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Going Off to the War in Hungary: French Nobles and Crusading Culture in the Sixteenth Century

Crusading culture played a significant role in the conceptions and practices of religious warfare in the Early Modern Period, as French authors and militant nobles redeployed Hungary as a crucial theater of crusading war. Examining crusading warfare in Hungary reveals new facets of warrior nobles' military activities in early modern France and abroad, building on recent studies of French noble culture. The article concludes that French readers developed notions of crusading warfare in part through reports of the war in Hungary, contributing to a burgeoning literature on the production, diffusion, and reception of early modern news and information across Europe.

Keywords: crusading warfare, Early Modern Hungary, French nobles, noble culture.

Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, lamented the disastrous defeat of the Hungarian army at the battle of Mohács (1526) in a treatise written during the French Wars of Religion (1562–1629), as Catholics and Calvinists engaged in intense sectarian fighting within France.¹ The duc de Nevers focused especially on the tragic death of Louis II Jagiellon, King of Hungary: “Louis was killed there with twenty thousand Christians, and so Hungary—which had served as a bulwark for Christianity against the Muslims for more than 150 years—was reduced nearly completely to obedience to the Turk.”² Despite the ongoing religious conflict and civil war within France during the second half of the sixteenth century, nobles such as the duc de Nevers dreamed of Hungary. Many French nobles readily engaged in crusading warfare against the Ottomans,

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2 Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, “Traité des causes et des raisons de la prise des armes faite en janvier 1589. Et des moyens pour appaiser nos présentes Afflictions,” in *Les Mémoires de Monsieur le duc de Nevers, prince de Mantouë, pair de France gouverneur et lieutenant general pour les rois Charles IX. Henry III. et Henry IV. en diverses provinces de ce royaume. Enrichis de plusieurs pièces de temps* (Paris: Thomas Jolly, 1665), 2, 5.

fighting in various campaigns in Hungary and in Southeastern Europe during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The history of crusading after the Crusades has become an important subject of research, in large part due to Alphonse Dupront's extraordinary influence on the field of religious studies and to the curious history of three unpublished theses. Dupront defended his doctoral thesis, "Le mythe de croisade. Étude de sociologie religieuse," in 1956, at a time when religious history was relatively marginalized in a French academic landscape that was dominated by Marxist and structuralist approaches to the humanities. The thesis remained unpublished, while its author went on to direct research at the Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and to found its Centre d'Anthropologie Religieuse Européenne in 1972. Dupront eventually published another work, *Du Sacré: croisades et pèlerinages* (1987), which drew fresh attention to his research.³ The thesis itself was finally published four decades after its defense, and in a heavily revised form, as *Le mythe de croisade* (1997).⁴ In this magisterial four-volume work, Dupront constructs an extremely unconventional history of the idea of crusading, examining the "creation of a collective spirit of crusade, and thus, in the corporeal and natural sense of the word, a myth. This myth where, as in life, the realities, and dreams, the unsatiated needs get mixed up together and confused."⁵ For Dupront, the early modern period represented a significant period in the transformation of the "crusading myth" that is best understood through what he calls an "existential" approach to "convergences" in the history of ideas.⁶

Dupront's elaboration of an anthropology of religion has become very influential, and his work on the "crusading myth" has spurred new research and debates on crusading warfare in early modern Europe and the Mediterranean.⁷ The remarkable doctoral theses of Péter Sahin-Tóth and Guy Le Thiec—which were both written and defended in the 1990s, but unfortunately remain unpublished—respond directly to Alphonse Dupront's work. Le Thiec's massive

3 Alphonse Dupront, *Du sacré: croisades et pèlerinages, images et langages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

4 Alphonse Dupront, *Le mythe de croisade* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1997).

5 *Ibid.*, 16.

6 *Ibid.*, 17–18.

7 Martin Wrede, "Monarchie héroïque? Héritage chevaleresque et vocation militaire de la fonction royale en Europe, XVIe–XIXe siècles," *Histoire, économie et société* 34 (2015): 86–103; Claude Michaud, *Entre croisades et révolutions* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010); Géraud Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade. Mythes et réalités de la lutte contre les Turcs aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004); Denis Crouzet, "L'étrange génie du mythe de croisade," *Le Débat* 99 (1998): 85–93.

four-volume thesis, entitled “‘Et il n’y aura qu’un seul troupeau...’ L’imaginaire de la confrontation entre Turcs et Chrétiens dans l’art figuratif en France et en Italie de 1453 aux années 1620,” meticulously examines early modern visual and textual sources depicting the Ottomans.⁸ Le Thiec presents vital evidence of French and European images of the Turks, proposing a complicated and ambivalent history of the construction of the “Turkish peril” and of crusading warfare. In “La France et les français face à la ‘Longue Guerre’ de Hongrie (1591–1606),” Péter Sahin-Tóth offers a crucial case study of French noble volunteers who traveled to Hungary to fight against the Ottomans.⁹ Sahin-Tóth, working in the mid-1990s, consulted Dupront’s then still-unpublished dissertation at the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne and then offered a substantial critique of its interpretive framework in his own thesis, which Sahin-Tóth defended in the same year that Dupront’s *Le mythe de croisade* was finally published in 1997. Sadly, Sahin-Tóth was unable to publish his thesis as a book prior to his tragic death in 2004.¹⁰

My analysis of French crusading culture draws on the work of Dupront, Le Thiec, and Sahin-Tóth, and also attempts to set them into dialogue with each other. Robert Sauzet, who co-directed Sahin-Tóth’s dissertation, has since published his own historicized exploration of seventeenth-century crusading warfare by placing it into the context of the growing Catholic Reformation in France in *Au Grand Siècle des âmes* (2007). Sauzet refers to the “*nostalgies de croisade*,” or crusading nostalgia, that became popular in early modern French political culture.¹¹ This article approaches the problem of crusading warfare from another angle, questioning whether French crusading culture really developed exclusively within a mythic or nostalgic mode. Le Thiec and Sahin-Tóth’s studies signal the need for further analysis of French nobles’ military service in Hungary and of contemporary writings about crusading experiences.

Contemporary correspondence, memoirs, and other writings conserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Archives Nationales, and various Archives départementales in France furnish evidence of French nobles’ experiences

8 Guy Le Thiec, “‘Et il n’y aura qu’un seul troupeau...’ L’imaginaire de la confrontation entre Turcs et Chrétiens dans l’art figuratif en France et en Italie de 1453 aux années 1620,” thèse de doctorat sous la direction d’Arlette Jouanna, 4 vols. (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier III, 1994), 443–47.

9 Péter Sahin-Tóth, “La France et les Français face à la ‘longue guerre’ de Hongrie (1591–1606),” thèse de doctorat sous la direction de Éva H. Balázs et Robert Sauzet (Tours: Université de Tours, 1997).

10 Robert Sauzet, “In Memorium: Péter Sahin-Tóth (1965–2004),” *Journal de la Renaissance* 3 (2005): 9–12.

11 Robert Sauzet, *Au Grand Siècle des âmes. Guerre sainte et paix chrétienne en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2007), 13–27, 45–80.

of crusading warfare in Hungary and Southeastern Europe. These sources demonstrate that French nobles were significant historical actors in shaping crusading culture and crafting images of their Ottoman enemies. French- and Italian-language sources from the Archivio di Stato di Firenze contain additional accounts of crusading warfare in Hungary during the Long War of 1593–1606. I analyze French crusading culture by juxtaposing manuscript sources from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries with contemporary prints and pamphlets that provided French readers with news of distant crusading warfare against the Ottomans.

My interpretation of crusading warfare in Hungary also draws on more recent research in several distinct historical fields whose historiographies often remain isolated from one another. Recent research on early modern Hungary and Transylvania provides an expanded understanding of the broader political and military contexts for crusading warfare in Southeastern Europe.¹² New studies of the Habsburg composite state and the Holy Roman Empire permit a deeper understanding of the crusading projects in Hungary.¹³ A growing historiography on the political and military organization of the early modern Ottoman Empire supplies alternative perspectives on warfare in Hungary.¹⁴ French portrayals of Hungary as a crusading space can now be considered in comparison with evidence of Ottoman conceptions of empire and territoriality.¹⁵ Finally, a rich and diverse

12 Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Thomas J. and Helen D. DeKornfeld (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 2009); László Veszprémy and Béla K. Király, eds., *A Millennium of Hungarian Military History*, trans. Eleonóra Arató (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 2002).

13 Most recently, see: Robert John Weston Evans and Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495–1806: A European Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Paula S. Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526–1850* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008).

14 See for example: Gábor Ágoston, “Firearms and Military Adaptation: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution, 1450–1800,” *Journal of World History* 25, no. 3 (2014): 85–124; Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, eds., *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

15 Marie Madeleine de Cevis, “Noblesse, Aristocratie et défense de la foi en Hongrie du début du XVI^e siècle au milieu du XVI^e siècle,” in *Le Salut par les armes. Noblesse et défense de l’orthodoxie, XIII^e–XVII^e siècle*, ed. Ariane Boltanski and Franck Mercier (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), 209–21; Palmira Brummett, “Imagining the Early Modern Ottoman Space, from World History to Piri Reis,” in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15–58.

historiography on conflict and coexistence in the early modern Mediterranean allows a more nuanced interpretation of Christian–Muslim warfare.¹⁶

I argue that crusading culture played a significant role in the conceptions and practices of religious warfare in the early modern period, as French authors and militant nobles redeployed Hungary as a crucial theater of crusading war. Examining crusading warfare in Hungary reveals new facets of warrior nobles' military activities in early modern France and abroad, building on recent studies of French noble culture.¹⁷ Considering French nobles' experiences of crusading war permits a reassessment of the position of crusading narratives and images within broader French political culture.¹⁸ The article concludes that French readers developed notions of crusading warfare in part through reports of the war in Hungary, contributing to a burgeoning literature on the production, diffusion, and reception of early modern news and information across Europe.¹⁹

French Crusading Imagination

Chivalric romances and *chansons de geste* had long shaped the ideals of French nobles, but changing historical circumstances and printed literary works expanded greatly the models for the perfect *chevalier* beginning in the fifteenth century.²⁰ The rapid expansion of the Ottoman Empire in southeastern Europe

16 From the growing literature, see: E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

17 Brian Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Pascal Brioiist, Hervé Drévilion, and Pierre Serna, *Croisser le fer. Violence et culture de l'épée dans la France moderne (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2002); Nicholas Le Roux, *La faveur du roi. Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547 – vers 1589)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2000).

18 Hélène Duccini, *Faire voir, faire croire. L'opinion publique sous Louis XIII* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2003), Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity During the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Jeffrey K. Sawyer, *Printed Poison: Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

19 Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); Brendan Dooley, ed., *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010); Brendan Maurice Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron, eds., *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001).

20 Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

and Sultan Mehmet II's dramatic conquest of Constantinople in 1453 provided a new focus for French crusading culture. Some illuminations presented the siege through depictions of assaults on the vaunted walls of Constantinople, which had been considered among the most impressive fortifications in the fifteenth-century world. These scenes emphasized swords, polearms, crossbows, bows-and-arrows, and stones as the principal weapons employed in the fighting. Such scenes presented a mirror image of well-established tropes representing Christian crusader victories in the Holy Land—here depicting the Ottomans ascending ladders and overwhelming Christian defenders.²¹ One of the most iconic illuminated manuscripts instead presented a new form of siege warfare by focusing the Ottoman camps, galleys, siege lines, and bombards—offering French audiences an alternative vision of a novel form of warfare and a new enemy.²² Constantinople now represented a new site for crusading campaigns in the French and broader European imaginaries of holy war.

Visual representations and textual narratives of the siege of Constantinople proliferated in Europe in the decades after Mehmet's conquest, even if the transition to Ottoman rule was probably less dramatic than these lamentations would lead readers to believe.²³ These works established what I have referred to as a “religious drama of the siege,” which influenced European narratives of the conflicts between Christians and Muslims throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁴ Narrative and descriptive elements that appeared in the accounts of the epic siege of Constantinople became replicated in accounts of later attacks on cities such as Negroponte in 1470, which was “one of the first events in Renaissance history to be recorded in print more-or-less immediately

21 Maître du Froissart de Philippe de Commines, *Siège de Constantinople*, illumination for “Chronique du règne de Charles VII,” Bibliothèque Nationale de France [hereafter BNF], Manuscrits français [hereafter Mss. fr.] 2691, f. 264v.

22 Jean Le Tavernier, *Siège de Constantinople (1453)*, illumination in Bertrand de la Broquière, “Voyage d'Outremer,” copied by Jean Miélot, c. 1458, BNF, Mss. fr. 9087, f° 207v.

23 Barthélémy de Salignac, *Itinerarii Terre sancte inibique sacrorum locorum ac rerum clarissima descriptio omnibus Sacre Scripture tractatoribus utilissima, peramena auditoribus, per Bartholomeum a Saligniaco* (Lyon: Gilbert de Villiers, 1525); Ian R. Manners, “Constructing the Image of a City: The Representation of Constantinople in Christopher Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87, no. 3 (1997): 72–102.

24 Brian Sandberg, “‘To Have the Pleasure of This Siege’: Envisioning Siege Warfare during the European Wars of Religion,” in *Beholding Violence in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Erin Felicia Labbie and Allie Terry-Fritch (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 143–62, here 149.

after the fact,” according to Margaret Meserve.²⁵ News pamphlets and siege narratives played an important role in early print media. Andrew Pettegree argues that “these publications, though generally originating in Italy, achieved a remarkable geographic range. The crusading writings of Cardinal Bessarion were among the first books published in France.”²⁶ A growing urban audience for printed news across Europe read accounts of the Ottoman attacks on Otranto and Rhodes in 1480. When the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem defended Rhodes against a besieging Ottomans army in 1522, Italian printers produced numerous pamphlets and maps relating the siege, which were then diffused in France.²⁷ The battles and sieges fought between Christian and Ottoman forces were increasingly reported in short pamphlets, printed in *octavo* format, as printing presses experimented with inexpensive editions intended for broad readerships and gradually developed news publishing.²⁸

In the aftermath of the Ottoman conquests of Constantinople and Rhodes, the Kingdom of Hungary became one of the principal lines of Christian defense against the Ottoman advance. Artists signified Hungary’s new position as a bulwark against the Ottomans through portrayals of Hungarians fighting against Turkish soldiers.²⁹ Scenes of “Turkish cruelties” established lasting iconographic conventions depicting Ottomans soldiers as barbarous, monstrous infidels.³⁰ Narrative tropes quickly emerged in textual sources to describe the combats between Christians and the Ottomans in Hungary. French nobles developed associations between Christian brotherhood and Christian defense that referred not to the Holy Land, but to battlefields in Southeastern Europe.

25 Margaret Meserve, “News from Negroponte: Politics, Popular Opinion, and Information Exchange in the First Decade of the Italian Press,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (Summer 2006): 443. On the formation of the public memory of the Siege of Belgrade (1456) and the Battle of Krbva (1493) see two studies in the present issue.

26 Pettegree, *The Invention of News*, 62.

27 *Il Lacrimoso Lamento che fa il gran maestro di Rodi* (1523); *La presa de Rhodi novamente stampata* (1523); Jacques de Bourbon, *La grande et merueilleuse et très cruelle Oppugnation de la noble cité de Rhodes, prinse naguères par Sultan Seliman, à présent grand Turcq, ennemy de la très sainte foy catholique, rédigée par escript par... frère Jacques bastard de Bourbon* (Paris: Gilles de Gourmont, 1525); *Le voyage de la sainte cite de Hiernsalem avec la descriptiõ des lieux portz, villes, citez, et aultres passages fait lã mil.iiii.c.iiii.xx. estât le siege du grât turc a Rodes et regnnat en Frãce Loys unziemes de ce nõ imprime nouvellement a Paris* (Paris, 1530). For analyses of the diffusion of images and news accounts of the siege of Rhodes, see: Guy Le Thiec, “Et il n’y aura qu’un seul troupeau,” 443–47.

28 Pettegree, *The Invention of News*, 58–60.

29 Maître du Froissart de Philippe de Commines, *Bataille entre Hongrois et Turcs (1453)*, illumination in Jean Chartier, “Chronique du règne de Charles VII,” BNF, Mss. fr. 2691, f. 273.

30 Le Thiec, “Et il n’y aura qu’un seul troupeau”; Keith P. F. Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

New pieces of crusading literature updated legendary chivalric figures for sixteenth-century audiences. A French prose translation of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, which had originally been published in 1516, appeared in 1544.³¹ Herberay des Essarts adapted and translated *Amadis de Gaule*, a chivalric romance that had originally been published in Spanish in 1533, producing an eight-volume series printed from 1540 to 1548.³² *Amadis de Gaule* became such a major best-seller that other authors and translators extended the series throughout the second half the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century.³³ These chivalric romances promoted visions of bellicose deeds, but other genres also contributed to French attitudes toward crusading war.

French crusading literature and artistic works drew on broader European tropes of the “terrible Turk” and the “Turkish peril.”³⁴ French chronicles and histories established a long lineage of crusading warfare by setting the Ottomans into a continuous progression of Muslim “infidel” enemies. Guillaume Aubert's *L'histoire des guerres faictes par les chrestiens contre les turcs...* (1559) provided a prehistory of the struggle against the Turks—beginning with the birth of Muhammad, continuing with the rise of the Saracens, and culminating with the Crusades.³⁵ Chronicles and artworks celebrated the crusades of Louis IX, or Saint-Louis. One popular theme was the Byzantine Emperor's gift of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Louis and its installation in the Sainte-Chapelle on the île de la Cité in Paris.³⁶ A sixteenth-century treatise on the rise and fall of states referred to the impressive power of the Ottomans: “Among all the things that we admire today, there is nothing so marvelous as the fortune of the Ottomans, with the progress of their greatness.”³⁷

31 Roland Furieux. *Composé premierement en ryme Tuscanne par messire Loys Arioste, noble Ferraroy, et maintenant traduit en prose Françoisse: partie suyvant la phrase de l'Autheur, partie aussi le stile de ceste nostre langue* (1544).

32 Herberay des Essarts, *Le premier livre de Amadis de Gaule, qui traicte de maintes adventures d'Armes et d'Amours, qu'eurent plusieurs Chevaliers et Dames, tant du royaume de la grand Bretagne, que d'aultres pays* (1540–1548).

33 Mireille Huchon, “Traduction, translation, exaltation et transmutation dans les *Amadis*,” *Camena* 3, no. 11 (2007): 1–10; *Les Amadis en France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 2000).

34 Guy le Thiec, “Et il n'y aura qu'un seul troupeau.”

35 Guillaume Aubert, *L'histoire des guerres faictes par les chrestiens contre les turcs, sous la conduite de Godefroy de Buillon, Duc de Lorraine, pour le recouvrement de la terre sainte* (Paris: Vincent Sertenas, 1559).

36 Maître du Cardinal de Bourbon, *L'empereur de Constantinople donne à Saint Louis la couronne d'épines, qui est déposée a la Sainte-Chapelle avec un fragment de croix, le fer de lance et l'éponge de la Passion, illumination in “Vie et miracles de monseigneur Saint Louis,”* c. 1482, BNF, Mss. fr. 2829, f. 17.

37 “Parmy toutes les choses qu'on admire aujourdhuy, il n'y a rien, de si esmerueillable, que la fortune des Ottomans, avec le progresz de leur grandeur.” René de Lucinge, *De la Naissance, durée et cheute des Estats, où sont traitées plusieurs notables questions sur l'establisement des empires et monarchies* (Paris: Marcy Orry, 1588), ii.

French crusading culture may have been “orientalist” in certain ways, but was much more varied, complicated, and political than Edward Said’s famous theory of Orientalism allows. Said insists that “from the end of the seventh century until the battle of Lepanto in 1571, Islam in either its Arab, Ottoman, or North African and Spanish form dominated or effectively threatened European Christianity. That Islam outstripped and outshone Rome cannot have been absent from the mind of any European past or present.”³⁸ Guy Le Thiec effectively challenges Said’s interpretation by demonstrating the diversity and complexity of European images of the Turks. Although European authors and artists described Ottoman sultans as *terrible*, *feroces*, and *cruel*, they also presented this cruelty as linked to tyranny, suggesting that the Ottoman domination was both rational and ephemeral. Indeed, Le Thiec presents ample evidence that many Europeans envisioned a role in toppling Ottoman tyrannical rule: “the Turkish tyranny, which threatened to expand in Europe and to block the Catholic project of converting infidels, became a power to combat and convert.”³⁹ Prophecies, prognostications, and theatrical performances promoted crusading efforts against the Ottomans, demonizing the Turks and offering assurances that the end of “infidel” rule was near.⁴⁰

Crusading ideals were not simply confined to literary works, since French nobles were active producers and consumers of crusading culture. Many of the *grands*, or great nobles, responded to calls to fight the “infidel” by planning personal crusades or elaborate military ventures. French nobles were already accustomed to supporting religio-political causes by engaging their honor as *nobles volontaires*, or noble volunteers, and offering their military service. French nobles who served as volunteers were often simply referred to in sources as *la noblesse*, because they did not have stable military offices or *charges*.⁴¹ When French nobles traveled abroad to join crusading forces in Hungary, they often attached themselves to military commanders and their entourages or formed their own cavalry companies.⁴² Infantry and cavalry companies from France,

38 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1978), 74.

39 Le Thiec, “Et il n’y aura qu’un seul troupeau,” 241.

40 Daniel J. Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

41 Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits*, 7, 15–16.

42 David Potter, *Renaissance France at War: Armies, Culture and Society, c. 1480–1560* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008).

Lorraine, Flanders, and other Francophone regions periodically joined Imperial armies fighting against the Ottomans.⁴³

Many French nobles viewed crusading as a special obligation of the French king and his nobles. Members of the Valois royal family, and later the Bourbons, actively promoted crusading projects through military orders, artistic works, and printed publications. The Valois dynasty furthered crusading ideals through the activities of the Ordre de Saint-Michel, which had been created in 1469. Henri III created the Ordre du Saint-Esprit, or Order of the Holy Spirit, in 1578.⁴⁴ According to Nicolas Le Roux, Henri III aimed to forge a common “religious and moral ideal” for Catholic nobles, but the military order simultaneously promoted a recharged Catholic militancy that would prove difficult to control.⁴⁵ French kings also provided support for the crusading activities of Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, whose members became popularly known as the *chevaliers de Malte*, or Knights of Malta after their relocation from Rhodes following the 1522 siege.⁴⁶ The Knights of Malta promoted a crusading spirit in their own ranks, but also encouraged Christian princes to support their efforts and engage their own forces in combat against Muslims.⁴⁷

The expansion of the Ottoman empire, the growth of news reporting, and the spread of Protestantism all transformed the French notions of crusade significantly during the sixteenth century, as Hungary became fully incorporated into French crusading culture. French crusading activities became more narrowly associated with a specifically Catholic combat against the Ottomans, rather than a common defense by all Christians. As Reformation movements spread into France in the 1520s and 1530s, the growing threat of heresy brought comparisons

43 Péter Sahin-Tóth, “La France et les Français face à la ‘longue guerre’ de Hongrie (1591–1606),” 187–225.

44 For the statutes of the Ordre du Saint-Esprit, see: BNF, Mss. fr. 3386, 43–46; BNF, Mss. fr. 4805, 324–55. On the ceremonies of the Ordre du Saint-Esprit, see: “Rellation des ceremonies qui ont esté obseruees a l’ordre des cheualliers du S^t Esprit lors de l’institution qui en fut faicte par le roy Henri 3^e au couuent des Augusti[ns]. 1578,” BNF, Mss. fr. 4044, f. 27–35.

45 Nicolas Le Roux, *Le roi, la cour, l’état. De la Renaissance à l’absolutisme* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2013), 74–75.

46 On the Knights of Malta, see: Emanuel Buttigieg, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity The Hospitaller Knights of Malta, c. 1580–c. 1700* (London: Continuum, 2011).

47 “Proposition en forme de remonstrance faicte par le grand maistre, seigneurs, et cheualliers maltois, au roy treschrestien de France et de Nauarre...,” BNF Mss. fr. 4044, f^o 107–128. On the close relationship between Malta and France, see: Emanuel Buttigieg, “‘The Pope Wants to be the Ruin of this Religion’ — The Papacy, France, and the Order of St John in the Seventeenth Century,” *Symposia Melitensia* 5 (2008): 73–84.

between the “infidel” Turks with the Huguenot “heretics” within the kingdom. Such associations would flourish in crusading literature once religious warfare erupted in France in the mid-sixteenth century.⁴⁸

The remainder of this article will focus on discussions of Hungary in French crusading culture at three distinct moments: the battle of Mohács of 1526, the Hungarian campaign of 1566, and the Habsburg–Ottoman War of 1593–1606. An analysis of these Hungarian cases will reveal shifting sixteenth-century French perceptions of Hungary as a crusading battleground, allowing us to re-examine contemporary notions of crusading warfare.

The Battle of Mohács, 1526

Sultan Süleyman I led a major Ottoman field army to invade Hungary in 1526, overwhelming a Hungarian army at Mohács and occupying much of the kingdom. King Louis II of Hungary drowned as he attempted to flee from the battlefield, leading to the collapse of the Jagiellon rule in Hungary. Géza Pálffy argues that “the battle meant more than just the end of the territorial integrity of the realm of St. Stephen. It was a major change in the history of central Europe just as the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 had meant a major change for all of eastern Europe.”⁴⁹ Shocking news of the disastrous battle circulated throughout Europe through Italian and German pamphlets.⁵⁰ If French printers produced pamphlets narrating the battle, none seem to have survived—perhaps because the French news publishing was still in its infancy or because of the political crisis in France following the capture of King François I at the battle of Pavia in 1525.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the memory of Mohács gradually entered into French narratives of crusading warfare.

Later sources progressively constructed a detailed narrative of the battle of Mohács as illustrating essential facets of a crusading tale. Martin Fumée’s historical account of Mohács, written in 1595, referred to the “piteous history of the loss and ruin of the kingdom of Hungary, and the wars that have occurred

48 Racaut, *Hatred in Print*.

49 Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 36.

50 Leslie S. Domonkos, “The Battle of Mohács as a Cultural Watershed,” in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 203–24.

51 A French language pamphlet, entitled *Les faits du chien insatiable du sang chrétien*, was published in Geneva in 1526.

in our time between the Christians and the Turks.”⁵² Accounts of the battle provided tender descriptions of the slain king’s body.⁵³ Fumée’s presentation of the battle of Mohács focused on the cruelty of the Ottoman soldiers, describing graphically the humiliating treatment of the head of one of the Hungarian nobles killed in battle: “The next day, his head having been separated from his body, was carried all around the enemy camp as a symbol of triumph, being stuck on a lance and reportedly planted in front of Süleyman’s tent.”⁵⁴ Fumée also described the beheading of Hungarian prisoners after the battle: “The day after the battle, 1500 Hungarians who had been captured, including many of the principal nobles ... were all suddenly decapitated, their blood serving as a sacrifice for these infidels.”⁵⁵ Such gory accounts of Turkish atrocities became integral parts of French crusading texts.

French authors recounting the battle of Mohács explained the fall of Hungary to a weakening valor of the Hungarian nobility in the face of successive Ottoman invasions. René de Lucinge argues that in the past, Hungary had displayed “the valor of its kings and of its peoples [who were] toughened, hardened, and able to endure the rigors of war.”⁵⁶ He stresses the contrast between the heroic Hungarians of previous centuries and those of the sixteenth century, who had “abandoned this first valor and bastardized the exercise of arms.”⁵⁷

In the aftermath of Mohács, the Ottomans occupied southern Hungary, but the remainder of the kingdom became divided in a succession dispute among Christian princes. Ferdinand von Habsburg, younger brother of the Emperor Charles V, claimed the throne of Hungary and attracted some of the Hungarian nobility, but János Szapolyai opposed his rule and eventually sought Ottoman support.⁵⁸ Few pamphlets seem to have been published in France on the confusing struggle in Hungary, perhaps because the ongoing Habsburg–Valois wars made the subject controversial.⁵⁹ French readers could nonetheless follow news of

52 Martin Fumée, *Histoire generale des troubles de Hongrie et Transilvanie* (Paris: Robert Foüet, 1608), 1.

53 *Ibid.*, 28.

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*

56 René de Lucinge, *De la Naissance, durée et chute des Estats, où sont traitées plusieurs notables questions sur l'establissement des empires et monarchies* (Paris: Marcy Orry, 1588), 1: 75–77.

57 *Ibid.*

58 For a detailed study of the partition of Hungary, see: Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 35–52.

59 Paula S. Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria: The Politics of Dynasticism in the Age of the Reformation* (New York, 1982).

Ferdinand's entry into Székesfehérvár and his coronation on 3 November 1527.⁶⁰ Ferdinand succeeded in establishing Habsburg rule in Hungary, with strong ties to the Holy Roman Empire, but the realm was effectively divided into three regions.⁶¹

Despite the ambiguous status of the Kingdom of Hungary in the wake of Mohács, French pamphlets stressed the ongoing fighting against the Ottomans. When Süleyman I's army encircled Vienna in 1529, letters and pamphlets circulated the news of the epic siege. One French language pamphlet called for a common defense of Christianity:

good princes and Christian lords, do not have hearts so hardened toward each other. Form an agreement together and make the Turkish dogs, enemies of our holy faith know that you are defenders of the faith of Jesus Christ. For, if you can demonstrate your power in the face of this mean Turk, all his power cannot resist you.⁶²

After a series of massive assaults, the Ottoman army finally abandoned its siege of Vienna and withdrew. Criers reported the news of the Ottoman retreat in the streets of Paris, according to one contemporary journal, which presents the retreat as “a great victory” for “Don Ferdinand, King of Hungary, brother of the Emperor,” but also one delivered by Jesus Christ, who sent a hailstorm to ravage the Ottoman troops at a critical moment. The journal relates that religious processions were held throughout Paris to give thanks to God for the salvation of Vienna and the defeat of the Turks.⁶³

A military frontier gradually formed in Hungary, as Habsburg, Ottoman, and Transylvanian forces constructed border fortresses and fortified cities in the

60 *La triumpante entrée et couronnement de Fernant / de sa royale maieste de Honguerie / et de Bobeme / faicte a Stoel Wittenburch le dernier iour doctobre. Anno domini mil cinq cens vingt sept* (n.p., 1527); Hans H.A. Hötte, *Atlas of Southeast Europe: Geopolitics and History. Volume One: 1521–1699*, ed. Colin Heywood (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 7–8.

61 Géza Pálffy, “An ‘Old Empire’ on the periphery of the Old Empire: The Kingdom of Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495–1806: A European Perspective*, ed. R.J.W. Evans and Peter H. Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 259–79.

62 *Le siege et champ mys nagueres devant la triumpante ville de Vienne en Austriche, du plus grand tyran et destruyseur de la chrestienté lempereur de Turquie, au moys de septembre Lan mil. D. XXIX* (Geneva: Wygand Lioln, 1529).

63 *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous le regne de François I^{er}, 1515–1536*, ed. Ludovic Lalanne (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1854), 397–400.

contested borderlands.⁶⁴ After Ottoman forces took Buda in 1541, Habsburg forces began to construct a new defensive system in Hungary that was composed of border fortresses, captain generalcies, regular garrisons, and irregular troops and financed by the Habsburg monarchy.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Ottoman military and administrative officials crafted a new military frontier system of their own in Hungary.⁶⁶ French pamphlets discussed the ongoing fighting in the militarized borderlands, citing Christian victories in Hungary and Transylvania.⁶⁷

Representations of the military frontier in Hungary proliferated through printed city views and maps. City views by Sebastian Münster included Buda as the capital of Hungary, while later engravings by Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg prominently displayed the bastioned fortifications of cities throughout Habsburg territories and around the world.⁶⁸ Printed maps and city views, including at least one siege view, depicted Hungarian communities and the military border for French audiences by the 1560s.⁶⁹ One curious anthropomorphic map of Europe as a queen presents Hungary, Poland, and Lithuania as the *ventre*, or abdomen, of the body of Europe—suggesting its crucial position as a barrier to Ottoman expansion.⁷⁰

French readers were probably unaware of the brutal realities of early modern raiding and siege warfare in Hungary, aside from stereotyped descriptions of the “cruelties” of the Turks.⁷¹ François de La Nouë deplores the “domination” of the Turks, alluding to the Christian lands conquered by the Ottomans, and insists that “against these peoples, one must draw the sword, not to convert them ...

64 Balazs A. Szelenyi, “The Dynamics of Urban Development: Towns in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Hungary,” *American Historical Review* 109 (April 2004): 360–86; Peter Schimert, “The Hungarian Nobility in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. II: Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. H.M. Scott (London: Longman, 1995), 144–82.

65 Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 89–118.

66 Gábor Ágoston, “Ottoman Conquest and the Ottoman Military Frontier in Hungary,” in *A Millennium of Hungarian Military History*, ed. László Veszprémy and Béla K. Király, trans. Eleonóra Arató (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 2002), 85–110.

67 *La deconfiture que a faite Sophie sur le Grant Turc ...* (n.p., 1531); *La Grand victoire du Tresillustre Roy de Poloine ...* (Paris: L’Escu de Basle, 1631).

68 Martha D. Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

69 *Diseño de Seget venuto novamente di Ongaria...* (1566), BNF.

70 Simon Girault, *Globe du Monde contenant un bref traité du ciel & de la terre* (Lengres: J. des Preyz, 1592), 70–71.

71 László Veszprémy, “The State and Military Affairs in East-Central Europe, 1380–c. 1520s,” in *European Warfare, 1350–1750*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 96–109; Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives*.

but to punish them for their cruelty and tyranny.”⁷² French writers stressed the Austrian defense of Christianity, emphasizing that Hungary remained contested because of the efforts of the Habsburgs. René de Lucinge argues that “After the Turks came, they found the obstacle of the House of Austria, seconded by the forces of Germany, and supported by the power of the Catholic King [of Spain], who never learned to fear the Turk.”⁷³ Lucinge laments “all these heresies” that produce divisions within Christendom, complaining especially about Calvinism’s notorious influence.⁷⁴

French crusading ideals had to confront the problematic French relationship with the Ottomans, which stemmed from commercial and political negotiations beginning in 1533 and culminating in a Franco–Ottoman alliance against the Habsburgs. François I allied with sultan Süleyman I and invited the fleet of Hayreddin Barbarossa to harbor in the port of Marseille before launching joint military-naval operations to besiege Nice in 1543–44.⁷⁵ Many French nobles were critical of Franco–Ottoman diplomatic relations, however. François de La Nouë, a prominent Calvinist nobleman, condemned the French alliance with the Ottomans: “if we make a comparison ... of the utility of all this Turkish aide with the decrease in the renown of the French among all the nations of Europe, one would have to confess that the shame [of it] has much outweighed the profit.”⁷⁶

The outbreak of the religious wars in France in 1562 created new complications for French crusading culture. The confessional fighting between Huguenots and Catholics in France reinforced associations between heretics and infidels. The French monarch’s duty as *roi très chrétien* to suppress heresy in the kingdom was increasingly connected with a global Catholic struggle, which encompassed the French people’s duty to fight against heresy and false belief. One source stressed:

“That as Christians we are obliged, especially since the first duty of a Christian is to maintain his religion and, according to the means that God has given him, not to put up with the practice of another contrary one. That our adversaries are in agreement with us [on this] and demonstrate that they will

72 François de La Nouë, *Discours politiques et militaire du seigneur de la Nouë. Nouvellement recueillis & mis en lumière* (Basel: François Forest, 1587), 378–79.

73 Lucinge, *De la Naissance, durée et chute des Estats*, vol. 1, 75–77.

74 Ibid.

75 Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel*, 114–40.

76 La Nouë, *Discours politiques et militaire*, 375.

not put up with any other religion being practiced where they have power, as in Geneva and elsewhere. That as French people, we have a particular obligation, especially since among Christians, we call ourselves Most Christian.”⁷⁷

The confessional struggle against heresy within France thus reinforced French notions of a Christian duty to uphold God’s honor and to battle against false religion. French crusading culture already presented Hungary as a sacred battleground in the war against the infidel, but French nobles and authors increasingly envisioned distant fighting against the Ottomans as closely linked to the bloody fighting against heretics within France.

The Hungarian Campaign in 1566

Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, noted that 1566 was “destined to make the French travel” as French nobles and soldiers set off to Malta, Madiera, Hungary, and other destinations to fight against the Ottomans.⁷⁸ The same year, René Benoist published a pamphlet, *Exhortation Chrestienne aux fideles et eslevz de Dieu, de batailler par tous moyens possiblees pour le grand Seigneur contre l’Antechrist*, encouraging French nobles to engage in the great crusade against the “idolaters and infidels.”⁷⁹ Sultan Süleyman I led another Ottoman field army into Hungary in the summer of 1566, prompting a large imperial mobilization and attracting many noble volunteers, including Henri de Lorraine, duc de Guise.⁸⁰

Printed pamphlets circulated war news from Hungary for a public of French urban readers and listeners. Jean de Malmidy’s *Discours veritable de la grand guerre, qui est au país de Hongrie...*, had provided a narrative of the previous campaign between Imperialists and Transylvanians in Hungary in 1565. The author dedicates this pamphlet to Antoine de Croy, prince de Porcian, and claims to provide an eyewitness account of the fighting.⁸¹ The focus of such pamphlets and other publications suggest tensions within crusading culture as printers increasingly specialized. There seems to have been a certain degree of competition between printers reporting on the theaters of war in Hungary and in the Mediterranean,

77 Mémoire, BNF, Mss. fr. 3336, f° 53–54.

78 Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, ed. Ludovic Lalanne (Paris: Société de l’Histoire de France, 1868), 405.

79 René Benoist, *Exhortation Chrestienne aux fideles et eslevz de Dieu, de batailler par tous moyens possiblees pour le grand Seigneur contre l’Antechrist* (Paris: Guillaume Chaudière, 1566).

80 James Tracy, “The Road to Szigetvár: Ferdinand I’s Defense of His Hungarian Border, 1548–1566,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013): 17–36; Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 80.

81 Jean de Malmidy, *Discours veritable de la grand guerre, qui est au país de Hongrie...* (Paris: Denys du Val, 1565).

as suggested by simultaneous reports on the fighting in Hungary and on the epic siege of Malta in 1565. After the successful Christian defense of Malta, Brantôme celebrated Jean de La Valette-Parisot, Grand Master of Malta, as one of the great captains of France, indicating that French people “are very happy and honored to have had in our nation such a great captain, who spilled the blood of the infidels and enemies of God and of our law and avenged that of Christians that was wickedly poured out by them over many years.”⁸² Accounts of the siege of Malta may have temporarily drawn some attention away from the Hungarian war theater, but they also stressed a common notion of Christian defense. The Ottoman invasion of Hungary in 1566 brought French readers’ focus back to Hungary as the bulwark against Turkish domination.

Süleyman’s field army advanced and besieged the fortified town of Szigetvár, which became the focal point of the fighting in Hungary in 1566.⁸³ A pamphlet entitled, *Advis de Vienne en Austriche, et de Hongrie...*, presented an account of the fighting in Hungary, allegedly related by an eyewitness. The pamphlet author claims that “one of my friends has written me, that as for Hungary, that the Imperial army there is growing day by day, and that it will soon consist of 90,000 infantry, not counting the cavalry.” The pamphlet develops as a series of reports from the Imperial army in Hungary, which included troops sent by the Duke of Savoy, Duke of Ferrara, Granduke of Tuscany, and other allies of the Emperor, as well as the duc de Guise.⁸⁴

French accounts of the 1566 campaign in Hungary presented the duc de Guise as a heroic crusader. A contemporary pamphlet recounted the duc de Guise’s travels to Vienna and his preparations to join the imperial army, concluding: “my lord and his troop are almost all mounted and armed, hoping to depart for the encampment in five or six days.”⁸⁵ Brantôme later recorded that “this young valorous prince thus went [to the Hungarian front], well accompanied by many nobles ... who could well have numbered a hundred, all valorous.”⁸⁶ Curiously, some later pro-crusading texts minimized Guise’s participation in the

82 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, 215–38.

83 Lajos Rúzsás, “The Siege of Szigetvár of 1566: Its Significance in Hungarian Social Development,” in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 251–59.

84 *Advis de Vienne en Austriche, & de Hongrie...* (Lyon: Benoist Rigaud, 1566).

85 *Discours de ce qui est survenu au voyage de Monsieur le duc de Guise, depuis la dernière despêche faite à Auguste* (Paris: Jean Dallier, 1566).

86 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, 405.

1566 campaign. For example, Martin Fumée's late sixteenth-century history of the wars in Hungary merely recorded the French contingent alongside other "nations" that joined the Imperial army.⁸⁷ Perhaps this source's reticence to celebrate Guise's warrior experience stemmed from its publication during the Catholic League wars of the 1590s, which were fueled by deep divisions between Catholic extremists, Catholic moderates, and Huguenots.⁸⁸

At the time of the 1566 campaign, the duc de Guise's voyage to the battlefields of Hungary allowed him to establish his crusading credentials and gain vital military experience. Agrippa d'Aubigné mentions the French contingent that joined the imperial army, noting several nobles in the duc de Guise's entourage, including Philippe Strozzi, Guy de Saint-Gelais de Lansac, and Timoléon de Cossé-Brissac.⁸⁹ Brantôme later described the French nobles who "went to Hungary with this valiant prince the duc de Guise, who was not yet 18 years old, who—following the example of his ancestors in holy war—wanted to confront the infidel army of the great sultan Süleyman, who was there himself in person."⁹⁰ Sahin-Tóth presents the duc de Guise's participation in crusading war as linked with a specifically Lorraine crusading culture.⁹¹ However, the duc de Guise also seems to have helped popularize Hungary as one of the war zones—along with Malta and the Netherlands—associated with military education for young French noblemen. Hungary thus became an appropriate stop on a grand tour for French nobles seeking military adventure and a proper education.⁹²

The Ottomans seemed poised to advance on Vienna after Szigetvár capitulated in early September 1566, but Ottoman forces abruptly abandoned their campaign and withdrew. Süleyman the Lawgiver had actually died at the encampment at Szigetvár, but his senior officers apparently managed to keep his death a secret for several months. Ottoman withdrawal signaled an early

87 Fumée's history was originally printed in 1595. Fumée, *Histoire generale des troubles de Hongrie et Transilvanie*, 270.

88 Jonathan Spangler, *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009); Stuart Carroll, *Noble Power During the French Wars of Religion: The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

89 Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Histoire Universelle*, vol. 4, ed. André Thierry (Geneva: Droz, 1982), 18, 312–13.

90 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, 405.

91 Sahin-Tóth, "La France et les Français face à la 'longue guerre' de Hongrie (1591–1606)," 82–93.

92 Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570–1715* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Mark Edward Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580–1715* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

end of the campaigning season, which seems to have frustrated many French nobles who were preparing to travel to Hungary to join the fight against the Turks. Brantôme recalled that “I wanted to go off to the war in Hungary; but, in Venice, we heard of the death of the great Sultan Süleyman.”⁹³ Many French nobles were apparently disappointed by the abrupt end of the crusading war in Hungary.

Nonetheless, French reading audiences had become increasingly interested in Eastern Europe following the 1566 campaign. French interest in the Hungarian theater of war is shown by the production of maps of Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, as well as maps specifically on Hungary, such as Gérard de Jode’s *Hungariae typus* (1567).⁹⁴ Despite the sustained transnational interest in the ongoing struggle against the Ottomans, news from the Mediterranean threatened to eclipse the Hungarian military frontier.

The great Christian victory at Lepanto in 1571 immediately became a monumental event in crusading culture, celebrated in pamphlets, books, poems, and paintings.⁹⁵ Because King Charles IX did not officially join the great Holy League against the Ottomans in 1571, studies of Lepanto have often overlooked the significance of the battle for French crusading culture.⁹⁶ However, many French nobles participated directly in the battle of Lepanto, serving in the Maltese galleys or fighting as volunteers in the Christian fleet. Couriers brought the first news of the victory, which apparently prompted spontaneous celebrations in many French cities. According to one pamphlet, “even in this city of Lyon you will have heard the great bells that give full and certain testimony (with the hymns and canticles that were sung to the God of armies in great devotion and joy) for such a victory.”⁹⁷ News of the battle of Lepanto circulated widely in France through letters, celebrations, poems, pamphlets, and other publications.⁹⁸

93 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 9, 374.

94 Gérard de Jode, *Hungariae typus* (1567).

95 Pettegree, *The Invention of News*, 140–45.

96 *The Battle of Lepanto*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth R. Wright, Sarah Spence, and Andrew Lemons, Villa I Tatti Library 61 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

97 *Le tres excellent et somptueux triomphe, fait en la ville de Venise, en la publication de la Ligue...* (Lyon: Benoist Rigauc, 1571), 2.

98 *Avis de la glorieuse victoire obtenue par l'armée Chrestienne cõtre l'armée Turquesque au golphe de Lepantõ le septiesme iour d'Octobre, 1571* (Paris: Jehan Dallier, 1571); *Antre veritable discours de la victoire des Chrestiens contre les Turcs en la bataille Nauale pres Lepantõ, aduene le septiesme iour d'Octobre, l'an 1571...* (Paris: Jean Dallier, 1571); *Vray discours de la bataille des armees chrestienne & Turquesque, & de la triomphante victoire contre le Turc...* (Paris: Jean Dallier, 1571); *Lettre de Venize du xix. d'octobre 1571. Touchant la tres-beureuse victoire des Chrestiens à l'encontre de l'armee du grand Turc* (Lyon: Michel Jove, 1571).

One pamphlet emphasized Christian unity in crusading combat against the Ottomans: “God wishes to crown entirely the Christians’ victory to punish the insolence and tyranny of the Barbarians.”⁹⁹

The election of Henri de Valois, duc d’Anjou, as King of Poland in 1573 heightened French audience’s engagement with Eastern Europe in general.¹⁰⁰ Henri’s reign as king of Poland was short, since Charles IX’s death in 1574 made him heir to the French throne and brought his return to France. Nonetheless, the French fascination with Polish culture remained, most famously evoked by Henri III’s extravagant fashion and earrings.¹⁰¹ Such styles supported the development of broader stereotypes about Hungarians and other Eastern European peoples in literary and non-literary texts.¹⁰² Brantôme told a curious tale of a Spanish officer who had fought in Hungary and who was “exhausted for arms.” The officer regretted having gone to Hungary, “having found in this country no courtesy, the people there being barbarous and rude.”¹⁰³

French crusading projects became increasingly elaborate toward the end of the sixteenth century. The Calvinist noble François de La Nouë boasted that “if the Christian princes were firmly united, they could chase the Turks from Europe in four years.”¹⁰⁴ Alphonse Dupront regards La Nouë as a “solitary crusader,” emphasizing his isolation and inability to realize such a sweeping vision of unified crusade. Dupront further suggests that the “crusading myth” was becoming secular during La Nouë’s lifetime, yet many other French nobles were also engaged in formulating crusading projects.¹⁰⁵ Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, developed various planning documents for crusading campaigns in the Mediterranean and Hungary.¹⁰⁶ Despite this continued interest in grandiose

99 *Antre véritable discours de la victoire des Chrestiens contre les Turcs en la bataille Navale pres Lepanthe, aduene le septiesme iour d’Octobre, l’an 1571...* (Paris: Jean Dallier, 1571).

100 Jean Herburt de Fulstin, *Histoire des roys et princes de Poloigne* (Paris: Olivier de Pierre l’Huillier, 1573).

101 Michael Wintroub, “Words, Deeds, and a Womanly King,” *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 4 (2005): 387–413.

102 Gábor Almási, Szymon Brzeziński, Ildikó Horn, Kees Tszeszszky, and Áron Zarnóczy, eds., *A Divided Hungary in Europe: Exchanges, Networks and Representations, 1541–1699. Volume 3: The making and uses of the image of Hungary and Transylvania* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

103 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 7, 54–55.

104 François de La Nouë, quoted in James J. Supple, “François de La Nouë’s Plan for a Campaign against the Turks,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 41, no. 2 (1979): 273–91.

105 Dupront, *Le mythe de croisade*, 390–98.

106 Scattered manuscripts of the duc de Nevers discuss crusading plans in BNF, Mss fr. 4723–4727, and other volumes of the Mss. fr. collections at the BNF.

crusading, warfare in Hungary gradually evolved into a protracted form of seasonal raids along the military frontiers in the 1580s.¹⁰⁷ French nobles would have to wait almost a decade for another opportunity to develop their crusading projects in Hungary.

The Habsburg–Ottoman War, 1593–1606

Soon after a new Habsburg–Ottoman war broke out in Hungary in 1593, Nicolas Brulart de Sillery wrote that “I am horrified to hear what is written and published in various places” about the Catholic Leaguers, who refused to accept Henri de Bourbon’s conversion to Catholicism and who were vigorously opposing his accession to the French throne as Henri IV. Brulart believed that the Leaguers were ignoring “the danger of the Turk,” warning of the threat posed by Ottoman armies in Hungary. Brulart argued that: “it seems that God is inviting Christians to reunite and join together though the great success that He has given to the forces of the Emperor in Hungary.”¹⁰⁸ Brulart went on to relate the latest news from the theater of war in Hungary and Transylvania, optimistically hoping that Pope would support the Holy Roman Emperor and launch a “general and offensive war” in Hungary.¹⁰⁹

Many French people indeed hoped for peace in France after years of brutal religious conflict within the kingdom, yet Nicolas Brulart de Sillery was not the only French observer to draw connections to Hungary. Guillaume Ancel, French ambassador at Prague, emphasized “the necessity for a peace in France, which cannot happen without the reception of the king.”¹¹⁰ The urgent need for peace within France, for this writer, was clearly coupled to the common Ottoman threat against all Christians: “nothing is more certain than that the continuation of our wars will serve to aid the progress of the enemies of Christianity to penetrate into the entrails of Germany.”¹¹¹ Despite such hopes for peace, the

107 Gábor Ágoston, “Empires and Warfare in East-Central Europe, 1550–1750: The Ottoman–Habsburg Rivalry and Military Transformation,” in *European Warfare, 1350–1750*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 110–34; Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700*.

108 Nicolas Brulart de Sillery to duc de Nevers, Soleure, 27 December 1593, BNF, Mss. fr. 3625, f° 119–20.

109 The original reads: “guerre generale et offensive.” Nicolas Brulart de Sillery to duc de Nevers, Soleure, 27 December 1593, BNF, Mss. fr. 3625, f° 119–20.

110 Guillaume Ancel to duc de Nevers, Prague, 30 December 1593, BNF, Mss. fr. 3625, f° 121.

111 Ibid.

religious wars would continue to rage in France, but French nobles increasingly became involved in crusading warfare in Croatia and Hungary in the 1590s.

The Habsburg–Ottoman War (1593–1606), also known as the Long Turkish War, produced sustained raiding and siege warfare, attracting crusading contingents from France and elsewhere. Géza Pálffy argues that “the Long Turkish War ... was the first modern war in Hungarian history,” characterized by foreign troops, confessional conflict, and civil warfare.¹¹² Péter Sahin-Tóth demonstrates that numerous French and Francophone nobles participated in crusading warfare in Hungary during the Long War. His detailed research in French and Austrian archives reveals a variety of motivations that led French, Wallon, and Lorraine nobles to engage in crusading warfare alongside Imperial forces that were fighting against the Ottomans.¹¹³

By the time the Long Turkish War broke out, French news publishing had developed significantly, with a number of presses specializing in producing pamphlets relating war news. A number of French-language pamphlets narrated military campaigns, battles, and sieges in Hungary throughout the war. The tributary states of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia rebelled against Ottoman indirect rule in 1594, joining the crusading cause. French readers could follow the 1595 campaign through Jean de Malmidy’s *Discours véritable de la grand’ guerre, qui est au país de Hongrie*, which described the Imperial forces’ capture of Esztergom.¹¹⁴ French authors were writing now histories, chronicles, and other works specifically focused on the wars in Hungary.

Martin Fumée’s *Histoire generale des troubles de Hongrie et Transilvanie* (first published in 1595) provided a geographic description of Hungary in addition to a narrative history of the sixteenth-century wars in Hungary. Fumée pointedly dedicates his history “to you (the French people) and to no other.” After describing the brutality of warfare in Hungary, Fumée invites French readers to reflect upon the destructiveness of war. “When you see the ruins and great desolations of a beautiful and rich country, you see your own at present reduce to an identical state.”¹¹⁵ Fumée draws direct comparisons between the miseries of Hungary and France, which were both suffering from divine punishment.

112 Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*.

113 Sahin-Tóth, “La France et les Français face à la ‘longue guerre’ de Hongrie (1591–1606),” 187–225.

114 Jean de Malmidy, *Discours véritable de la grand’ guerre, qui est au país de Hongrie...* (Paris: Denys du Val, 1595).

115 Fumée, *Histoire generale des troubles de Hongrie et Transilvanie*, Preface, n.p.

He concludes: “it seems that we are in a worse condition than Hungary is in.”¹¹⁶ Hungary then served as a reminder to French people of the shared miseries of religious disunity, political chaos, and civil warfare that continued to plague both kingdoms.

A series of French language pamphlets and narratives related the ongoing fighting in Hungary in the late 1590s. Another imperial army took Eger in 1596, but attrition led to less intense fighting in 1597.¹¹⁷ An account of the ongoing war in Hungary related the sieges of Győr/Raab, Tata/Tottis, and Temesvár (Timișoara, Romania), as well as the broader military campaigns and skirmishes.¹¹⁸ When Imperial armies launched a major new offensive to retake Buda, a number of French pamphlets reported on the action.¹¹⁹ A pamphlet entitled, *L’admirable et heureuse prinse de la ville de Bude en Hongrie par l’armee Imperiale, sur les Turcs*, offered a series of reports from the war zone in Hungary in the form of several short letters from an anonymous correspondent who was accompanying the Imperial army.¹²⁰ The siege of Raab provided the subject for another pamphlet published the same year. The author of this pamphlet highlights military technology at the siege, focusing on the use of a *pétard*, an explosive device often used against city gates.¹²¹ The imperial siege of Buda in 1598 again failed to retake the city, however.

As informal French involvement in crusading war increased, so did tensions with the Ottoman Empire—especially concerning the status of French subjects under Ottoman rule. During the 1598 campaign, the French ambassador in Istanbul reported that Sultan Mehmet III was attempting to prevent forced conversions of French subjects within his empire.¹²² When Christian troops

116 Ibid., 3.

117 John Roger Paas, *The German Political Broadsheet, 1600–1700* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1985), 49–50.

118 *Sommaire description de la guerre de Hongrie, et de Transylvanie, de ce qui est advenu depuis l’automne dernier de l’an passé 1597. jusques au printemps de l’an 98. entre les Turcs, ennemis hereditaires du Nom de Jesus Christ, & des Chrestiens...*, trans. Victor Cayet (Paris: Guillaume Chaudière, 1598).

119 Paas, *The German Political Broadsheet, 1600–1700*, 50–51.

120 *L’admirable et heureuse prinse de la ville de Bude en Hongrie par l’armee Imperiale, sur les Turcs. Ensemble le retablissement de Battori, Vaivod de Transilvanie* (Lyon: Thibaud Ancelin and Buichard Jullieron, 1598).

121 *Discovrs tres-veritable de l’admirable et hevreuse reprinse de la ville & forteresse de Raab, autrement Iauarin, en Hongrie, par les Chrestiens sur les Turcs...* (Lyon: Jacques Roussin, 1598).

122 The sultan purportedly ordered “que les marchans francois ou autres estrangers qui trafiquent soubz leur banniere ... ne puissent en façon aucune estre inquietez et molestez pour abondonner leur religion et espouzer la nostre. ... Ilz ne puissent estre violemment circoncis ny soient acceptez pour mahomettans.” “Commandement du grand seigneur sultan Mahomet III pour empescher que les jeunes chrestiens ne

destroyed an Ottoman force near Buda in 1599, a French source celebrated: “God always gives an excellent victory to small forces of Christians facing a great multitude of Turks.”¹²³

After the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes in May 1598, many determined Catholic Leaguers departed from the kingdom in disgust rather than accept Henri IV as a legitimate Catholic ruler.¹²⁴ Some of these ex-Leaguers, or *dévots*, headed off to Hungary to serve in the crusading army organized by the Habsburgs against the Ottomans.¹²⁵ Several members of the Guise family joined armies fighting against the Ottomans in Hungary in the early seventeenth century. Philippe-Emmanuel de Lorraine, duc de Mercœur, aimed to fight against the Ottomans and “to spill the last drop of my blood for the maintenance and protection of our religion against this great other sect of infidels that they say are in great number in Hungary.”¹²⁶

The duc de Mercœur indeed went on crusade in 1600–1601, serving as lieutenant general for the Holy Roman Emperor in Hungary. A number of contemporary French sources portrayed the duc de Mercœur as an ideal crusader.¹²⁷ Brantôme records that Mercœur “having acquired lots of money during his wars, employed them in the war in Hungary, where he went in person with his beautiful troops, [and] where he fought so well that he was the envy of the Germans, for he surpassed them all in the art of war.”¹²⁸ An account of the war in Hungary stresses the duc de Mercœur’s courageous response to the Ottoman Grand Vezir: “That he will not hesitate at all to attack the largest number of infidels with less Christians, even if they have sly minds, being

fussent violentz a se faire Turcs et circoncir, obtenu par monsieur de Breues en octobre 1598 ete par luy translaté de turc en francois,” BNF, Mss. fr. 16171, f° 152–54.

123 Jean Richer, *Chronologie septenaire de l'histoire de la paix entre les roys de France et d'Espagne* (Paris: 1605), 103v.

124 Robert Descimon and José Javier Ruiz Ibanez, *Les ligueurs de l'exil: le refuge catholique français après 1594* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2005).

125 Péter Sahin-Tóth, “Expier sa faute en Hongrie. Réminiscences de croisade et pacification politique sous Henri IV,” in *Foi, fidélité, amitié en Europe à la période moderne: mélanges offerts à Robert Sauzet*, ed. Brigitte Maillard, 2 vols. (Tours: Publications de l'Université de Tours, 1995), 429–39.

126 Philippe-Emmanuel de Lorraine duc de Mercœur to Charles de Lorraine duc d'Aumale, 1599, quoted in Robert Sauzet, *Au Grand Siècle des âmes. Guerre sainte et paix chrétienne en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2007), 49.

127 Edward Shannon Tenace, “Messianic Imperialism or Traditional Dynasticism? The Grand Strategy of Philip II and the Spanish Failure in the Wars of the 1590s,” in *The Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History. Essays in Honor of Geoffrey Parker*, ed. Tonio Andrade and William Reger (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 281–308.

128 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, 194.

confident in God's aid."¹²⁹ Péter Sahin-Tóth constructs a detailed analysis of the duc de Mercœur's military leadership and crusading activities in Hungary.¹³⁰

The Ottomans launched a major offensive in Hungary in the summer of 1600, targeting the fortified city of Nagykanizsa (referred to as Canisa by many contemporaries). In September 1600, an Ottoman army besieged Nagykanizsa, which the Ottoman Grand Vezir described in a letter: "we are going to besiege Canisa, the key to the Christian lands, and the principal gate of this unhappy country of Hungary."¹³¹ The duc de Mercœur led a force to relieve the siege, but the Imperial garrison at Nagykanizsa capitulated in October.¹³² Several Ottoman writers, including Katib Çelebi, wrote celebratory accounts of the Ottoman siege of Nagykanizsa, incorporating fictional and historical elements.¹³³

A major imperial army assembled under the command of Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand in 1601, aiming to retake Nagykanizsa. The imperial army was a multi-ethnic crusading force composed of Austrian, German, Swiss, Hungarian, Savoyard, Tuscan contingents, accompanied by noble volunteers from France and other territories. The army advanced into Hungary and besieged Nagykanizsa in September 1601.

The writings of a French noble who participated in the Nagykanizsa campaign (presumably Marin Malleville) offer valuable insights on the crusading experience in Hungary.¹³⁴ Malleville accompanied the Tuscan military contingent to Hungary, having been "commanded by the Grand Duke, my master, to head to Nagykanizsa to join lord Don Giovanni his brother."¹³⁵ Malleville could thus offer a close narrative of the campaign in Hungary based on his service with the Tuscan troops and the multi-ethnic crusading army. Soon after the siege trenches opened, Marin Malleville wrote to a Tuscan secretary to describe the siege of Nagykanizsa. Malleville claims that he had suggested a surprise attack

129 Jean Richer, *Chronologie septenaire de l'histoire de la paix entre les roys de France et d'Espagne* (Paris: 1605), 201.

130 Sahin-Tóth, "La France et les Français face à la 'longue guerre' de Hongrie (1591–1606)," 287–436.

131 "Lettre d'un grand vizir à Henry IV. traduite du Turc par M. de la Croix, Interprete du Roy," in Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, *Les Mémoires de Monsieur le duc de Nevers*, vol. 2, 845–48.

132 Paas, *The German Political Broadsheet, 1600–1700*, 51.

133 Claire Norton, "Fiction or Non-fiction? Ottoman Accounts of the Siege of Nagykanizsa," in *Tropes for the Past: Hayden White and the History/Literature Debate*, ed. Kuisma Korhonen (Rodopi, 2006), 119–32.

134 This noble correspondent, who signed his letters "Malleville," was presumably Marin Malleville.

135 Malleville to Henri I de Montmorency duc de Montmorency, n.d. [1601–1602], Archivio di Stato di Firenze [hereafter, ASF], Mediceo del Principato [hereafter, MdP] 4759, n.f. [c. 159–60]. Note: some of the MdP documents utilized here been analyzed in the Medici Archive Project's Bia Database, available online at <http://www.medici.org>.

on Nagykanizsa and that Don Giovanni de' Medici had proposed this plan to Archduke Ferdinand.¹³⁶ Nagykanizsa was not surprised, however, and a formal siege soon developed. Simultaneously, another imperial force was besieging the Hungarian city of Székesfehérvár, which was held by a small Ottoman garrison. Székesfehérvár was taken in only ten days, but the trench fighting around Nagykanizsa wore on for three months. Malleville describes the heavy losses in the ranks of the imperial army and expresses his “pain” after hearing that two fellow officers had been captured and “they were enslaved.”¹³⁷ The Imperial army eventually abandoned the siege in November 1601.

Soon afterward, Malleville wrote to Henri I de Montmorency, duc de Montmorency, to report the news of the siege of Nagykanizsa. Malleville provides a detailed and complex narrative, which begins by recounting that prior to his departure for Hungary he sent two falcons to Guitard de Ratte, bishop of Montpellier, to keep for the duc de Montmorency. Malleville expresses his surprise that he has not still received confirmation of the falcons' arrival after his return to France following the campaign.¹³⁸

Marin Malleville's account of the Nagykanizsa campaign is full of recriminations. “I could tell the story of the siege of Nagykanizsa,” Malleville wrote, “but we received so little honor there that I do not dare open my mouth to speak to Your Highness.”¹³⁹ Malleville compares the geography of Hungary and the character of the fighting to the religious wars he had already experienced in France.¹⁴⁰ Malleville offers a description of the fortifications of Nagykanizsa, specifying that “the fortress is composed of five bastions.”¹⁴¹ The siege was finally abandoned—a military failure that Malleville blamed on the German soldiers and the Imperial commanders.¹⁴²

Malleville criticizes the abandonment of the siege and the withdrawal of the crusading army. He describes the “poor order and disorder” among the Imperial and allied troops toward the end of the siege, which resulted in “the loss of four

136 Malleville to Belisario di Francesco Vinta, Nagykanizsa, 12 September 1601, ASF, MdP 4759, n.f. [c. 95–96].

137 The original reads: “il sont été fait esclave.” Malleville to Belisario di Francesco Vinta, Nagykanizsa, 12 September 1601, ASF, MdP 4759, n.f. [c. 95–96].

138 Malleville to Henri I de Montmorency duc de Montmorency, n.d. [1601–1602], ASF, MdP 4759, n.f. [c. 159–160].

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

pieces of artillery, which were abandoned.”¹⁴³ Malleville records a poem or song that he had heard among the Italian troops, which mocked the German officers in the army:

Questa la crude anzi fera Canisa
Che fu lassata impredda in man di cani
Con vituperio infama di Hongueri Corbati est Allemani
E sol l’Italia ce remasta occisa.¹⁴⁴

Not content merely to report this satirical verse, Malleville comments himself on the Imperial leaders, who allegedly followed the advice of the Archduke’s Jesuit confessor rather than military officers.¹⁴⁵ Malleville was not the only contemporary to assess the Nagykanizsa campaign, but his privileged perspective as a military observer offers a fascinating glimpse of the tensions in the crusading army.

There were other reasons for the failure of the crusading campaign to retake Nagykanizsa, however. The famous case of a group of Francophone soldiers at Papa who mutinied against their commanders and became renegades in May 1600 suggests the strains of crusading war during this period.¹⁴⁶ A Catholic noble named de Potrin-court, who had led an infantry regiment for the Catholic League, provides another example of the conflicting loyalties in the Hungarian wars. Potrin-court had raised a new regiment to serve in Hungary during the 1600–1601 campaigns, but allegedly became a renegade serving in Ottoman forces. Brantôme claims that “he revolted and became a renegade ... taking with him many brave men of his.”¹⁴⁷ Potrin-court apparently remained a renegade, and “he died serving as the *pasha* of Damascus with a strong reputation and greatly appreciated by his master.”¹⁴⁸

The demobilization of the imperial army following the failed Nagykanizsa campaign discouraged some of crusading nobles. Marin Malleville returned to

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid.

146 Péter Sahin-Tóth, “Autour de la Guerre de Hongrie (1593–1606). De la croisade au service du sultan,” in *Chrétiens et musulmans à la Renaissance. Actes du 37^e colloque international du CESR (1994)*, ed. Bartolomé Bennassar and Robert Sauzet (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), 467–85; C. F. Finkel, “French Mercenaries in the Habsburg–Ottoman War of 1593–1606: The Desertion of the Papa Garrison to the Ottomans in 1600,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 55 (1992): 451–71.

147 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, 389.

148 Ibid.

France and Giovanni de' Medici decided to seek other opportunities for military command at various princely courts. Charles de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, nonetheless led a new group of French nobles on crusade in Hungary in 1602.¹⁴⁹ These French nobles joined the Imperial army in the summer of 1602 for another attempt to retake Buda, which also failed.¹⁵⁰ Blaise de Montluc-Montesquieu, seigneur de Pompignan, died of disease while serving in the entourage of the duc de Nevers.¹⁵¹ In the aftermath of the 1602 campaign, many more crusading nobles departed.

During the latter stages of the Long War, Hungary descended into an even more chaotic civil war. Lutheran towns resisted Catholic bishops' efforts at recatholization in Hungary, especially after Habsburg troops occupied a Lutheran church in Kassa (Košice, Slovakia) in January 1604.¹⁵² Later in the year, a Calvinist Hungarian noble named István Bocskai led a major uprising against Habsburg rule, but failed to gain widespread support of the Lutheran Hungarians. According to Géza Pálffy, Bocskai instead "became the carefully manipulated vassal of the Ottomans, a 'Turkish king of Hungary.'"¹⁵³ Negotiations finally led to an Ottoman–Habsburg peace in 1606, which granted Bocskai the title of Prince of Transylvania, although he died later that year. The Transylvanian diet promptly elected another Calvinist noble, Zsigmond Rákóczi, as its new prince in early 1607.¹⁵⁴

Many of the crusading nobles who had fought in the Long Turkish War seem to have been disillusioned by the experience. French Catholics were presumably shocked by the news of a peace sanctioning of a Calvinist prince of Transylvania, but most of them were probably back in France by the time the peace was signed. Indeed, many foreign nobles and soldiers had departed well before the end of the war. Don Giovanni de' Medici, who had commanded Tuscan troops in Hungary in 1601–1602, traveled to Flanders and then to

149 Sahin-Tóth, "La France et les Français face à la 'longue guerre' de Hongrie (1591–1606)," 457–78.

150 BNF, Mss. fr. 23197, f° 172.

151 Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme*, vol. 5, 44–45.

152 Dénes Harai, "Les villes luthériennes de Kassa et de Sopron face au soulèvement anti-Habsbourgeois d'István Bocskai en Hongrie (1604–1606)," *Revue historique* 650 (2009): 321–43; Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 212.

153 *Ibid.*, 221.

154 Graeme Murdock, "'Freely Elected in Fear': Princely Elections and Political Power in Early Modern Transylvania," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7 (2003): 213–44.

France, where he offered his services to King Henri IV.¹⁵⁵ During his travels, Don Giovanni expressed his continued interest in the war in Hungary by thanking a Florentine official for a delivery of *avvisi*, manuscript news circulars: “the *avvisi* that you have send me and that your continually send, are always appreciated.” Don Giovanni noted, however, that “the *avvisi* from Germany and Hungary arrive here [in Sedan] much earlier by other means.”¹⁵⁶ These news connections are perhaps an indication of the close personal and news networks that had been forged among the nobles who had waged crusading warfare in Hungary during the Long War.

Conclusion

By the early seventeenth century, Hungary had become a vital space of crusading experience, which held intimate meaning for many French nobles. Genealogies composed for French nobles in the first decades of the seventeenth century often celebrated family members’ military service in Hungary. A manuscript *livre de raison* of the seigneur de Châtillon recorded that one of his family members “had been killed in Hungary in 1605 toward the end of December.”¹⁵⁷ Other nobles carefully conserved their letters and commissions related to their crusading experiences to use as proofs for their induction into the Order of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁸ These sources show that lived experiences of crusading in Hungary were deeply meaningful to many French nobles and their families. This article has approached such sources and the wider problem of crusading warfare from a new angle, revealing shifting understandings of French military service on Hungarian battlegrounds. French writings about the battle of Mohács, the 1566 campaign, and the Habsburg-Ottoman War demonstrate that French crusading culture did not operate exclusively through mythic and nostalgic modes of expression, but instead encompassed diverse narratives and associations.

Hungary had become an important case in French political theories and treatises, offering an important lesson on monarchy. Jean Bodin portrays Hungary as suffering under Ottoman domination even before the disaster

155 Brendan Dooley, “Art and Information Brokerage in the Career of Don Giovanni de’ Medici,” in *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, and Badeloch Noldus (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), 81–95.

156 Giovanni di Cosimo I de’ Medici to Belisario di Francesco Vinta, Sedan, 6 April 1606, ASF, MdP 5157, f° 447.

157 BNF, Mss. fr. 23246.

158 BNF, Cabinet d’Hozier 18, f° 397.

at Mohács, stressing the pernicious effect of tributary payments and internal violence.¹⁵⁹ Martin Fumée emphasized that “this kingdom of Hungary, once rich and powerful, [has] at present fallen into such poverty that it is truly desolated”—warning that France was threatened with the same fate if it did not re-establish religious unity and good government.¹⁶⁰ French nobles and political writers continued to dream of Christian unity through crusading. The duc de Nevers wrote: “I beg you to consider that the growth of the Muslim empire came about only because of the divisions among the Christian princes, who fight among themselves, while the Great Turk usurped Christian cities and provinces.”¹⁶¹ Crusading was thus usually contemplated in conjunction with commentaries on the religious divisions within Christianity.

By the early seventeenth century, the enslavement of Hungarians became increasingly important in crusading culture. Guyon considered the treatment of slaves by Christians, Muslims, and Jews, claiming that none of them actually freed slaves who converted to the dominant religion. Muslims did not free Christian slaves, he claims, “which is the reason that the Hungarians, Transylvanians, Polish, Bohemians, Germans, Italians, Danish, and other people no longer free their slaves when they convert.” He contrasts France with these other realms, emphasizing that: “France holds this privilege that any slave who sets foot there is emancipated, as shown by an ancient *arrêt* of the court of [the parlement de Paris] which found against an ambassador.”¹⁶² French authors now contemplated Hungary and Southeastern Europe in the context of commentaries on Mediterranean slavery and the problem of “redemption.”¹⁶³ Perhaps such discussions reflected a growing interest in empire, as the French colony of Québec was founded in 1608 and New France soon began to provide outlets for crusading conquests and missionary activities.¹⁶⁴

Crusading culture continued to be influential in early seventeenth century France. Jean Héroard, royal physician for the dauphin Louis [the future Louis XIII], recorded that Louis boasted that “one day, I will lead a great army into

159 Jean de Bodin, *Les six livres de la republique de I. Bodin Angevin* (Paris: Jacques du Puys, 1576), 89, 724.

160 Fumée, *Histoire generale des troubles de Hongrie et Transilvanie*, 5–6.

161 Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, “Advertissement aux bovrgeois de notre ville de Paris, et a tovs bons catholiques,” in Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, *Les Mémoires de Monsieur le duc de Nevers*, vol. 1, 933.

162 Louis Guyon, *Les Diverses leçons de Loys Guyon, sievr de la Nauche, conseiller du roy, & eslen au bas Lymosin: suivans celles de Pierre Messie, & du sieur de Vauprinaz* (Lyon: Claude Morillon, 1604), 49.

163 Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*.

164 Michel de Waele and Martin Pâquet, *Québec, Champlain, le monde* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2008).

Hungary against the Turk.”¹⁶⁵ Religious leaders who were affiliated with the royal family, such as Père Joseph, actively preached on the virtues of crusading.¹⁶⁶ As an adult, Louis XIII would continue to promote crusading culture through the Order of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷ French nobles in the Knights of Malta proposed elaborate crusading projects to Louis XIII in the 1610s, while other French nobles engaged in their own personal crusades.¹⁶⁸ A new French translation of Torquato Tasso’s great crusading tale, *Jerusalem Delivered*, was published in 1610 with a dedication to the duchesse de Guise, who presumably sponsored the translation.¹⁶⁹ Charles de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, developed detailed plans to create a *Milice chrétienne* and launch a new Catholic crusade to the Holy Land, with support from Maria de’ Medici.¹⁷⁰

Nonetheless, French writers often expressed regret that the religious strife and civil warfare within France prevented France from committing more fully to crusading against Muslims. French perceptions of crusading were thus shaped by the ongoing religious conflict within France, since the Edict of Nantes had failed to resolve the religious tensions between the Catholics and the Huguenots in France. New localized conflicts broke out in the confessionally mixed regions of southern France during the 1600s and 1610s. Jacques-Auguste de Thou lamented: “How many years lost in civil wars? If [the Christian princes] had instead employed them against the common enemy of Christianity, [the Turks] would have easily been chased out of Hungary and Africa: which would have added to their glory and their worth.”¹⁷¹ The continuing religious conflicts in France escalated in the 1620s, allowing Louis XIII and many Catholic nobles to enact their crusading desires against Huguenot “rebels” in southern France.¹⁷²

165 Jean Héroard, cited in Sauzet, *Au Grand Siècle des âmes*, 23.

166 Père Joseph is one of Alphonse Dupront’s examples of a “solitary crusader.” Dupront, *Le mythe de croisade*, 399–413.

167 “Despesches de l’Ordre du St. Esprit du Regne du Roy Louis XIII,” BNF, Clairambault 1128, f° 6–8.

168 “Proposition en forme de remonstrance faite par le grand maistre, seigneurs, et cheualliers maltois, au roy treschrestien de France et de Nauarre...,” Mss. fr. 4044, f. 107–28.

169 Torquato Tasso, *La Hierusalem du seigneur Torquato Tasso renduë françoise par Blaise de Vigenere bourbonnois*, trans. Blaise de Vignére (Paris: Anthoine du Brueil, 1610).

170 BNF, NAF 1054, analyzed in Le Thiec, “Et il n’y aura qu’un seul troupeau,” 3: 333–38. Additional documents on the *Milice chrétienne* include BNF, Mss fr. 4723–4727, which I have not yet been able to fully consult.

171 Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Mémoires de la vie de Jacques-Auguste de Thou, conseiller d’état, et président à mortier au parlement de Paris, ouvrage meslé de prose et de vers, avec la traduction de la Préface qui est au-devant de sa grande Histoire* (Rotterdam: Renier Leers, 1711), n.p. [preface].

172 Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits*.

Hungary remained a crucial theater of crusading warfare, but depictions of the war torn kingdom seem to have been changing by the 1620s. Deepening Franco-Spanish rivalries and the Thirty Years War (1618–48) may have led to Hungary's displacement in French crusading culture and imaginaries of warfare.¹⁷³ An altered vision of Hungary would later reemerge in a French political culture during Louis XIV's reign, but by this time perhaps crusading warfare had truly been replaced by crusading nostalgia.

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173 Sahin-Tóth, "La France et les Français face à la 'longue guerre' de Hongrie (1591–1606)," 46–51.

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