

Similarities and Differences of Discourses in the Travel Books of Antun Vrančić and Marco Antonio Pigafetta

1.

The following article explores the perception of space of the European part of the Ottoman Empire in travel books written by two writers from the second half of the XVIth century: the humanist from Šibenik Antun Vrančić, the Hungarian primate, and the Venetian, Marco Antonio Pigafetta, the less known member of the famous family of travel writers. The author analyses two of Vrančić's unfinished travel books dating from his first mission to Turkey (1553-1557),¹ and the two preserved diaries² and two letters to Maximilian II³ written on the same route during his second mission to Istanbul in 1567. M.A. Pigafetta accompanied Vrančić on the second mission. He published his travel book *Itinerario di Marc' Antonio Pigafetta gentil' huomo vicentino* in London in 1585. They took the well-trodden route⁴ from Hungary by river (the Danube) and over land from Budim to Belgrade and from there travelled the Istanbul road: Smederevo–Ćuprija–Drinopolje–Istanbul. This was Vrančić's second time on these roads, Pigafetta's first. Travel books describing an identical space written by two authors who are travelling at the same time prompted me to question the representational discursive models used to relate to an unknown culture and to explore the manner of perceiving a selfsame space and time.

¹ The travel books are known under the following titles: *De itinere et legatione sua Constantinopolitana cum fratre Michaelae dialogus* (Monumenta Hungariae historica, Scriptores, Volume. II, 268 pray Annales, P V., 486. According to: Matković, „Putovanje A. Vrančića“, 3), and *Iter Buda Hadrianopolim anno 1553 exaratum ab Antonio Verantio tunc quinqueecclesiensi, mox agriensi episcopo, ac demum archiepiscopo strigoniensi, regio in Hungaria locumtenenti, magno regni archiepiscopo strigoniensi, regio in Hungaria locumtenenti, magno regni cancellario, atque S. R. E. Cardinali electo; nunc primum e Verantiano carthophylacio in lucem editum* (the shorter translated title is frequently in use *Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje/Travelling from Budim to Drinopolje*). The description of the journey from Drinopolje to Istanbul is missing from the 1553 travel book. It was first published by Alberto Fortis in 1774. in Venice in his book: *Viaggio in Dalmazia/Travels into Dalmatia/* (compare, Vrančić, in: Fortis, *Travels into Dalmatia*, 115-145).

² There exist diaries from Vrančić's second journey which are very similar in content. The first is *Ratio itineris in Turciam facti per Danubium* (Monumenta Hungariae historica, Scriptores, Volume. VI, 78-84), the second *Ratio viae Danubialis Vienna Belgradum – Ratio itineris, quod est a Vienna ad Constantinopolim* (Monumenta Hung., Volume XXXII, 55-59, according to : Matković, „Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette“, 65).

³ The first letter is from Sophia (4/VIII Mon, Hung.), the second from Tatarpazardžika dated 8/VIII 1567. The letter contains the description of the part of the journey missing in the first travel book. (Matković, „Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette“, 66)

⁴ Eventually this route was abandoned because journeying from Viena was shifted to the more secure East Adriatic coast.

2.

The manner of representing the geographic, orographic and social reality of the Ottoman area of Christian Europe of that time was part of European Renaissance discourse⁵ about that part of the Orient. The Renaissance system of thought can be seen in the geographical reconstructions of space, in the assessments of the material values of the area, in the descriptions of the beauty of the landscape and in the analyses of the social circumstances, the appearance and the behavior of the natives. This is a Renaissance discourse about a culture different from the Christian one, which through its territorial expansionism created a feeling of endangerment and insecurity but also a curiosity to explore ways in which Christian culture can survive under Ottoman authority. The travel books clarify the process of establishing an opposition between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. One must add that the travel writers differentiated the two groups under observation as a fractured object of knowledge: the Christian folk of European Turkey and the ruling wealthy Ottomans. The manner of representing Christian culture under the Ottomans incited the reader to work for the return of the conquered space under the jurisdiction of Christian rulers. The geopolitical consciousness of the travellers presupposed the dominant discursive practice as a particular type of representation. Within the framework of this meaning of discourse I will attempt to deconstruct the relation the two travel writers hold towards the events that befall them on the journey.

2.1.

Considerations of genre lead us today to read travel books (giving due weight to the fact that there is no ideal reader)⁶ as literary texts but they also insinuate its factional nature which during the Renaissance was considered its main attribute. The broadest theoretical

⁵ I address the discourse of the travel book writers Vrančić and Pigafette relying upon the insights of Michel Foucault (*The Order of Things*, *Archeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Discourse*), which presuppose the historical, language and thought levels of knowledge which in practice are transformed into a tool of the will to power. In that context, put in simple terms, Ottomanism is Orientalism – a geopolitical discourse. Discourse understood in Foucault's sense of the word refers to discursive practices and the real effects of such practices.

⁶ I acknowledge that each reading, including of course mine own, is a singular act but also a product of the social practices of reading that are wholly invisible to the reader (Chartier; Jouhaud, 53-80. See Zlatar, 494). Relating to the reconstruction of the readings of the targeted travel book writers, I hold that the writers themselves impacted upon the reception of their writings. For example, Vrančić addresses his unknown reader in a number of places in the travel book. Perhaps this reader was his brother Mihovil for whose reading the diaries were intended. We would have known more about this if he had edited his work for publication like Pigafetta did.

assumptions concerning the texts of the travel writers that will be explored here have been developed by, for example, Justin Stagl, Casey Blanton, Mary Louise Pratt or Dennis Porter. The travel writers recorded their observations in the context of the Renaissance academic culture whose system called *ars apodemica*⁷ – Hilarius Pyrckmair's⁸ term – became particularly popular during the middle of the XVIth century. Through widespread publications of travel books, textbooks and theoretical texts about travelling, frequently in the form of collections of articles or anthologized guides, *Ars apodemica* survived for at least two centuries. Both Vrančić's and Pigafetta's book are founded on the principles of *ars apodemica*, shaped in accordance with the cultural and scientific requirements of the humanistic travel book⁹, but in addition bearing features of a reportage account of a journey.

Going by Blanton's views¹⁰ the works of both writers would belong to the impersonal group – the type of book of travels that shares certain features with the travel books written by sailors, pilgrims and merchants – although their books frequently overstep its strictly defined framework. According to Mary Louise Pratt's typology (*Imperial Eyes*, 1992), who deals with travel books from the 18th century onwards, the travel books under consideration here belong to the *scientific*, and not to the *sentimental travel books* – that is, to the group that evinces an authorial distance. In the same manner, according to Dennis Porter, whose classification is based on the motivation to travel, we recognize the travel books written by the Šibenik humanist and by the traveller from Venice as *travel book stemming from duty* and not as travel books motivated by the *wish to travel* (Blanton, 1997: 16).

The humanistic scientific interest in unfamiliar lands and descriptions of spaces conquered by war as part of diplomatic missions is certainly an important impulse to record impressions on one's travels. However, it seems that our two travel writers described their journey through the

⁷ *Ars apodemica* dealt with the manner of preparing and equipping travellers for their journey and with advise how to describe the journey. Concerning *ars apodemica* see at more length in Stagl's book *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550-1800*, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995., which assembles a series of thematic studies concerning travel writing.

⁸ Pyrckmair uses the term in the book *Comentariolus de arte apodemica, seu Vera Peregrinandi ratione*, Ingolstadt, 1577.

⁹ For example, Vrančić positions himself as a travel writer who seeks to test existing cartographic accounts. Earlier he had emphasized sight as the most secure method of presenting space which indicates a conscious setting up of the Renaissance scientific discourse: "(...) if many things in my description are described differently than they are by other writers let nobody in haste correct or pronounce judgement because I have seen them with my own eyes and investigated them having lived for some time in Erdelj and made the effort to learn the habits of the folk there." (Matković, "Putovanje Antuna Vrančića", 9)

¹⁰ Blanton divides travel books into two ideally conceived types (*impersonal travel book* and *autobiographical travel book*), comparing the author's procedures of introspection and the representation of the phenomenal world he is describing (Blanton 1997: 4).

Ottoman Empire keeping also in mind the growing demand for such texts during the period of burgeoning Ottoman expansionism and Europe's curiosity about the exotic empire. Namely, as the emperor's emissary Vrančić had frequently travelled to European countries (for example, London, Paris, Madrid, Rom). However, he made no record of these places nor of the people he met. I do not know that Pigafetta wrote of London even though we know that he lived there for a longer period of time. It seems that Pigafetta¹¹ was primarily motivated by geopolitical and economic concerns. Describing the lack of extant descriptions of European Turkey he underlines that he had to investigate what accounted for the power and the weakness of the Turkish empire.¹² Although, when the book was published he did emphasize the scientific utility of his travel book in the wholly unconventional dedicatory epistle-preface to Eduard Seymer.

2.1.1. Both travel writers take the stance of the epic subject-narrator and in most of the text declare themselves to be omniscient, eductaed story tellers.¹³ Their mission to Suleiman the Magnificent is a heroic deed and the reader follows the emissary/hero as he passes through different mishaps to his goal. Nature gone wild in the post-war state of dereliction poses a danger on their journey. The one-time safe journey by sea is hazardous because of the impassable sea lanes while journeying over land is liable to encounter dangerous desolate places threatened by highwaymen so that, as they write, human settlements stay clear of the main roads. Inhabited areas also cause discomfort: Vrančić empahsyzes the feeling of loneliness and unease while he walks through dark and dingy empty streets lined with strange

¹¹ It is probable that Pigafetta was Vrančić's secretary versed in military matters. In his account he frequently emphasizes that Vrančić, as the leader of the missionary expedition, gave him explanations concerning areas they were passing through, about historical unknowns as well as linguistic explanations, casual comments, as well as the retelling of legends and suchlike things. In addition, many comments made by Pigafetta accord with Vrančić's opinions and views.

¹² „Mi spinge ancora oltre a ciò, a far questo il considerare, che nel narrare le cose turchesche non mi sono messo nell' altrui fatiche, et il sapere, che pochi o niuno habbia fin hora investigato: in che prinpalmente consista la potenza et debolezza dell' impero Turchesco, et perchè più in un tempo, che nell' altro sia venuto a tanta grandezza (...)“ (Pigafetta, *Itinerario*, in: Matković, „Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette“, 71)

¹³ Collections of apodemic texts frequently do not distinguish between factional and fictional travel books because they recount on an equal footing events from the journeys of Proserpine, Orpheus, Ceres and of Antique travellers. Compare, for example, *Hodoeporicum sive itinerarium totius fere orbis libri VII. Opus Historicum, Ethicum, Physicum, Geographicum* Nicolausa Reusnera, Basel ,1580. (Miličić, 57). This is probably the reason why similar elements are encounterd in both travel books, as factual texts, and literature. However, the fictional type of subgenre with numerous fabricated topical elements, which was in particular favour in the XVIIth and XVIIIth century, stands in no connection with the fictional elements in the travel books that we are dealing with.

buildings in Bulgaria – “blind” houses with windows on the rooftops.¹⁴ The incongruity between different cultures of human dwelling and the inability to establish immediate contact with the natives cause the travellers unease. Nevertheless, the travel writer as observer does not abandon his own cultural frame, he does not take up the position of the observed to offer explanations such as this possible one: the architecture of the house functions to guarantee the security of its dwellers and not to welcome travellers, truth to say, it assumes an adverse reaction to unwanted visitors.

The early Modern Age travel book introduces excursions in the form of retelling different meetings – using the example of travelling themes included into *ars apodemica* – such as those from Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*. The stylistic register of excursions in travel books frequently engages topics similar to literature. For example, Vrančić deploys this literary convention by occasionally introducing folk stories or legends. The relativisation of the relationship between historiography and pseudo-historiography is characteristic for the early Modern Age, before the introduction of Bollandist methodology, so it is not unusual that Vrančić treats legends as historical sources. Both of our travel writers use excursions. The literary and folklore interpellations and associations are not the fruit of observations or of knowledge of only the writers themselves but rather some of them are commonplaces in all travel books.

2.1.2. Vrančić includes fluent knowledge of the native language amongst the tools necessary to become acquainted with a space in order to avoid simply embracing other people's testimonies as was the common practice.¹⁵ He holds that being a Slav he is well acquainted with the language of the area because, as was habitual for the time, he maintains that

¹⁴ „There is not a single comely house in Sophia. Not one is made of stone: all are low, roofed to the ground and made of wood. If some are built better, they are made out of shaped but not baked bricks. Baked tiles are used only for the roofs “. (Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“, in: Fortis, *Travels into Dalmatia*, 135). The description of Plovdiva (Vrančić mistakenly names it *Philippopolis*) is uncanny: „(...) furthermore, the dwellings are darksome precisely there where they ought to have the greatest number of eyes. Such also are the streets which do not light up any windows but are on both sides covered by house fences which rise to the roof. If you met no passerby while you strolled, you would say this is desolation: nobody, literally nobody watches from the windows “. Ibid., 140.

¹⁵ Thoughts in the text *De situ Transylvaniae, Moldaviae et Transalpiniae* about the benefits of long sojourns for getting acquainted with an area accord with this, although the writer himself relies upon conclusions made by other writers due to the lack of the possibility of verifying old explanations concerning the area of South Eastern Europe: „It is clear – there is no doubt – that older writers wrote a lot according to news gathered by those who had preceded them and on the basis of what they had read and not according to their own experience. Neither will I pay much ado to this because the inhabitants of those regions nowadays diverge in their judgements on this matter(...)“. (Vrančić, 143).

Bulgarian, admittedly a bit misshapen, is also his language. Pigafetta is of the same opinion but with a difference — Vrančić is his source for gathering data and local legends but also his language mediator, that is translator and explainer of toponyms. The influence of the Croatian teacher is widespread: for example, he records Bulgarian toponyms using a terminology which is unusual for an Italian travel writer: „Mustafa most (bridge) is in Croatian, Mustafa chiupri in Turkish“¹⁶.

It is today difficult to precisely assess what were the real possibilities for establishing communication between two very much different Slav languages but it is understandable that the grammatical and lexical nature of similar vernaculars is more obvious to an educated speaker than it is to the uneducated common folk.¹⁷ But we do not know to what extent is Vrančić's difficulty of communicating with the Slav population, about which he complains throughout the journey, a consequence of the ignorance of the people he meets on his journey. When he does meet the natives he writes that they are uneducated because they know nothing about the area they inhabit, they do not know the names of settlements, rivers, of the mountains. As we will see, there might have been many reasons why the natives refused to talk with strangers or to give data about the toponymy of space. Nevertheless, when discussing the «mute» natives, he points to the problem of perceiving speech and of distinguishing between language/speech in socially and culturally various segments of the Slav populace. The uneducated person can hardly understand the small prosodic or phonetic differences in language. What to educated Vrančić might seem total ignorance might possibly be the result of his unfounded belief that there exists a profuse cross-language understanding between Croatian and Bulgarian speakers.

2.2.

Although the fore-mentioned genre features, that is the impersonality of travel writing in the early Modern Age and its significant conventionality, signalize the reduced individualization in *travel writing while on duty*, the imposed restrictions of movement also make their contribution. The problem arises as soon the traveller is assigned guards who then treat the travellers as though they were some kind of prisoners. The guards block their access to

¹⁶„Mustafa most in crovato, che in turco dicesi Mustafa chiupri“. Pigafetta, *Itinerario*, in: Matković, „Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette“, 173.

¹⁷ I recall Vrančić's famous nephew Faust who thinks about Slav languages in a similar manner or Jurja Križanić's opinions concerning the possibility of understanding between Slav peoples.

information, including their correspondence with the emperor. Here we see that diplomatic practice is a demonstration of power. We learn this from the following first hand account:

People might think that emissaries are in a better position if they are assigned guards or followers or scouts to keep them safe from damage and harm but the emissaries are attended to by them night and day in such a manner that they prevent any kind of communication, even correspondence. They are prevented from writing to or receiving letters from their king and if they manage to do so they have to do it clandestinely.¹⁸

Vrančić explains to his brother Mihovil how difficult it is for the travel writer to establish geographic verification of a locality because sometimes the observer's eye is not a trustworthy witness and seeks verification from the natives. However, in that case a number of objective obstacles arise which put to question the trustworthiness of even of that source because of different factors – spanning psychological, sociocultural, economic and political factors:

When one looks around and asks about particulars, one immediately attracts the suspicion of spys. So it is rude to ask the folk about the position of the place and it is great bother to find someone in the know about these matters. If someone suggests to go seek information from the Turks or the merchants little will be gained by this because there are those who know but because of the said suspicion they pretend ignorance and say that they know not nor do they care for such things thinking that it suffices that they are in the know and take pleasure in keeping silent. Timid merchants, fearing for their gold, are satisfied that they know something for their own sake and fear to inform others. It is only the common folk that you can ask but their answers are so convoluted, untransparent and absurd that they can hardly reply to ten questions concerning one thing and very hardly in a forthright manner.¹⁹

Due to communication disturbances which arise while perceiving space, the reader will imagine a traveller who observes *the unknown* and *the other* – without immediate contact with space – through a kind of glass wall/tunnel. Therefore when we read that Vrančić resorts to reading the terrain from cartography, especially from new editions of Ptolemy's map, this is an understandable decision. The transcription of cartographic signs of the lost space of Antiquity onto the space under observation or the recognition of real historical remains in the country of «cruel people» shows itself to be a humanist's encounter with the meanings of a

¹⁸ Fragment from a dialogue with his brother Mihovil (Matković, „Putovanje Antuna Vrančića“, 13).

¹⁹ Quoted according to: Matković, „Putovanje Antuna Vrančića“, 13.

lost language preserved in schematic drawings bereft of their original content. Discourse is inevitably destined to become its own false apparition in the eyes of the traveller who constantly exchanges the status of the reader for that of the observer. In unreliable cartography, because of the broken ties between the signifier and the signified, truth and falsehood are enmeshed. Both travel writers are in the unfortunate situation of readers who are lost.²⁰ To journey according to a map made by one of the classics, one of the geographical forefather, seems like a historicization of space with the help of a periscope lowered into the concave cartographic mirror. Nevertheless, despite this unenviable cartographic support, Vrančić manages to gather some precious geographic factual data: for example, he is the first travel writer who mentions the Vitoš mountain range (Matković, 32), and sometimes he succeeds in correcting old cartographers.²¹

We do not know whether Vrančić was acquainted with any of Mercator maps from 1554²² but it is evident that, if the landscape that the travellers encounters did not correspond to any maps which were published with numerous corrections in the XVIth century, it was simply too bad for the landscape. For example, he wonders why the natives call the river Marica Marica when he is convinced, on the basis of Ptolemy's map, that this another name for Struma. In large measure this is also true for Pigafetta although he names the concrete river Marica as it should be named. In the travel book he chiefly verifies the data from Ptolemy's map on the terrain itself but he corrected some orographic and geographic mistakes precisely because he probably published the travel book as late as 1585. after Mercator's maps of the Balkans and Greece had been published and after his consultations with Richard Haklyt, the renowned Oxford geographer.

2.3.

The representative impressions of the travel writers (particularly Vrančić's) concerning the areas lost in war derive from the contemporary theological explanations of social reality. Concerning the impressions describing the condition of Christians in the Islamic land one can

²⁰ The authors whom Vrančić critically engaged and whose achievements he attempted to confirm are most frequently: Strabon, Pliny, Aeneus Sylvia, Sabelliko, Volaterran (Matković, "Putovanje Antuna Vrančića", 10).

²¹ He corrects Ptolemy when he writes that the nameless stream (Lipa on old maps) at the foothills of the Ihtimansko Srednogorie (Haema) does not flow into the Danube but into the Iskra river (Matković, "Putovanje Antuna Vrančića", 37).

²² The famous Mercator atlas, published in 1578, made partial corrections to Ptolemy's map, while maps of the Balkans and of Greece were added as late as 1588. In addition to Ptolemy, Vrančić relied on another, unknown source, which is evident from the description of Maričine's esturay, the river Tundže (*Toncia*) for which he says that it is Nesus, although in Ptolemy it is labelled *Tonzos*. (Matković, "Putovanje Antuna Vrančića", 41).

recognize the long existing view of Christian life as an example of a this-worldly purgatory – God's punishment for sins committed by Christians.

As is to be expected, the language of the great Catholic prelate recognizes the finger of God in extraordinary phenomena which, according to the accounts of the local population, occurred when the Turks invaded Bulgaria. A legend about monasteries in Bulgaria recounted that one was swallowed up by the earth together with the monks when the Turks conquered the city. Another monastery was designated by the conquerors to be destroyed but a short time after all of the seventeen destroyers died. In addition to the Christian symbolism of sin and punishment, the author makes allusions to the punishment of the non-Christians who violated the holy place. Said otherwise, what these texts voice is a hope in redemption.

Vrančić's representation of the Christian area of Moeria Superior, gleaned from the account given by the Syrmia boatman, a Serb by birth, gestures to the stereotype of God's stigma known as the «wasteland». Catastrophe is rendered by narrating the barbaric destruction of one-time civilization and of cultivated nature (fallow land, navigable rivers blocked with detritus, horrifying wilderness, overgrown fields and vineyards, rare livestock, ruins of human dwellings and settlements where «the number of serfs that under our rule was in one village can now be hardly collected in thirty villages »²³). Destroyed space is rendered through the Biblical symbolism of the broken horn of plenty: namely, the story of the 7000 spilled barrels of wine which «flew like a stream high up to the knees through the area of the square»²⁴. The number of demolished stone houses in comparison with the existing straw-covered houses is emphasized in an almost formulaic fashion that plays with the opposition between the cultural meanings of the signifiers referring to stone and straw architecture (150 against 15). This information cautions the reader regarding the changed cultural concepts of space and not only about the depicted poverty. It bears witness to a lost level of civilization which was deserving of the humanist's respect: it does not fail to register the disappearance of a cultural manifestation such as literary games (*litterariis ludis*), that were once held in Hungarian Panonia.²⁵

A similar register of descriptions of wartime destruction is to be found in the artificial literature of old Croatian writers (for example, Marulić, Zoranić, Šižgorić) or in letters that were sent to the Pope and to Christian rulers with pleas for aid in battling the Ottomans.

²³ Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“, in: Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, 37.

²⁴ Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“, in: Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, 37.

²⁵ This is recorded in Vrančić's diary from 1567, see Matković, „Putovanje Antuna Vrančića“, 17.

The representation of Turkish prisoners also gestures to the literary convention of the time. Nearby Lomnica (Lomniza) they meet a slave-driving caravan on horses and mules in which: «young men and those of lordly origin hid behind masks so that their faces were not parched by the heat of the sun and the harmful dust but also not to be recognized “.²⁶ The expression, saturated with empathy and with the call to act as Christians ought to do, is a mode of widespread public speech of the early Modern Age: the construction “they walked one after another in a row letting out sorrowful cries, weeping ”²⁷ is a formulation which we find in similar form in other works of literature (Lucić's *Robinja/Slave/*). Similar motifs were frequently used by other travel writers (for example in Busbecq's and Zen's travel writing)²⁸. Kuripešić had earlier written about the miserable conditions of Christians, the tithe in children and in slaves²⁹ so that it is not unusual that such motifs are frequent in Croatian literature.

A meeting with another slave driver – a more refined Turk who led chained people – gives the travel writer the opportunity to explain the practice of *devşirme*. From the slaves he learns that the Turks collect them in the villages and that earlier they did this every fifth year while now it is every second-third year. The emissaries hoodwink the parents by bargaining over the price of bought goods but when they receive the money they still take their children. People hide their children in the woods when they hear that the emissaries are coming. Vrančić underlines how appalled he is that people are treated like beasts for sale without paying any heed to human dignity: «I was appalled by this godless tithe and shame ”³⁰.

If we compare the relation of the two travel writers towards the darker aspects of Ottoman rule over Christians, it is evident that Vrančić's remarks on the sufferings are more numerous. In addition, his emotionally-engaged utterance has a greater suggestive power because it appears within a dominantly, proportionately reduced, informative style of historiographic and socio-cultural discourse. If we add to this the significance of the utterance, deriving from the travel's writer's position as a Catholic prelate, the suggestivity is intensified.

2.3.1. Vrančić's and Pigafetta's views on the religious life of Christians reveals the power relations amongst religions on Ottoman territory. The older Serb in Bulgaria complained to Vrančić that young people were more and more converting to Islam. However, he does not say whether they are doing this voluntarily – namely, the Turks do not prohibit their religion –

²⁶ Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“ in: Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, 128.

²⁷ Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“ in: Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, 128.

²⁸ Matković, „Putovanje Antuna Vrančića“, 25.

²⁹ Matković, „Putovanje Antuna Vrančića“, 25.

³⁰ Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“ u: Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, 129.

or under some kind of force. He emphasized that Serbs serve the Turks because this is not prohibited by their faith (noted also by Pigafetta) and because of a lack of Christian priests, so that the people know their faith only thanks to feasts and fasts. (Vrančić, “Putovanje iz Budima”, 141).

Pigafetta writes about the status of Christians in Belgrade. He emphasizes that he had nowhere seen such discrimination particularly as it is practiced towards the Dubrovnik Catholic colony whose church the Turks are searching to find but without success because it is hidden beneath the ground. Because of the threat of the death penalty prayer meetings are organized in secret. He finds it interesting that, on the other hand, the mode of governance over the Christian population is gentler in the newly conquered areas nearer to Hungary: the Slavonian and Sirmia Christian population of the “Augsburg confession” express satisfaction³¹ in being able to receive free schooling in the Christian West and to live peacefully after the fall of Siget. Before that both armies played havoc with their lives. It seems significant to him that only in Hungarian Turkey was he able to hear church bells.

Why this was the case can perhaps be illuminated by an observation made by Bartul Kašić, a century later, concerning religion in the same area. Contrary to Pigafetta, he identifies misery as the social status of the Christians in Panonia, similar to the misery Vrančić and Pigafetta recorded in Bulgaria in the 16th century. It seems that the Venetian recorded the condition of the Christian spirit and the Christians's relation to authority within an area potentially important for military purposes. Obviously, for both sides the attitude of the border population was strategically important.

It is noticeable that Pigafetta interprets what he sees in a more neutral tone than Vrančić, stays clear of pathetic outflows in presenting what he sees and avoids hiperbolization such as we find, for example, in Bartul Đurđević's travel writing. However, when he writes about the Italian colony in Istanbul he does so with more emotions. He converses with people who have converted to Islam (including Italians) who, as he writes, have not forgotten their Christianity and who can hardly wait for a rebellion to break out against the Turks. It is understandable that the engagement of the commentator intensifies when he is talking about his own countryfolk.

Pigafetta's military analyses are explicit. He estimates that the Turks are in a far worse military condition than Christian Europe is ready to admit and that, in addition to the faith in God's providence, it would be worthwhile to endeavour to return European Turkey under the

³¹ The inhabitants proudly emphasize freedom of religion, their comfortable lives (foremost their efforts to gain an education): schooling in Vienna, a high level of literacy.

jurisdiction of Christian rulers. The recordings of witness accounts and observations concerning the behavior of the Turkish army during their withdrawal after the battle in Siget support these claims. He ridicules the disarray in the Christian army and notes that the havoc created during the withdrawal from Panonia in the direction of Vienna was greater than what they saw of Turkish atrocities from Siget to Istanbul. Furthermore, he acclaims the examples of punishment for theft in the ranks of the Turkish army on its passage through Slavonia.

Alongside his interest in the structure of the army, Pigafetta shows an impressive interest in geopolitics while he, for example, recounts the reasons for sending Maximilian's envoys to the emperor and spells out the causes of the Hungarian-Turkish war that preceded these. He devotes an exceptional large part of his work to discussing the origins of the Turkish people and the enabling conditions of their military power, to descriptions of military orders, especially the janissary, pashas and viziers. As he himself states, he drew upon Vrančić's enormous knowledge – in a number of places he eulogizes his master's learning – while his other sources, noticeable in his accounts of the army and its manpower, can be discerned by comparing them with the historians Giovi and Guicciardi.

The awareness of the historical division of the European part of the Ottoman Empire bears witness to the fact that former state boundaries have a long afterlife in memory. Pigafetta shows this in the way he maps the historical border points. For example, he sees the border between Bulgaria and Raša as being between Suha Klisura and Niš while he locates the border between Greeks and Bulgarians nearby present day Semizče (*Zemische*, Bulgarian. Klokotnica). Other travel writers proceed in the same manner – Kuripešić and Betzek move the border to Mustafa bridge, while Dernšvam moves it to Hadrianopolis.³² In truth, the border is construed according to the rest-places on the road that caravans passed through or according to the language of the travellers – native folk. Surely, the historical memory of space is interwoven into the suggestive imaginings of the travel writer about how the space could be ordered.

His arrival into Bulgaria gives him the occasion to tell the story about the origins of the Slavs whom he calls Bulgarians; he says that they speak the Croatian language and that they encompass different peoples (Serbs, Rasijani, Bosniaks, Croats, Slovenes and «others speaking the same language»).

³² Pigafetta, *Itinerario*, in: Matković, „Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette“, 118.

³³ It seems that Pigafetta owes his knowledge of Slav people to Vrančić: it was believed that their place of origin was nearby the river Volga and that in the 7th century they forced Constantine V to hand over to them Mysia and Panonia where they settled. They settled and divided the land that «today is named by those peoples» (Ibid., 125)

2.3.2. Pigafetta's representation of the Ottoman capital city's world of wealth reveals to the reader, albeit in an indirect manner, that he does not present faith as a system of values that stands atop other systems nor is it the basic measure of value within the social field but is merely only one of the elements of identity. For example, he describes Turkish costumes and customs as seen through the enchanted eyes of a person from Western Europe who is impressed by these. In his descriptions of the clothing of rich people he emphasizes the luxuriance and expensiveness of the cut and the material (silk, brocade, gold, ivory, leather, camel leather, gilt silk carpets) and not its functionality. He also describes the social and cultural actualities whose pomp fascinates him such as the solemn procession of the Persian emissaries. In describing the palace (saraj) and the ceremony of the emissaries paying obeisance to the sultan he emphasizes his own astonishment and fascination at its exotic nature. However, he also ruminates about the reciprocal impressions of those attending the ceremony because he discerns in the Turkish eyes a reflection of his own cultural image.

The fascination with the sumptuous architecture or with the luxuriant style of life contains Pigafetta's suggestive information about the travel book itself. One feels that with his abundance of details he is attempting to supersede previous writers and to supplement the collection of extant imaginings of the East in Europe. Thusly he seeks to satisfy as best he can the curiosity of his readers. He shows that the exotic is more deserving of fascination if it evinces human creativity based on material wealth. In other words, Pigafetta's view of the elite, however other they appear to him, in large measure is founded on the respect he has towards wealth.

On the other hand, although we might have expected it, the travel writer's relation to the poor Christians does not presuppose an identification, founded on religious affiliation, with those who are similar to him. The dress of Bulgarian women from Suha Klisura as well as their dancing and singing is to him both strange and repulsive although he writes that it reveals a great tradition because he saw that sort of dress on a painting of empress Milica, the wife of the Serbian despot Lazar. Jakob Betzek and Pierre Lescalopier provide similar descriptions of Pirot costumes as well as of singing and dancing in pairs in Suha Klisura. There are strange correspondences in these travel books – in both it is Sunday and the girls are all attired in the same way – that give rise to the suspicion that the scenes have been simply recycled. However, the reactions and the comments made by the authors differ. Pigafetta thinks that the

according to tribes. It is interesting, for example, that he differentiates Raška and Serbia as Vrančić does who, in addition, explains the use of two names for the antique province of Upper Mysia.

girls are dancing in order to receive money from the onlookers while the truth is that he is witnessing a custom according to which the singers (“lazarice”) are rewarded by the master for whom they sing: with eggs, wool or flour.³⁴ He refers to the humble embroidery of the Christian women as almost ugly despite the fact that he admires the beauty of the women. The exoticism that this European man hankers for presupposes the wealth which arrived in Europe on merchant ships.³⁵

Respect of wealth dominates over the comeliness of the exoticism of the poor – which is represented by the clothing of the Slav folk or their dancing. The clothing merely reminds him of the richness of European Christian Turkey.

One has the impression that the reach of Pigafetta's expressed sympathy for the Christians is limited and conditioned by his high social status. He is the observer who represents them from the perspective of cultural and material superiority. Disagreements pertaining to the occasion and the nature of the girls dancing confirm the extent to which discourses are impacted by power relations in which they arise. Pigafetta sees what he wants and is able to see as an observer who has no intention of abandoning the discursive frame with which he legitimates himself.

While Pigafetta thinks the manner of dress, the singing and the dancing are savage in relation to the parades that demonstrate wealth, Vrančić reflects upon the conceptual value of wealth and embroidery and not their material value. He finds the same satisfaction with jewelry both amongst women of Western Europe and amongst the village women he is watching:

There were so many of them who appeared in front of us and showed astonishment – their astonishment at our presence, ours at their being there and at their jewelry. One asked whether our women put on such fine jewelry. They are fortunate in being ignorant of our luxury, and measure their own by things without any value! They are equally satisfied with their poverty as our women are with their wealth!³⁶

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³⁴ One can assume that what was described was a ritual dance, the so-called “lazarica”, «kolednica» devoted to St. Lazarus. (Petrović, 15). Those participating perform their ritual song and dance in early spring but since our travel writers journeyed in late summer this also indicates that probably the scenes were copied from older travel books.

³⁵ At the end he prints the Istanbul market price list of different wares that Europeans find appealing as well as of spices from November 1567. This is a precious novelty for the travel books of his time.

³⁶ Vrančić, „Putovanje iz Budima u Drinopolje“ in: Fortis, *Travels into Dalmatia*, 134.

In Vrančić's and Pigafetta's travel books I compared the way they represented the space that stretches from Budim to Belgrade alongside the Istanbul road Smederevo – Čuprija – Drinopolje – Istanbul and the Istanbul area, focusing upon the similarities and differences in the way they represented what they saw: the territory, people, the geopolitical, social and cultural aspects of the people's lives or the knowledge of their history.

To a certain extent the travel writers share the world view framework from which they observe that space, particularly because they share the dominant Catholic relationship to Islam and both belong to the European humanistic elite. Both travel writers share the Western Christian understanding of the tribulations of war as God's punishment for sin, however, both stress their conviction about the military-political power of the Ottoman Empire which they see as dominant precisely because of numerous political weaknesses of the European kingdoms. The scientific framework of apodemic travel books from the XVIth century enabled the travel writers to create a genre hybrid consisting of the *impersonal travel book*, *the travel book while on duty* and the *informative travel book*. All of these are present in both authors's work although not in equal measure.

The emphasis placed on questions of historically determined space, of the status of religion, politics and social values, more characteristic for Pigafetta than for Vrančić, can have as its goal the instigation to reconquer a particular space. Neutral or emotionally-charged statements about poverty, the general spiritual dereliction of Catholics and Christians alike, follow one another in Vrančić which can be connected with his desire to, perhaps, arouse sympathy or rebellion amongst those to whom the book is addressed. Suggestivity is achieved through descriptions of certain concrete situations.

Vrančić's humanistic orientation and his education fundamentally condition his approach to both geography and history. As a humanist he frequently referred to Old Greek and Roman geographers and their place names, place names which had disappeared amongst the populace. Although the XVIth century evinced a significant methodological turn in geographical research, his reliance on the values of Antiquity is in large measure evident in his toponymy. He used contemporary names only when he did not know older appellations, accompanying them with the comment «as the local population calls it». However, it is evident that he did not translate the new, folk name into Latin nor does he give it a Latin form despite the custom of the time to use Antique toponymy.³⁷

³⁷ Matković, "Putovanje Antuna Vrančića", 15.

The fictional elements contained in the polyhistor's text – as it is possible, going by its content, to read the exploratory travel book of the early Modern Age – function to emphasize the features of the travel book as an allegedly historical eye-witness account. Literary elements in travel books (folklore, legends, collocutor's accounts and stories) are suggestively addressed to the reader as though they were objective historical reality. The opposite procedure is also evident: Vrančić treats the historical (the orographic and geographical accounts of his collocutors) with suspicion as elements of fiction. The travel writer does not make proper use of his own insights, that is, he challenges positivism even at its best because he is imprisoned by the net of historical cartography precedents. His uncertainty is aggravated by the restrictions imposed on his horizon of knowing in a situation dominated by politically conditioned constraints and faulty communication with his host. This disables his insight on space and blocks the exploration of its possible meanings.

Pigafetta's linguistically unpretentious travel book catered to a numerous reading public while his geopolitical discourse, evident in his analysis of space for military purposes and his description of various forms of wealth, suggestively incites Europe to consider the material advantages that would accrue if it retook the conquered areas. His questioning of power relations is visible in the ideological stratum of his work. That is the fundamental *modus operandi* of his representation of space – a world-space of luxury and exotic precious things. The reader detects in this text the voice of an expert of military affairs. Perhaps, his descriptions of roads and fortresses, of the social and military situation in Turkey, weakened as it was by Suleiman's death, was primarily intended for army use. The basic paradigm of perceiving space consisted of the constellation of Renaissance theories³⁸, of concepts for mapping space and of the ways and permitted possibilities of observing reality. The representation of space we find in both travel writers, particularly in Pigafetta, indicates that Christian Europe had embarked on a period of admiration for the Ottomans regardless of the numerous lamentations over the sombre condition of the conquered European lands in the XVIth century. Although Vrančić did not prepare his notes for publication, both left to their readers a story of an exotic space, a mixture of faction and fiction.

Summary

³⁸The humanistic apodemic idea is also illustrated by the concept *ordo rerum* – an important element in Petrus Ramus's (Pierre de la Ramee) teachings – that presupposes the methodic principles of systematizing systematically collected insights on the basis of observation. It is believed that Theodor Zwinger's apodemic work (*Theatrum vitae humanae*, 1565. i *Methodus apodemica*, 1577) was based on this concept. (Miličić, 54-55).

The article discusses the perception of the space of the European part of the Ottoman Empire as recorded in travel books by two authors from the second part of the XVIth century: the humanist Antun Vrančić, the Hungarian primate, from Šibenik and Marco Antonio Pigafetta from Venice, a less known member of the famous family of travel writers. The article analyses Vrančić's two uncompleted travel books dating from his first mission to Turkey (1553-1557) and two preserved diaries and two letters addressed to Maximilian II from the same route during his second mission to Istanbul in 1567. Vrančić was accompanied on this journey by M. A. Pigafetta who recorded his own observations. The article gives a reading of his travel book entitled *Itinerario di Marc' Antonio Pigafetta gentil' huomo vicentino*, which was published in London in 1585. This was the well-trodden route from Hungary by river (Danube) and over the land: the distance Budim – Belgrade and thence via the Istanbul road (Smederevo – Čuprija – Drinopolje – Istanbul). Travel books describing an identical space written by two authors who travel together prompted the author to explore the perception of an identical space and time of an unknown culture, that is, to investigate the representation of discursive models of the culture to which the writers belong. On the one hand, their perception of reality was shown to depend on the system of ideas presented by the travel writers: on Renaissance theories of *ars apodemica*, on concepts of mapping geographical space, methods of observing the real world; on the other hand, it depended on the writers's perception of the power relations between Christianity and Islam as two separate worlds. The representation of space we find in both travel writers, particularly in Pigafetta, indicates that Christian Europe had embarked on a period of admiration for the Ottomans regardless of the numerous lamentations over the sombre condition of the conquered European lands in the XVIth century. Both writers offered to their European readers a story about an exotic space that they thought ought to be returned to the jurisdiction of European rulers.

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