If one were to seek from the period leading up to 1529 examples of Europeans confronted with a genuine and urgent choice between Christian and Turkish overlordship, one natural place to look would be the Balkan Peninsula, among populations struggling with Ottoman expansion from the south, Austrian Habsburg ambitions from the north, and their own aspirations for independence. Fodor (1991) usefully makes the case for Ottoman aggressive intentions in the Balkans. Hungary in particular faced the dilemma in the time leading up to the *De conditione*. The Turks took Belgrade in 1521, overthrew the Hungarian monarchy at the climactic battle of Mohács in 1526, where King Louis II died, and mounted an unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1529. Hungary was “split into three unstable spheres”, one of which was Transylvania, whose lord was Duke John Zápolya (Fichtner 2008:32). He is perhaps the best-known example of a European prince leading his people into submission to the Turks: “Defeated by Ferdinand in battle in 1527, Zápolya offered both himself and his principality in vassalage to Süleyman, who closed the deal swiftly. Transylvania became a prized protectorate of the sultan.” (Fichtner 2008:31.) But even here, claims Bayerle, “no pro-Ottoman sentiments existed in Hungary; it was only that John I Zapolyai’s party regarded Habsburg encroachment as more injurious.” (Bayerle in Bak 1982:228.) Bayerle’s description of the peasants’ experience in “no-man’s land” between Ottoman and Habsburg defensive lines after Mohács reinforces the point: Despite “Habsburg extortions and demands for corvée” and other indignities, the Hungarian peasants took refuge in the Habsburg fortresses before Ottoman incursions, never the other way around. “... the peasants on both sides of the border continued to identify with Christendom and their submission to their Ottoman landlords was never complete.” (Bayerle in Bak 1982:232-33.) This picture, if accurate, exhibits a population choosing to knuckle under to abusive treatment by a Christian regime rather than entertain a transfer of allegiance.

But at this point, another view of what was happening emerges from the work of Gabriella Erdélyi with the recently accessible archives of the Roman Apostolic Penitentiary pertinent to Hungary (Erdélyi 2011).¹² Unlike Rostagno, for whom the richest archival documentation comes from dates inconveniently late for our purposes, Erdélyi has at her disposal material from before Vives’s 1529 essay as well as later. She reviews petitions to the Penitentiary from two groups: priests desiring absolution for active involvement in war or other instances of violence; and laypeople seeking relief from ecclesiastical marriage laws. The latter group includes a particularly telling early 16th century case involving one Matthias Antusui, who began as a friar in a Franciscan community, and who then wished to leave the institution. When his confreres tried to prevent his departure he escaped, adopted the dress and appearance of a Turk, and married a Muslim in a Muslim ceremony. Then, both conscience-stricken and afraid of being found out and killed, he left his wife and traveled to Rome. There, he petitioned the Penitentiary for release from both his clerical vows and his marriage commitment, since he hoped to wed a Christian woman. He “depicted his free movement between cultures as a strategy of survival”, says Erdélyi, although the people he deceived doubtless saw differently. Erdélyi adds:

¹² I quote here by page number from the English translation, generously supplied by the author, titled in English “Cultures at Odds? Trickster Narratives from the Borders of the Muslim-Christian World.”

I find it astonishing that a Christian could feign to be a Muslim so easily. Where did he learn their ways and how could he so successfully adapt himself to them? His case contradicts our modern view, according to which religion was a constitutive part of personal identity at that time. [...] The story of Matthias [...] does not fit at all the broad picture we have about the aversion of the people of Hungary from Islam. (Erdélyi 2011, English translation, p. 8.)

Erdélyi cites other stories as well, portraying people moving easily back and forth between Muslim and Christian self-presentation, and indicating that religious affiliation need not be a firmly planted aspect of one's identity. Bennassar and Bennassar (1992) provide similar archival narratives of easy transition by individuals between Christianity and Islam. The dated instances they provide, however, are too late for direct use in understanding Vives's 1529 *De conditione*. The same is true of Bennassar (1988), on "converts" with minimal or inaccurate understanding of Christian – Muslim differences (see especially pp. 1351-53), and also on cases of voluntary conversion under greater or less pressure of circumstances (especially as summarized on pp. 1363-64). The "modern view" Erdélyi cites skeptically is one that Vives implicitly holds up as the ideal, but which he finds sadly missing in his chosen target audience. Shallow conviction, we recall, was dealt with by Vives as a moral failing with the potential dire consequences of loss of one's faith.

Conclusion

Vives's strategies in selectively explicating Christians' life under the Turks are nicely illustrated by a close look at his portrayal of Greece and the Greeks. But "Christians' life under the Turks" takes second place to his other preoccupation with the moral, religious, and political vulnerabilities of his imagined European target audience. When one inquires just who are in this audience, the picture is less clear. Vives's own reluctance to be specific does not help. The question is complicated by the fact that with some exceptions, much of the archival source material made accessible in print by researchers, of a kind that would provide background to the *De conditione*, dates after 1529.

Vulnerable Europeans, as Vives describes them, harbor unrealistic, indeed fanciful, notions of liberty which they hope will be realized by passage from Christian to Turkish domination. Vives claims the negligence or oppression of Christian rulers as the stimulus to flight toward Turkish rule. Various more or less contemporary documents provide a much wider range of impulses. Looking at the narratives conveyed to us from archives by Erdélyi, Rostagno, Scaraffia and the Bennassars, whether prior or subsequent to 1529, one finds people with varying personal reasons for crossing over, not just sufferance under offensive Christian princes. When it comes, then, to identifying Vives's vulnerable Christians and determining their location in the Mediterranean world, questions are raised whose answers, now at times uncertain, may be clarified by currently ongoing archival study. The *De conditione*, in short, relies heavily on Vives's careful shaping, for his own purposes, of both the subordinate Christian population in the Ottoman world and the European target audience which he specifies as needing to be enlightened. The effect of these observations is not to question the rhetorical mastery of Vives. Indeed, the treatise stayed alive in a prominent printed venue: when Theodor

Bibliander (1543 [1550]: 1550 edition, vol. 2, pp. 140-148) compiled his controversial landmark three-volume collection of Islamica, including a translation of the Qur'an and other materials into Latin, the *De conditione* appeared among the contents. Rather, the *De conditione* serves to illustrate the lengths to which Vives is ready to go, in dealing with the Turkish question, in making a clean, direct, and focused point: that European Christians who find the prospect of Turkish domination attractive need to check such wayward impulses by pondering their own shallowness of faith and political naiveté.

Works Cited

- Ady, Cecilia M. *Milan under the Sforza*. London: Methuen, 1907.
- Bak, János M., & Béla Király, ed. *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1982.
- Bayerle, Gustav. "One Hundred Fifty Years of Frontier Life in Hungary." In Bak and Király 1982:227-42.
- Bennassar, Bartolomé. "Conversion ou reniement? Modalités d'une adhésion ambiguë des chrétiens à l'Islam (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)." *Annales, Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 6 (1988):1349-66.
- Bennassar, Bartolomé, & Lucille Bennassar. "Frontières religieuses entre islam et chrétienté: l'expérience vécue par les 'Renégats.'" In *Les frontières religieuses en Europe du XVe au XVIIe siècle: actes du XXXIe Colloque international d'études humanistes*. Ed. Alain Ducellier & al. Paris: J. Vrin, 1992. 71-78.
- Bibliander, Theodor, ed. *Mahumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina, ac ipse Alcoran*, etc. Basel: Oporinus, 1543 [1550]. 3v.
- Bisaha, Nancy. *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Bono, Salvatore. "Pascià e raïs algerini di origine italiana." In *Italia e Algeria: Aspetti storici di un'amicizia mediterranea*. Ed. Romain H. Rainero. Milan: Marzorati Editore, 1982. 199-222.
- Brady, Thomas A., Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, & James D. Tracy, ed. *Handbook of European History: 1400-1600. Volume I: Structures and Assertions*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Brandt, Karl. Trans. C.V. Wedgwood. *The Emperor Charles V*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1970.
- Brockman, Eric. *The Two Sieges of Rhodes*. London: John Murray, 1969.
- Colish, Marcia L. "Juan Luis Vives on the Turks." *Medievalia et Humanistica* N.S. 35 (2009):1-14.
- Croce, Benedetto. Ed. & intro. H. Stuart Hughes. Trans. Frances Frenaye. *History of the Kingdom of Naples*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Donia, Robert J., & John V.A. Fine, Jr. *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994.
- Dursteler, Eric. *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006.
- Erdélyi, Gabriella. "'Felvettem ruhájukat és köztük éltem': Pogány-keresztény impostorok" ["'I Put on Their Dress and Lived among Them': Christian-Muslim Impostors"]. In *Szökött szerzetesek. Erőszak és fiatalok a késő középkorban* [*Runaway Friars: Violence and Youth in the Late Middle Ages*]. Ed. G. Erdélyi. Budapest: Libri Kiadó, 2011. 183-98.
- Fichtner, Paula. *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526-1850*. London: Reaktion Books, 2008.
- . *Ferdinand I of Austria: The Politics of Dynasticism in the Age of the Reformation*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1982.
- Finkel, Caroline. *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.

- Fodor, Pal. "Ottoman Policy towards Hungary, 1520-1541." *Acta orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45 (1991):271-339.
- Gargantini, Giuseppe. *Cronologia di Milano dalla sua fondazione fino al 1860*. Pavia: Edizioni Selecta, 2001.
- Geanakoplos, Deno J. *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966.
- . "A Byzantine Looks at the Renaissance: The Attitude of Michael Apostolis toward the Rise of Italy to Cultural Eminence." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 1 (1958.):157-62.
- George, Edward V. "Author, Adversary, and Reader: A View of the *De veritate fidei Christianae*". In *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*. Ed. Charles Fantazzi. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008. 315-57.
- . "Juan Luis Vives' *De Europae dissidiis et bello Turcico*: Its Place in the 1526 Ensemble." In *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Bariensis: Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies*. Ed. J. F. Alcina & al. Tempe, AZ: MRTS Press, 1998. 259-66.
- . "Persuading a Feminine Audience? Gratuitous Invective Apostrophe in Juan Luis Vives' *On the Education of a Christian Woman*." *Scholia: Natal Studies in Classical Antiquity*. N.S. 5 (1996):94-111.
- Goffman, Daniel. *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002.
- Goodwin, Godfrey. *The Janissaries*. London: Saqi Books, 1994.
- Inalcik, Halil. *Turkey and Europe in History*. Istanbul: Eren, 2006.
- . "Art and Creative Thinking in the Reign of Süleymân the Lawgiver." In *Süleymân the Second and His Time*. Ed. Halil Inalcik & Cemal Kafadar. Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993. 295-315.
- . Trans. Colin Imber & Norman Itzkowitz. *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*. New York: Praeger, 1973.
- Itzkowitz, Norman. *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Kamen, Henry. *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power 1492-1763*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.
- Lewis Bernard. *Islam and the West*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993.
- Lyber, Albert Howe. *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1966.
- McCully, George E., Jr. *Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540) and the Problem of Evil in His Time*. Diss. Columbia University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1967.
- Rabil, Albert, Jr. "Humanism in Milan." In *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*. Ed. Albert Rabil, Jr. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988. 3v. 1:235-63.
- Rogers, Michael. "The Arts under Süleymân the Magnificent." In *Süleymân the Second and His Time*. Ed. Halil Inalcik & Cemal Kafadar. Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993. 257-94.
- Rostagno, Lucia. *Mi faccio turco: esperienze ed immagini dell'Islam nell'Italia moderna*. Rome: Istituto per l'oriente C.A. Nallino, 1983.

- Runciman, Steven. *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968.
- Scaraffia, Lucetta. *Rinnegati: Per una storia dell'identità occidentale*. Roma & Bari: Edizione Laterza, 1993.
- Schwoebel, Robert. *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)*. Nieuwkoop: B. deGraaf, 1967.
- Soykut, Mustafa. *Image of the "Turk" in Italy*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001.
- Tracy, James D., Jr. *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002.
- Vacalopoulos, Apostolos. *The Greek Nation, 1453-1669: The Cultural and Economic Background of Greek Society*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1976.
- Vaughan, Dorothy M. *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances 1350-1700*. Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1954.
- Vives, Juan Luis. Ed & trans. Edward V. George. *Declamationes Sullanae: Part Two*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012. .
- . Trans. Francisco Calero, María Luisa Arribas, & Pilar Usábel. *De concordia et discordia in humano genere: Sobre la concordia y la discordia en el género humano: De pacificatione: Sobre la pacificación: Quam misera esset vita Christianorum sub Turca: Cuán desgraciada sería la vida de los Cristianos bajo los Turcos*. València: Ayuntamiento de València, 1997.
- . Trans. Lorenzo Riber. *Obras completas*. Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1947. 2v.
- . Ed. Gregorius Majansius. *Opera omnia*. Valencia: Montfort, 1782-1790. 8v. Repr. London: Gregg Press, 1964. Abbreviated here as *VOO*.
- Winter, Michael. "The Ottoman Occupation." In *The Cambridge History of Egypt. Volume I: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*. Ed. Carl F. Petry. Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge Univ. Press. 490-516.
- Zachariadou, Elizabeth. "The Neomartyr's Message". *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* 8 (1990-91): 51-63.