CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LEIBNIZ, MARANA, AND THE TURKISH MIRROR

In the Azzolino collection there is a curious letter from the Orient, dated 30 October, 1672. It is directed to Christina who after reading it put down her signature. It is written in code by Prior Seuin of the Capucin monks of Marbecce in Mesopotamia and Aleppo in Syria. Seuin writes that he: “avec beaucoup de peine a obtenu icy assurance son indulgence plenixe, a l'on dissent icy assurance. & monsr. prevost, si il est conduite de son bon ange, anéantira toute la magie & et tous les magiciens.” By using the key one can convert the meaning of “indulgence plenixe” to the philosophers’ stone. “La magie et les magiciens” translates to Turkey and the Turks. The letter is thus deciphered as saying that Seuin thinks that the Ottoman Empire is going to fall if he is given an instrumental role in the league formed by mr. le prevost, probably the Pope. Seuin thus claims that he—through alchemy—has achieved the necessary means to make a league possible, whether by monetary means or spiritual strength. The letter ends with a salute: “Amen. V. Ange.”

Europe’s preoccupation with the Moslim world grew in pace with the Turkish advances through Hungary towards Vienna. The Protestant reformers in the group around Dury and Comenius had long been convinced of the necessity of forming a program for converting the Jews and the Turks to Christianity, as an essential element in their millenarian scheme. But their efforts did not lead to their envisioned community of minds. Instead, the reality of the Turkish incursion drew attention away from general pacification. The awaited clash between the Ottomans and the west prompted Christina to write in her maxims: “Craindre le Turc n’est pas un terreur panique.” Catholic unionism directed against the Turks was officially inaugurated by Pope Alexander VII in 1660, when he declared his intention of forming a league against the Ottomans. To Mazarin’s dismay, Christina had earlier tried to aid the scheme of general reconciliation by moving the former French Frondeur, Cardinal de Retz, closer to the Pope. The league now faltered

1 Azzolino-collection 36, K 449. Riksarkivet, Stockholm.
2 Arckenholtz (1751) vol. II. p. 71. Christina’s comment in her Maxims, “Centurion VIII”.
because France refused to cooperate. Achieving a union between the Christian princes was a very difficult goal, because the rivalry between France and the pro-Spanish parts of Italy had no natural resolution. Given her mediation attempts after the abdication and her Naples plan in 1657, Christina was acutely aware of the problem and believed that she could use her contacts for diplomacy. In 1663, she argued that a European military campaign must be sent to help Venice defend its trade in the Mediterranean and that driving the Turk out of Crete was the first step to be taken in defence of the Christian states.\(^3\) In 1667 in Hamburg, while planning her Polish candidacy, she gave Tasso’s play on Godefry de Bouillon’s crusade *Ierusalem liberata* and asked the Swedish general Carl Gustaf Wrangel and the fieldmarshal Paul Wurtz to join a European military league.

In 1672, with the failed Polish candidacy fresh in her memory, Christina’s European plans were further disappointed. She tried to use her influence with the Swedes but King Charles XI turned down the Pope’s request that he should join the Poles against the Turks, who now were pressing forward through Hungary against Vienna. Christina no longer could influence political decisions, a fact she could not really accept. Her unionist ideas stem from an early date and she seems to have assigned herself a pivotal role as mediator, not only on the Franco-Spanish axis, but also in closing the rift with the North. In Marseille, on her way from Rome to fame in Paris 1656, in a spate of militant unionism, she had already chosen watchwords for her guard such as “St. Louis”.\(^4\)

Her militarist activity was in vogue. When Leibniz left Nürnberg for Frankfurt in 1667, he had met his patron Christian von Boineburg, who in 1645–47 was diplomat at the Swedish court and whose pro-Irenist plans influenced him to study political and juridical problems.\(^5\) Boineburg introduced Leibniz to several diplomats and together they tried to influence the Polish election in favour of Count Philipp von Neubourg.\(^6\) Besides writing juridical

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\(^6\) On Skytte see Fritz Arnhem (1911) above. In 1669 Leibniz wrote down notes for a “societas philadelphia” and in a letter to Henri Justel, he later recalls Skytte’s project for a “Heliopolis”.