

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Debby, Nirit Ben-Aryeh. Crusade Propaganda in Word and Image in Early Modern Italy: Niccolò Guidalotto's Panorama of Constantinople (1662)

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Volume 39, Number 3, Summer 2016

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086521ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v39i3.27730>

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Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Lawrence, D. (2016). Review of [Debby, Nirit Ben-Aryeh. Crusade Propaganda in Word and Image in Early Modern Italy: Niccolò Guidalotto's Panorama of Constantinople (1662)]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 39(3), 174–176. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v39i3.27730>

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discovers a stolen letter in a pile of debris, and her complicated dealings with duplicitous royal diplomats—also reveal her vulnerability. Ultimately, these tales underscore one of the key themes of the text: the mysterious workings of divine providence. In the concluding paragraph of *Ample Declaration*, Jeanne employs a final gendered defense of her arguments—rendered, as she writes, in the plain “style of a woman” (94). Like many early modern women writers, she marshals tropes of feminine weakness to deflect her detractors and suggests that her lack of artifice is itself evidence of the truthfulness of her narrative.

The editors are to be congratulated for creating a translation that is faithful to the nuances of language, style, and tone in the original text. Students of French literature, gender studies, and early modern history will be well served by their efforts to situate Jeanne d’Albret’s life and work within the broader context of Reformation politics and polemic and the literary traditions of Renaissance Europe.

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Debby, Nirit Ben-Aryeh.

Crusade Propaganda in Word and Image in Early Modern Italy: Niccolò Guidalotto’s Panorama of Constantinople (1662).

Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2016. Pp. 163. ISBN 978-0-7727-2183-9 (paperback) \$24.95.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 sent shock waves across Europe. Even though there had been an Ottoman presence on the Continent for nearly a century, the loss of the Byzantine capital proved a bitter pill for many in the West. However, against the backdrop of continued fighting in the Balkans and Mediterranean, and consistent calls for a crusade to win back the city, trade and diplomatic relations were slowly re-established between the leading European states and the Ottoman Empire. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it was not uncommon to find many “trans-imperial subjects”—Western merchants, diplomats, clerics, religious converts, and freed slaves—going about their business in the city. On the surface, the picture was one of peaceful coexistence, but as Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby informs readers in *Crusade Propaganda in Word and Image in Early Modern Italy*, below the surface there were some, like the Franciscan

friar Niccolò Guidalotto, who believed a crusade to regain Constantinople was preferable to a policy of coexistence. While anti-Ottoman propaganda was hardly a new phenomenon by the mid-seventeenth century, Guidalotto chose to issue his call to crusade and express his hatred for the New Babylon, a term he often used, by painting a 6.12 x 2.58 metre cityscape, replete with allegorical imagery and biblical passages depicting “an earthly paradise surrounded by hounds of hell and damnation” (16).

Debby packs a great deal into a short book, offering up a fascinating account of how Fra Guidalotto took up a pen instead of a sword to convince the papacy to try to win back his beloved Constantinople. She describes not only the cartographic and artistic inspiration for Guidalotto’s massive *Panorama of Constantinople*, which was completed in 1662, but also the political, religious, and intellectual influences that shaped the accompanying text presented to Pope Alexander VII, which now resides in the Vatican Library. Debby believes that the cityscapes of Guidalotto and his contemporaries served “utilitarian and political ends” (19), and she argues that the time is right to re-explore the political and religious content of these urban representations.

Debby’s book, which is built around five compact chapters and thirty beautiful colour illustrations, opens with a biographical sketch of Guidalotto, who spent eight years in Constantinople as part of the Venetian Embassy during the 1640s. The seeds for revenge, the author suggests, were planted amid the tensions of the Cretan War (1645–69), notably the siege of Candia, which set the stage for the maltreatment of the *bailo* Giovanni Soranzo and the execution of the dragoman Antonio Grillo. As part of the embassy, Guidalotto too suffered at the hands of the Ottomans, and thanks to a depiction of these events from the *Memorie turchesche* reproduced in the book, we see the friar chained and ignominiously paraded through the city with the others. As the book progresses, more of Guidalotto’s complex character is revealed: he is at times vengeful, agitated, confrontational, fanatical, utopian, and misogynistic. Convinced that his age would once again see a Christian Constantinople, the *Panorama* serves as his “political manifesto” (21) and a clarion call to crusade.

The second chapter explores how the *Panorama* and text were both a product of Guidalotto’s lust for revenge and a part of the rich visual culture of maps, cityscapes, and frescoes that could be found in palaces in Italy and across Western Europe. Guidalotto, an expert cartographer who had produced a portolan atlas prior to his departure for Constantinople, also drew on what

might best be termed the Lepanto tradition—the great paintings of the Holy League’s triumph over the Turks in 1571 that adorned the walls of the Vatican and Escorial, as well as the more widely accessible prints of the battle by Martino Rota. These paintings and prints were an important aspect of anti-Ottoman visual propaganda, both as commemorative representations of the victory and as a call to future military action.

Chapter 3 focuses specifically on the mapping of Constantinople in the early modern period, reinforcing the notion of the “lost city,” with Western cartographers often refusing to acknowledge the city’s fall or even Ottoman control over territories adjacent to it. In his own act of cartographic *damnatio memoriae*, Guidalotto fails to acknowledge the presence of Topkapi Palace and maintains the Byzantine *Sancta Sophia* in place of its Ottoman designation. Debby describes this as a rejection of Ottoman political power and as part of a wider “utopian dream of uniting Christianity and reviving the Crusader spirit” which now seemed possible, at least to Guidalotto, with the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648 (79).

But what makes the *Panorama* stand out among the cityscapes of Constantinople by Piri Reis, Melchior Lorck, and Giovanni di Vavassore is the combination of word and image, which is explored in more detail in the final two chapters. While Debby locates the painting in the cartographic and artistic movements of the previous two centuries, she also sees Guidalotto’s theology, so central to the work, as a product of the well-established tradition of Franciscan crusading preachers, among them Bernardino of Siena, Roberto Caracciolo, and John of Capistrano, who were successors of the medieval tradition of Joachim of Fiore. The eschatological references found in the *Panorama* and in the text create a “visual sermon” and divulge the extent of Guidalotto’s dream, albeit a utopian one, of seeing Constantinople regain its position as the New Rome (119). While much has been written recently of peaceful coexistence and the links between East and West in the early modern period, Guidalotto’s story, skilfully told by Debby, suggests that for some, coexistence was an anathema, and that military confrontation, fuelled by religious fanaticism, was the only practical course of action.

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