

# Ottoman Istanbul from the Perspective of the Catholic Missionaries in the Post-Tridentine Period (End of 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> centuries)

*Elmira Vassileva*

Bulgaristan Bilimler Akademisi

Istanbul has been one of the most magnificent cities in Europe for centuries. Being the Ottoman capital, it was visited and admired by a great variety of people from both Eastern and Western world, belonging to different religious and social groups of diverse occupations. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and in the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the Ottoman capital became, an important missionary centre of the Catholic Church, hosting many friars who were preaching the Christian truths to the peoples of the Orient. Thus, among many other descriptions of the wonderful city of Istanbul, interesting are also those of the agents of the Roman Church. The purpose of this paper is to present the image of Istanbul through the eyes of the Catholic missionaries coming from Christian Europe during the Post-Tridentine Period (end of 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries). This study is not aiming at a comprehensive presentation of all Roman Church's emissaries sent to the Ottoman lands but rather to analyze some of the available reports, in search of the attitudes towards the city.

The Catholic Church missionary activities within the territories of the Ottoman Empire were part of the general efforts

of the Papacy to restore its power and glory after the tumultuous period of crisis in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> c. The peak of the crisis was the Protestant Reformation and the permanent division of the Western Christian world into Catholic and Protestant ones. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) marked the beginning of the long process of overcoming the Church crisis. The Tridentine decisions laid the foundation of a multilateral reform program, aiming at the restoration of the Roman Church's authority and increasing its influence, which designated the time of the Counter-Reformation (or the Catholic Reforms).

One of the main consequences of the Tridentine reforms was the resumed missionary activity of the Roman Church. The Catholic missions hitherto had been launched rather as a result of the good will and financial support of the Catholic princes than the endeavors of the Church to spread the faith in the world. Thus, the missionaries were often obliged, together with their purely religious duties, to perform other tasks in favor of their benefactors. The Tridentine reforms in the Church, and especially those in the monastic orders, caused the restoration of the religious ardor, which at first was aimed against the Protestants, but subsequently, against the Muslims, as well as against the pagans in a world constantly expanding as a result of the geographical discoveries. During the time of the Catholic reforms new religious orders appeared. What united them were their pastoral and charitable activities because all the new orders preferred the active ministry to simple prayers.<sup>1</sup> While in the Middle Ages very important missionary work was carried out by the Mendicant orders (Franciscans and Dominicans), who in most of the cases were driven by religious enthusiasm, the most significant among the post-Tridentine missionaries were the newly-established Capuchins and Jesuits.

The restored proselytizing zeal intensified the need of founding a special body that would collect the information for the missionary territories, plan the work and organize new missions. The

.....

1 J. P. Donneley, "New Religious Orders for Men", *Cambridge History of Christianity. Reform and Expansion 1500-1660*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, VI, 162.

institutional development of the Catholic Church in the Post-Tridentine period naturally resulted in the establishment of an integrated center of all Catholic missions in the world. Thus, on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1622 *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for Propagation of the Faith) was founded by the resolution of Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623).<sup>2</sup> Diverse and huge were the tasks undertaken by the Congregation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At first, using the detailed reports sent by the missionaries, a wealth of information about many lands in Europe and beyond was collected, analyzed and subsequently utilized in the widely developed missionary work. The Congregation undertook the administration of all Catholic missions in the world, solving all questions, problems and difficulties faced by the missionaries, whether they were religious, administrative, financial or any other. It also established new ecclesiastical structures in the missionary territories, educated future workers in the missionary field, supervised creation, printing and spreading of religious literature in local languages, etc. An important obligation of the missionary sent by the Congregation was to submit detailed reports describing conditions in the territories where they had been sent and rendering an account of the work done. The Congregation's activities were considerable and as a consequence there was a real rebirth in the Catholic missionary enthusiasm in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. which resulted in a significant expansion outside of Europe.

Along with many other lands during the Post-Tridentine period the Ottoman territories became an object of the Catholic propaganda. Actually, the Roman Church had not been able to care for its flock in the Ottoman Empire during the long period of crisis and only after the Council of Trent was the Papacy's strong interest in the Ottoman Catholics restored. Besides, the conditions under the Sultan caused well-founded concerns because except the obvious danger for the Roman Church to lose the local Latin-rite

.....

2 J. Metzler, Foundation of the Congregation of "de Propaganda Fide" by Gregory XV.: *Sacrae Congregationis Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum (350 anni a servizio delle missioni 1622-1972)*. Vol. I/1 (1622-1700). Rom-Freiburg-Wien, Herder, 1971, p. 86; S. Delacroix, *Histoire universelle des missions catholiques*, Paris, Libraire Grund, 1957, II, 116.

Christians to Islam or Orthodoxy, very real were the fears of these groups being influenced by reformist ideas. The Ottoman authorities not only allowed the penetration of Protestant teachings in their lands but in some cases they even supported them.<sup>3</sup> Protestant leaders, furthermore, established contacts with the primates of the Constantinople Orthodox Patriarchate.<sup>4</sup> Even though the Patriarchate refused the possibility of a union with the Protestants, Rome assuredly considered those contacts as a serious threat.

Apostolic agents were sent into the Ottoman lands as the first step of the implementation of the Catholic reforms. They were to collect some information about the state of Catholicism in the territories under the Sultan, as well as to explore the possible ways for strengthening its positions. Thus, the first emissary of the Papacy who came to Istanbul was the Bishop of Nona (Nin) in Dalmatia Pietro Cedulini.<sup>5</sup> Being appointed visitator and apostolic delegate by Pope Gregory XIII, in 1580 he arrived in the Ottoman capital with the task to visit all Latin churches in the Balkans and Anatolia. His immediate assignment was also to meet the Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremias II Tranos to whom he was supposed to promote the Gregorian calendar. He submitted a detailed report about the conditions and outlined the main objectives of the Roman Church's policy in the Orient. As a result of the information collected, the Roman Curia was faced with solving several important tasks, such as provision of churches, chaplains, church plates and books, and later on – restoration of the bishops and Catholic hierarchy. Missionary activities were undertaken in the Ottoman territories, too, having special objectives. At first the missionaries were to support

.....

3 D. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. III; Molnar, *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions catholiques de la Hongrie Ottomane 1572-1647*, Rome-Budapest, 2007, p. 95.

4 S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 246; С. Герлах, Дневник на едно пътуване до Османската порта в Цариград, София, Изд. Отечествен фронт, 1976, с. 46.

5 A. Gottlob, *Die lateinischen Kirchengemeinden in der Türkei und ihre Visitation durch Petrus Cedulini, Bischof von Nona, 1580-81*. – *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 1885, Vol. 6, p. 42-72; G. Maffei, *Degli annali di Gregorio XIII, a cura di C. Cocquelines*, Roma, 1742, II, 144-150.

local Latin-rite communities, which were not numerous but still preserved their faith and traditions. Secondly, they were striving to convert new people to Catholicism or rather to “welcome back” the Schismatics and Heretics. Finally, important task for all missionaries was to gain the Orthodox Church for the cause of the union with Rome.

Significant factor that contributed to the launch of Catholic missions in the Ottoman lands in the post-Tridentine period was the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and European Catholic states. Among other things, the acquisition of special right for protecting the Christians and their holy places was an important factor for development of such relations. Actually, the inhabitants of Galata, who formed the core of the Latin-rite community in Istanbul, were granted certain privileges and religious freedom by Mehmed II the Conqueror.<sup>6</sup> However, Catholic missionaries from Europe were allowed to preach in the Ottoman lands under the protection of those states that had been able to negotiate capitulations with the Sultan. Venice was among the first Western nations that had an agreement for free trade with the Ottomans, as well as the right to keep a diplomatic representative (bailo) in Istanbul.<sup>7</sup> Despite the fact that no special stipulations on religious matters were included in the Venetian capitulations, they were considered as protectors of Catholicism in the 16<sup>th</sup> c. and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. But because of the frequent Ottoman-Venetian wars this protection was not always reliable and was gradually overtaken by France.<sup>8</sup> The main purpose of the French capitulations in turn, was protection of the economic (trade) interests but there were also

.....  
6 H. Inalcik, “Ottoman Galata 1453-1553”, E. Eldem (ed.), *Première rencontre internationale sur l'Empire ottoman et la Turquie moderne*, Paris, 18-22 janvier 1985 : 1. Recherches sur la ville ottomane: Le cas du quartier de Galata, Istanbul-Paris, 1991, pp. 18-19.

7 A. H. de Groot, “The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries”, *Oriente moderno*, 2003, XXII (LXXXIII), 587-595.

8 The Ottoman-Venetian wars were held in: 1463-1479 for the Venetian possessions in Morea, Aegean and Adriatics; again in 1499-1503; 1537-1539 for the Ionian Islands; 1570-1573 for Cyprus; 1645-1669 for Crete.

aspirations for political influence and to increase the prestige of the French monarchy that was, recognized as protector of the Holy Places and all Catholics in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>9</sup> These ambitions coincided with the post-Tridentine aims of the Papacy for strengthening Roman Church's positions in the Ottoman Empire, thereby enabling missionary work. In 1616 rights for religious protection were granted to the Habsburg Empire, too.<sup>10</sup>

The Catholic population of the Ottoman Istanbul in the period under discussion was situated mainly in Galata (Pera), the core group of which was formed primarily by the descendents of the medieval Genoese colonists, being referred to as *Perots*. The main organization of the Latin community was the so-called *Magnifica Comunità di Pera*, to whom Mehmed II granted certain legal and ceremonial rights. In addition to these local Catholics and sultan's subjects, part of the community of Latin-rite Christians in Istanbul were also the foreign merchants, living there for a long or short periods, the staff of the Catholic states' embassies, as well as prisoners, slaves and other people, brought by chance to the Ottoman territories.<sup>11</sup>

.....

9 For the French capitulations and the acquired rights of religious protection, see: I. de Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte ottomane avec les puissances étrangères depuis le premier traité conclu en 1536, entre Suléyman I et François I, jusqu'à nos jours*. T. I. Paris, 1864, pp. 175-178; *Recueil des instructions aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France*, t. 29. Turquie par Pierre Duparc. Paris, CNRS, 1969, pp. 92-94; J. Lafon, *Les capitulations ottomanes: un droit paracolonial? – Droits*, 28, 1998, p. 165; O. Peri, *Christianity Under Islam in Jerusalem. The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times*, Brill-Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2001, pp. 61-62; A. H. de Groot, *The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime ...*, pp. 595-600.

10 I. de Testa, *Recueil des traités ...*, vol. 9, p. 26.

11 For the Latin Community in Istanbul see: M. A. Belin, *Histoire de la latinité de Constantinople*, Paris, A. Picard, 1894; C. Saï'h, *Notice historique sur la communauté latine ottomane et Rapport soumis à cet effet par la Commission provisoire de recherches et d'étude à l'Assemblée Générale de la communauté latine ottoman*, Constantinople: Zellich, 1908; E. Dalleggio d'Alessio, "La communauté latine de Constantinople au lendemain de la conquête ottoman". - *Échos d'Orient*, 36, 1937, pp. 309-313; H. İnalçık, "Ottoman Galata ..."; E.

A Catholic hierarchy, headed by a patriarch, was present in Byzantine Constantinople since 1204 when the crusaders took the city. After the Ottoman conquest in 1453 this Latin patriarch was no more residing there and a patriarchal vicar was appointed instead.<sup>12</sup> The vicar was chosen among the members of the religious orders which were working in Istanbul and he pretended to have vast jurisdiction over the Roman Church's affairs in the Ottoman Empire. However, he was not recognized by the Porte as a representative of the Roman Catholics.<sup>13</sup> This led to frequent disputes over the jurisdiction of the Latin churches in Istanbul, being the *Magnifica Comunità* authorized by Mehmed II to superintend them. The Patriarchal vicar was important figure for the Roman Church, embodying the post-Tridentine ideas for reorganization of the ecclesiastical life through centralization of the church administration and imposing stronger control over the clergy and missionaries. The position of Patriarchal vicar, at least in theory, was equivalent to the bishops and was considered very prestigious among the Catholic clergy and missionary hierarchy, giving many opportunities for further hierarchical promotions.

The Catholic clergy in Ottoman Istanbul was composed of friars only. Several religious orders were present there. Some of them, such as Franciscans, Dominicans and Benedictines, had been in the city since the Byzantine times. But with the introduction of the Catholic reforms of the post-Tridentine period and the beginning of the intensive missionary activities, new orders came into the

.....

Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople. Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2006; R.Marmara, *La communauté levantine de Constantinople. De l'Empire byzantine à la République Turque*, ISIS, Istanbul, 2012.

12 M. A. Belin, *Histoire de la latinité ...*, p. 347; G. Hofmann, "Il vicariato apostolico di Constantinopoli (1453-1830)", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 103, 1935, p. 15.

13 E. Borromeo, "Le clergé catholique face au pouvoir ottoman. Les brevets de nomination (berat) des évêques et des archevêques (17ème siècle)", C. Adang, S. Schmidtke (eds), *Contacts and Controversies Between Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire and Pre-Modern Iran*, Würzburg, 2010, p. 218.

Ottoman lands. Istanbul became centre of the Catholicism in the Balkans and a starting point for all missions in the Orient. After the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was set up, mainly two religious orders were sending missionaries for the Eastern lands: Jesuits and Capuchins. The first Jesuit mission in Istanbul was established in 1583, after the recommendation of the apostolic visitor Cedulini. They enjoyed the protection provided by the diplomatic representatives of Venice and France and for almost two centuries (1583-1773) had been active missionaries not only in Istanbul but also in Izmir, on the Mediterranean islands and in the continental Greek lands.<sup>14</sup> Jesuit missions were organized in the European part of the Ottoman Empire as well, especially in the former Hungarian territories.<sup>15</sup>

The first Capuchins' attempt to establish a mission in Istanbul failed, being commissioned by two over-zealous friars who tried to convert Muslims to Christianity. As a result they were thrown to prison which caused many troubles to the Latin community in the city.<sup>16</sup> In 1587 a group of Italian friars tried to renew the Capuchins' mission but they failed, too. Among them was the famous friar Giuseppe da Leonessa, canonized later a saint, who met the Sultan in attempt to Christianize him.<sup>17</sup> In 1622 a mission of the French Capuchins set off for the East (Constantinople, Egypt, Palestine, and Damascus) with the purpose to study the conditions for further missionary work. As a result in 1626 three groups of Capuchins were sent to these lands, one of them settling permanently in Istanbul.<sup>18</sup>

.....

14 G. Hofmann, "Apostolato dei Gesuiti nell'Oriente Greco 1583-1773", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 1935, I, p. 142.

15 A. Molnar, *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions ...*, pp. 141-175.

16 R. da Cesinale Cocchia, *Storia delle missioni dei cappuccini*, Vol. I, Rome, 1873, pp. 52-55; Ch. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1983, p. 29.

17 R. da Cesinale Cocchia, *Storia delle missioni ...*, I, 55-71; P. Wenceslas, *La mission de Saint Joseph de Léonisse à Constantinople*, Librairie Mariale et Franciscaine, BLOIS, 1956.

18 Thomas de Paris, "Ambassadeurs de France et Capucins français à Constantinople au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Études franciscaines*, T. XXIX, N<sup>o</sup> 174, 1913, p. 235.

Their leader was Pacifique de Provins, whose recommendations were considered important by the Papacy and missions in the Orient were organized according to them.<sup>19</sup> The Capuchins were given special decrees by the French King Louis XIII, which signified that their mission was under the protection of France and they should be assisted by the ambassadors and consuls in the Ottoman Empire and all French citizens living there.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the Capuchins became priests of the French embassy in Constantinople, confirmed by the Royal decrees of *Propaganda Fide*, too.

The missionary reports from Istanbul were usually devoted to the Catholics and their ecclesiastical structures, following the obligatory pattern provided by the Congregation. The required information was about the extension of the mission, countries, peoples and languages; missionaries' loci and believers; the exercising of Christian religion, rituals, errors and abuses; number and condition of the existing churches (both Catholic and Orthodox); Catholic ecclesiastical organization, bishops, priests, monks, missionaries; what was the past condition of Catholicism in the described regions, which were the impediments to the faith, as well as what were the remedies for them.<sup>21</sup> However, many other pieces of information have also been included, providing rich picture of life in the Ottoman Empire. Besides, behind the formal style and among the required elements of such works, particular opinions and attitudes are visible, reflecting not only personality of the authors but also their social status, religious and sometimes even political views.

The main sources for this paper are the available accounts of several representatives of the Roman clergy in Ottoman Istanbul. Pietro Cedulini was not only the first post-Tridentine apostolic emissary, but he also provided a detailed report, describing the city from

.....

19 R. da Cesinale Cocchia, *Storia delle missioni* ..., III, 61.

20 Ignazio da Seggiano, "L'opera dei cappuccini per l'unione dei cristiani nel Vicino Oriente durante il secolo XVII", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 163, 1962, p. 34.

21 *Bullarium Pontificium Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Typis Collegii Urbani, Roma, 1859, I, 233-238.

the viewpoint of the Latin-rite Christians.<sup>22</sup> The motley group of Catholics living in Istanbul was portrayed, as well as their churches and clergy, emphasizing the significance of the French protection for the Roman Church's affairs in the Orient. In the spirit of the post-Tridentine reforms, he recommended clarification of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction by establishment of a Bishop of Constantinople who was to replace the Patriarchal vicar. He also insisted on the necessity of new missionaries in Istanbul. The Jesuits were envisaged as most suitable candidates, who by preaching and opening schools for the youngsters would prevent the penetration of Protestantism and would strive for gaining positions among the "Greeks". Cedulini held talks with the Constantinople Patriarch, trying to prevent the undesirable contacts with Protestant theologians.

An interesting text was composed by Giulio Mancinelli, founder of the Jesuit mission in Istanbul (1583-1585). He was prominent member of the Jesuit Order and an experienced missionary who had been working in Italy among the social marginals (children, sick people, prisoners, prostitutes) and in Dalmatia. His accounts were remarkable and being an attentive observer, he provided rich picture of life in Istanbul. Mancinelli wrote a detailed report, which he later prepared for publishing under the title *De Missione Patrum Societatis Iesu Constantinopolim a Gregorio XIII anno 1583 usque ad annum 1586* (Concerning the Mission of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus Sent by Gregory XIII to Constantinople from the Year 1583 to 1586).<sup>23</sup> In his work, known and unknown facts about Ottoman Constantinople were revealed, describing antiquities and, probably based on some other written sources, he gave an account of mosques and churches, Christian and Muslims living in Istanbul. Naturally, of

.....

<sup>22</sup> A. Gottlob, Die lateinischen Kirchengemeinden ...

<sup>23</sup> Mancinelli's report has been published in part by P. Pirri, "Lo stato della chiesa ortodossa di Constantinopoli e le sue tendenze verso Roma in una Memoria del P. Giulio Mancinelli", S. I, *Miscellanea Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi*, I, Rome, 1947, pp. 79-104.

For an edition and commentary on the topographical part of Mancinelli's report see: V. Ruggieri, "Constantinopoli vista da P. Giulio Mancinelli S. J. (1583-1585)", *Revue des études byzantines*, tome 60, 2002, pp. 113-131.

special interest to him were the religious relations and especially the attitude of the “Turks” towards the Christian religion, the condition of the Christian prisoners in Constantinople, the Turks and other Christians influenced by the “sect of Mohammed” and especially the status of the Eastern Church and the Patriarch.<sup>24</sup>

Important for Rome were the accounts of Pacifique de Provins. He participated in the first French Capuchin mission to the Orient in 1622 and wrote a very descriptive report about his travel that was published in 1631 under the title *Relation du voyage de Perse, fait par le R.P. Pacifique de Prouins predicateur Capucin. Où vous verrez les remarques particulieres de la terresainte, & des lieux où se sont operez plusieurs Miracles depuis la Creation du monde, iusques à la mort & Passion de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ. Aussi le commandement du grand Seigne*. His curiosity was provoked not only by churches and religious affairs but also by the landmarks and antiquities of the glorious Constantinople, by the traditions and way of life of its various inhabitants, by the legends and miracles, that made this city marvelous.

Very informative is also the report of Giovanni Mauri della Fratta. He was appointed Vicar of the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople (1629-1631) and in 1631 wrote a missionary report to which later were added many historical remarks.<sup>25</sup> He made a historical-topographic description of Galata and presented the history of Constantinople; provided statistical information for the Catholics and their churches, adding many other details and curious facts about the religious life and relations between different nations living in the city.

Fascinating are the texts of Angelo Petricca da Sonnino. In 1631 he arrived for the first time in Istanbul participating in a Franciscan mission sent to Persia. In 1637 he was appointed Vicar of the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople. In addition, in 1638

.....

<sup>24</sup> P. Pirri, “Lo stato della chiesa ortodossa ...”, pp. 85-104.

<sup>25</sup> The report was published by E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relatione dello stato della cristianità di Pera e Constantinopoli obediante al sommo pontefice romano*, Edizioni Rizzo & Son, Constantinopoli, 1925.

he was also appointed apostolic vicar of Walachia and Moldavia. Angelo Petricca was author of several theological works, written mostly in the years after he returned to Italy. But for the purposes of this paper, interesting are the reports, written in 1639-1640 or in the time when he was still patriarchal vicar, which reflected, therefore, his immediate impression of Istanbul and his travel through the Bulgarian lands to Walachia and Moldavia. These are *Relatione dello stato presente della Christianità di Pera et Constantinopoli* (Report for the present condition of Christianity in Pera and Constantinople) and *Trattato del modo facile d'espugnare il Turco e discacciarlo dai molti regni che possiede in Europa* (Treatise for the easy way of the Turks' expulsion from the many kingdoms they possess in Europe).<sup>26</sup> They provide a rich picture of life in the Ottoman capital and provinces in the 17th c. Petricca was interested not only in religious matters but also in political issues, relations between different groups living in the empire, everyday life, etc.

In the focus of the Catholic missionaries' reports from Ottoman Istanbul was the former Genoese suburb of Galata (Pera) where the bulk of the Latin-rite Christians lived and the Catholic churches and monasteries were concentrated. They also payed attention to the former Byzantine capital, the available remains, and the contemporary appearance of the great city. Constantinople was the name almost invariably employed by the missionaries for designation of Ottoman Istanbul. Obviously, it was the legitimate term for them. Thus, in his topo-geographic account Giulio Mancinelli explains that Constantinople was named after the Byzantine emperor Constantine but the Ottomans called it *Stambol*, while the Greeks used the corrupted word *Stybolim*, i.e. "to the city".<sup>27</sup> Actually, the toponym Constantinople was used for designation of the three parts of the city: Stamboul, the ancient city; Galata with the nearby

.....

<sup>26</sup> The works of Angelo Petricca are published by G. B. Cervellini, "*Relazioni di Constantinopoli del Vicario patriarcale Angelo Petricca*", Bessarione. *Pubblicazione periodica di studi oriental*, 1912, s. III, vol. IX, a. XVI, pp. 15-53.

<sup>27</sup> V. Ruggieri, *Constantinopoli vista ...*, p. 127.

quarters *Vigne di Pera*, Tophane, and Besiktas; as well as Uskudar on the Asian coast of Bosphorus.<sup>28</sup>

In reference to the vocabulary of the post-Tridentine missionaries, it is necessary to make some remarks. Regarding the toponyms, there is an interesting mixture of ancient and contemporary terms. In fact, Constantinople/ Istanbul had been described in such a manner by all European visitors who were brought by different reasons to the city in the Early Modern Period. The knowledge of ancient names was a symbol of erudition marking not only the writings of seculars, such as travelers or diplomatic representatives, but also the works of the church's servants. As to the ethnical and confessional denominations, they are usually combined, since religion was the major principle of distinction in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, "Turks" was equivalent to Muslims; "Greeks" was used for the Orthodox peoples; Catholics were referred to as Latins; while the Protestants living in Istanbul (mainly English and Dutch) were usually designated as Heretics.

Considering missionaries' attitudes towards Istanbul, at first we should note the admiration of the fascinating city, its richness, natural beauties and pleasant geographical location. They praised that wondrous site of Constantinople with delightful coasts and commodity of two seas, Black and White, which come together, providing convenient port for thousands of ships coming from both seas and from Asia and Europe.<sup>29</sup> The missionaries arriving from the West were impressed by the variety of merchants and goods from all over the world, by the magnificent buildings and luxuriance of the town.<sup>30</sup> This admiration applies even to the buildings of the Muslim cult. But it comes together with stating his regret that Istanbul was dominated by the Ottomans. Thus, what was remarkable for the *Pacifique de Province* in the city was the ugliness of the common

.....

28 E. Borromeo, "Les catholiques à Constantinople Galata et les églises de rite latin au XVIIe siècle", *Identités confessionnelles et espace urbain en terres al'islam. Revue des mondes musulmans et de la méditerranée*, 107-110, 2005, p. 228.

29 E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relazione dello stato ...*, p. 8.

30 V. Ruggieri, *Constantinopoli vista ...*, pp. 125-127.

houses at the expense of the excellence of the mosques, being built with the best materials.<sup>31</sup>

The next significant feature of Ottoman Istanbul was its ancient and glorious history. Famous antiquities and historical remains could be found everywhere in the city, such as the Hippodrome with the obelisk (*columna pyramidis*) and the Serpent Column (*serpentes aenei*), the Porphyry column, the Blachernae palace, the Studios, etc.<sup>32</sup> Naturally, the prominent temple of St. Sophia was the most impressive landmark, a giant monument of the Christian glory, transferred into a mosque.<sup>33</sup> Actually, all pilgrims, visitors and other people who were willing to see the city have been following for centuries one and the same route: St. Sophia, the Hippodrome, the town's squares, and important churches.<sup>34</sup> Similar descriptions of the remains of the Classical Antiquity and Byzantine period were available in many other works, travel writings, reports of the Venetian and other diplomatic representatives, etc. Thus, in the Catholic missionaries' reports ancient names were mixed with contemporary ones, showing not only the good knowledge of the authors but their respect of the significance of the city. Besides, Istanbul was not only a glorious Roman town but an important religious centre since the dawn of Christianity, keeping many relics. It was a city of wonders, of miraculous healings, happening even in contemporary times.<sup>35</sup> Constantinople was a phenomenal place even to those that had not been able to visit it. Thus, an old man from Capo d'Istria gave Paolo

.....

31 *Relation du voyage de Perse, fait par le R.P. Pacifique de Prouins predicateur Capucin. Où vous verrez les remarques particulieres de la terresainte, & des lieux où se sont operez plusieurs Miracles depuis la Creation du monde, iusques à la mort & Passion de nostre Seigneur IesusChrist. Aussi le commandement du grand Seigne, 1631, pp. 18-19.*

32 V. Ruggieri, *Constantinopoli vista ...*, pp.127-128.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130; *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, pp. 19-21

34 С. Ракова, П. Данова, Бенедето Рамберти и Даниело Лудовизи двама венециански пратеници в Константинопол през 1534 година, Пловдив, Фондация “Българско историческо наследство”, 2016, с. 51.

35 *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, p. 32; G. Matteucci, “Un glorioso convento francescano sulle rive del Bosforo. Il S. Francesco di Galata in Constantinopoli - c. 1230-1697”, *Studi francescani*, Firenze, 1967, pp. 111-114.

di Rovigno, who was supposed to go to Istanbul, a coin to pray for his health on the Virgin from Constantinople.<sup>36</sup>

Istanbul was an Oriental city, centre of the Ottoman power and the Muslim world. Many features made it exotic for the Western Europeans. Their curiosity was provoked not only by the places of religious cults but by other bizarre landmarks. Thus, Giulio Mancinelli included in his reports topographic and statistic information about mosques, Dervishes' "monasteries", places where children were thought reading and writing, caravanserais (Carabam Sarai), public fountains and those used for washing before prayer, baths, beverage shops, bakeries, flourmills, marketplaces, etc.<sup>37</sup> Peculiar were also the institution of the Ottoman government, where the prominent Ottoman figures were colorfully presented. Pasifique de Provins, describing a Sultan's procession, used French terms to interpret the meaning of the various Ottoman titles. *Grand Vizier* was *Chancelier* and *Connestable*, *Boustangy Bachy* was Lieutenant of the Sultan's gardens just as the Capitan of Tuilleries in Paris, *Bachats* were governors of towns, *Beys* were governors of provinces.<sup>38</sup> Constantinople or Stamboult was the imperial city of the *grand Seigneur Turc*<sup>39</sup> or *imperator Turcorum*, the hearth of the Ottoman power. For the Catholic missionaries and their flock in the different parts of the empire, it was the place where important issues concerning their religious cult and ecclesiastical organization were solved. For example, all repairs and other modifications of the existing church buildings were approved by the Porte. It was a cumbersome process, requiring special efforts and certain skills for using the well-developed system of bribery to which the foreign missionaries were not accustomed. Not having the Catholic Church official status in the Ottoman Empire, the clergy was obliged to conform to the local customs and the orders of the Ottoman authorities.

.....

36 T. Zlatović, "Izvjetaj o Bosni god. 1640 o. Pavla iz Rovinja", *Starine JAZU*, 23, 1890, p. 3.

37 V. Ruggieri, *Constantinopoli vista ...*, pp. 126-127.

38 *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, p. 27; 36-37.

39 *Ibid*, p. 18.

Istanbul was also the place where protection by the European diplomats was provided. The Catholic states' ambassadors were important patrons of the missionaries and they paid special attention to the development of the diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the European states. Not only the Catholic states' ambassadors (French, Venetian, Habsburg and Ragusan) were influential, significant were also the actions of the "heretical" English and Dutch diplomatic representatives. Furthermore, there is some information about the "Greek" principalities Walachia and Moldavia which also sent their representatives to the Ottoman capital, as well as about Moscow, which occasionally had representatives.<sup>40</sup> However, of particular importance to the Roman Church were the French and Venetian ambassadors, whose gorgeous courts and numerous personnel could guarantee the prosperity of Catholicism in the Ottoman lands. This protection was significant factor for the well-being of the Catholic clergy, providing a certain comfort that was not available in the provinces. Thus, the Catholic Archbishop of Sofia Pitero Diodato in his report of 1663 and in connection with an argument he had with a Conventual Franciscan that had come from the Ottoman capital, sadly concluded that it was easy to be a missionary in Constantinople, where the ambassadors were residing, but was very difficult in the regions where Christians remained unprotected.<sup>41</sup>

Important for the missionaries was the fact that Istanbul had Catholic presence and Latin ecclesiastical structures since medieval times. Thus, essential part of the detailed missionary reports was the narrative of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and subsequent organization of the Latin community in Galata, as well as the history of the extant Catholic churches and monasteries, most of which were there since the Byzantine times.<sup>42</sup> The patriarchal

.....

<sup>40</sup> E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relazione dello stato ...*, pp. 27-31; G. B. Cervellini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, pp. 35-37.

<sup>41</sup> Документи за католическата дейност в България през XVII в., (съст. Б. Примов, П. Сарийски, М. Йовков), С., 1993, р. 203.

<sup>42</sup> A. Gottlob, *Die lateinischen Kirchengemeinden ...*, pp. 56-58; E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relazione dello stato ...*, pp. 42-67; G. B. Cervellini, *Relazioni di*

vicar Giovanni Mauri della Fratta, who was also representative of the Conventual Franciscans, noted proudly that his monastic order and that of the Dominicans were the first Catholic friars to settle in Pera in the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Because of their long-lasting traditions in the city, they have always had local men to join the orders, while other Catholic missions relied on foreigners.<sup>43</sup>

Istanbul was also an Orthodox city and it was of special importance to the very complicated relations between the Papacy and Patriarchate of Constantinople. Actually the attitude of the missionaries towards “Greeks” or “Scismatics” was ambiguous. Traditionally they were regarded enemies of the Catholics, in some respects even greater than the Muslims. They were competitors for the Christian souls and especially in the provinces, there were many conflicts with the Orthodox clergy, who were taking advantage of the fact that the status of the Catholic Church in the Ottoman Empire was not official. They were imposing taxes on the Catholic population.<sup>44</sup> The image of the “Schismatics” in the works of Catholic priests in the Balkans was constructed according to the opposition “they-we”, being the Orthodox congregation regarded as stupid, ignorant, stubborn to keep their faith and frequently tending into sins.<sup>45</sup> On

.....

*Constantinopoli ...*, pp. 37-38.

43 E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relazione dello stato ...*, p. 49.

44 There are many complaints of the Roman missionaries against the Orthodox clergy and Constantinople Patriarch, in particular, who were trying to overtake the care of the Catholic groups, scattered in the Ottoman provinces. These arguments for jurisdiction on the congregation were often solved by the Ottoman court, where money and lobbies were important factors. For example, see: Българско участие в католически мисии из Унгария и Трансилвания през XVII-XVIII в. Документи от Архива на Светата конгрегация за разпространение на вярата – Ватикана 1637-1716 г. (съст. И. Г. Тот), София, 2008, pp. 195-197; M. Jačov, *Le mission cattoliche nei Balkani durante la guerre di Candia: 1645-1669*, Citta del Vaticano, 1992, p. 143; 592; Jačov, M. Jačov, *Le mission cattoliche nei Balcani tra le due grandi guerre: Candia (1645-1669) Vienna e Morea (1683-1699)*, Citta del Vaticano, 1998, p. 29; 266

45 M. Bur, “Catholic Missionary on Orthodoxy in the Balkans, 17th - 18th c”, *Études balkaniques*, 4, 1993, pp. 43-54; K. Stančev, “L'immagine della

the other hand one of the main post-Tridentine missionary tasks was to cease the penetration of Protestantism to the Ottoman lands by union of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This was among the major assignments of the first post-Tridentine visitor Pietro Cedulini, who negotiated with the Constantinople Patriarch. However, Cedulini's conclusion was that the "Greek" hatred towards the Western Church remained the same as it was in the past and that they with the help of the Turks robbed the Latin community and their churches.<sup>46</sup> In general, this attitude did not change even if there were some exceptions. Thus, the Capuchins accepted that there was no other nation that hated them more than the "Greeks".<sup>47</sup> But some of the missionaries sincerely believed in the unity of Christianity against the common enemy – the Ottomans. Angelo Petricca claimed that those things that had been dividing the two Christian denominations for centuries were not current anymore. The main reason for this was that the Orthodox population was basically ignorant and was not able to understand the reasons for the schism. Thus, he upheld the idea that it would be enough for this people to see the cross in front of a Christian army which would invade their lands, and they all would support it unconditionally.<sup>48</sup>

In comparison with Orthodoxy, interesting is the Catholic missionaries' attitude towards Islam, most frequently designated as *Mohammed's sect* or *Turkish faith*. Even though the first post-Tridentine attempts to convert Muslims failed, damping the missionary zeal, it continued to be one of the important aims for all missionaries in the Orient. In the Catholic clergy's writings Islam was regarded as the enemy's religion. These enemies were making Christians suffer, imposing a tyrannical rule and providing many impediments to the spread of Catholic faith. But Muslim traditions and way of life were purposely studied and sometimes curious remarks could be found in the reports. For example, some missionaries admired

.....

maggioranza ortodossa negli scritti secenteschi dei Bulgari Cattolici.”  
*Letterature di Frontiera = Littératures Frontalières*, IX (1999), 2, pp. 281-295.

46 A. Gottlob, *Die lateinischen Kirchengemeinden ...*, p. 68.

47 R. da Cesinale Cocchia, *Storia delle missioni ...*, III, 66.

48 G. B. Cervelini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, pp. 45-46.

the respect of the Ottomans towards their mosques, especially in comparison with the negligent priests in Europe and all Christians who dare to be insolent inside the churches.<sup>49</sup> Giulio Mancinelli tried to describe comprehensively the Muslims and their way of life, paying special attention to good disposition of the *Turks* towards the Christian religion.<sup>50</sup> Descriptive account of the Dervish rituals, making parallels with Christian preaches and prayers were provided by Pacifique de Province.<sup>51</sup> The missionaries were also impressed by the comparative tolerance of the common people towards the Christian rituals, observing that none of the *Turks* would interrupt a mess because many of them entered the churches driven by curiosity.<sup>52</sup> In a way Islam was considered more acceptable than Orthodoxy or Protestant teachings. Thus, Giovanni Mauri della Fratta commented that unlike the *Greeks* and *Heretics*, the *Turks* believed in Purgatory even if it was accompanied by superstitions.<sup>53</sup> Angelo Petricca even insisted that they without any difficulty could become Christians.<sup>54</sup> He also explained that the number of Christians in the Ottoman Empire was constantly decreasing because they were lacking proper education and their faith was weak. This was why many of them converted to Islam but the process could be easily reversed.

Istanbul was a multiethnic and multi-religious town and the shared space of everyday life of its various inhabitants resulted in some cultural phenomena, syncretism and other interesting practices, which the Catholic missionaries described with astonishment. They were also impressed by the existence of religious tolerance among the common people and the shared sacred places. For example, there was a small chapel of “St. Anthony the Hermit” which was visited by many *Greeks* and *Turks*, who spent the night there in search of miraculous healing of their illnesses, donating money and other

.....

49 *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, p. 22.

50 V. Ruggieri, *Constantinopoli vista ...*, p. 121.

51 *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, pp. 24-28.

52 E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relatione dello stato ...*, p.42; G. B. Cervellini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, p. 39.

53 E. Dalleggio D'Alessio, *Relatione dello stato ...*, p. 88.

54 G. B. Cervellini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, p. 53.

things necessary for the monks.<sup>55</sup> Many Ottomans visited Catholic churches and especially “St. Francis” driven by curiosity, desiring to observe Christian prayers and to listen to the music of the organ.<sup>56</sup> Celebrations were those occasions where various peoples living in the cosmopolitan city of Istanbul came together. Thus, not only the Latin people contributed to the solemnity of the great Catholic feasts in the city but also many Greeks, Armenians, Russians, Heretics, and Turks did so.<sup>57</sup> Besides, the relations between different Christian denominations in Istanbul they gave the Catholic priests in the provinces as an example. Thus, the Bishop of the small diocese of Trebinje-Mrkan in Herzegovina, who in his report of 1664 was concerned about the validity of confessions made by Orthodox monks, compared the situation with that in Constantinople where Greeks and Latins interchangeably were attending their churches and were participating together in the public processions.<sup>58</sup> In addition to that Angelo Petricca insisted that the *Turks* were very hospitable, providing food for whoever came to their table, which he personally had experienced many times.<sup>59</sup>

Sometimes political issues were also part of the Catholic clergy’s activities. According to the requirements of the Congregation *Propaganda Fide*, the missionaries were forbidden to interfere in politics and only religious purposes should be pursued.<sup>60</sup> However, at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. there were numerous Christian projects for restoration of Ottoman territories and supporting local rebels

.....

55 *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, p. 30.

56 E. Dalleggio D’Alessio, *Relazione dello stato ...*, p.42; G. B. Cervelini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, p. 39.

57 E. Dalleggio D’Alessio, *Relazione dello stato ...*, pp. 82-83.

58 Jačov, M. *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balkani durante la guerra di Candia: 1645-1669 ...*, p. 646.

59 G. B. Cervelini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, p. 51.

60 J. Metzler, “Orientation, programme et premières décisions (1622-1649)”, *Sacrae Congregationis Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum (350 anni a servizio delle missioni 1622-1972)*. Vol. I/1 (1622-1700). Rom-Freiburg-Wien, 1971, p. 150; G. Matteucci, *La missione francescana di Constantinopoli*, Biblioteca di studi francescani, Firenze, 1975, p.208.

against the Empire.<sup>61</sup> Actually, beside the ecclesiastic reforms, the post-Tridentine period was also marked by the restored efforts of the Papacy to appeal for war against Christianity's enemies, especially in the time of Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605). He made efforts to organize an anti-Ottoman coalition and considered the Balkan Christians as possible allies.<sup>62</sup> In 1593 the Pope sent a prelate, Alexander Komulović (Comuleo) from Spalato, to visit Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as Moscow, where he was supposed to hold talks about the Church's union and the foundation of a united anti-Ottoman front. It was the atmosphere in which religious missions were being organized and they were inevitably influenced by this. The Catholic clergy (bishops and missionaries) in the Ottoman Empire was among the main sources of information about the conditions under the Ottomans, providing details to the Holy See not only for religious and administrative matters, but, especially in the war regions. They also collected and transmitted first-hand military information.<sup>63</sup> Besides, being protected by the Catholic states, the friars had to comply with their patron's policy.

Thus, the missionaries appealed to unification of the Christian world against the Ottomans, some of them even assumed diplomatic assignments, while others writing special works in search of possible means for the Christian victory. Such a work, entitled *Treatise for the easy way of the Turks' expulsion from the many kingdoms they possess in Europe*, was written in 1640 by the Patriarchal vicar Angelo Petricca.<sup>64</sup> It was not a typical Catholic missionary's work but was probably the result of some other aims of the Roman Church policy.

.....

61 B. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du proche-orient au temps de la réforme catholique*, École française de Rome Palais Farnèse, 1994, p. 187.

62 L. F. Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the close of the Middle Ages*. Vol. XXIII. Clement VIII (1593-1606), London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1933, pp. 265-310.

63 J. Petitjean, "The Papal Network: How the Roman Curia was Informed about South-Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean (1645-1669)", J. Raymond, N. Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, Brill, 2016, pp. 185-186.

64 G. B. Cervellini, *Relazioni di Constantinopoli ...*, pp. 43-53.

He described the conditions in the Ottoman Empire, emphasizing on the military weaknesses of the Ottomans, such as the lack of any kind of fortification and the necessary discipline and tactical training of the Ottoman troops. In addition, Petricca believed that the local Orthodox population would support unreservedly the invading Christian army and the only condition for the successful war against the Ottomans, therefore, would be the unification of Christian princes' forces. He appeals to all Christian rulers to settle their differences claiming that a future victory over the Ottomans would bring enough lands and properties to be distributed among them and so all conflicts would cease. Petricca's views were really interesting and were not characteristic for a clergyman. Actually he was not just a regular missionary but one of the prominent representatives of the Catholic Church in the lands under the Ottomans who was assigned important tasks.<sup>65</sup> Besides, he could be regarded as an agent of the military fraction within the Catholic hierarchy working for the preparation of "late crusades" against the Ottomans.

The missionaries were also in connection with their European protectors and sometime their nationality predominated in the formation of the attitudes towards the Ottomans and Istanbul. Interesting is the example of the French friar Pacifique de Provins. In his work, describing the tomb of Mehmed the Conqueror, he mentioned that there were also two graves of Christian women, one of them belonged to a French princess who was captured by the Sultan at Galipoli and the other one – to a Greek woman from the Paleologues, whose descendant was Duc de Nevres.<sup>66</sup> Thus, he

.....

65 For example, parts of his work were the talks for union with the Constantinople Patriarchate that happened in a very special period of intricate relations between the churches in the time of Patriarch Cyril Lucaris who was believed to be Calvinist. Petricca actively participated in the struggle of the Catholic diplomacy in Istanbul against the supported by the Protestant diplomats Lucaris. The replacement of Lucaris with the pro-Catholic Patriarch Cyril from Veria was considered Petricca's personal success.

66 By the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> c. Charles de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers (1580-1637) made an effort to organize a crusade against the Ottomans. He claimed the right to ascend to the Byzantine throne, being his grandmother a successor of the Paleologue dynasty. He was supported by the famous Capuchin friar

believed that all Sultans were related to the French royal dynasty,<sup>67</sup> probably giving his explanation to the well-developed diplomatic relations between France and the great enemy of the Catholic world – Ottoman Empire – and the claims over the Byzantine throne.

The post-Tridentine period was a time of renovation and increasing influence of the Roman Church, which resulted in huge missionary activities all over the world. The Ottoman lands were also target of the Rome's renovated proselytizing efforts. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. many missionaries were sent, whose reports to the Holy See provides many details of the life in the Empire. Ottoman Istanbul from the perspective of the Catholic missionaries had several important features. It was ancient and wondrous city where the Catholic Church had a strong positions. Important for the missionary work was that the political centre of the Ottoman power and the residence of their main religious opponent (the Orthodox Patriarch) had been there but at the same time their protectors and benefactors (the European diplomatic representatives) dwelled in the city, too. The cosmopolitan city, variety of cultures and syncretism was what usually impressed them. Romantic attitudes and dreams for restoration of the Christian Constantinople were also expressed, combining past and present perceptions. Hence, the Catholic missionaries' letters and reports offer an interesting picture of Ottoman Istanbul, giving clues not only on ecclesiastic and religious matters, but also an political and diplomatic issues.

.....

Père Joseph, the “grey eminence” of Cardinal Richelieu and even the Pope was informed about the crusading plans. See: W. Leitsch, “Père Joseph und die Pläne einer Türkenliga in den Jahren 1616 bis 1625”, *Habsburgisch-osmanische Beziehungen*, Wien, 26.-30. September 1983; colloque sous le patronage du Comité international des études pré-ottomanes et ottomanes, Wien: Verlag des Verbandes der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1985, pp. 161-169.

67 *Relation du voyage de Perse ...*, pp. 40-41.