

RHETORIC OF THE “OTHER” IN NEO-LATIN (OBSERVATIONS BASED ON ERASMUS, BUSBECQ, PETER MARTYR, SEPÚLVEDA, JOANNES LATINUS, MAFFEI, LANDÍVAR)

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Abstract. The paper investigates the ways in which the ideas of “self” and “other” are conveyed in a number of various Neo-Latin passages. It considers the dynamics of explicit and implicit identifications, together with the suggested connotations in them, and relates all of these to the intentions of the author. The paper also explores the possibilities and the limitations of the Latin language in expressing these concepts, and argues that Latin is a language that crosses boundaries and is more inclusive than is sometimes thought.

Keywords. Neo-Latin; “the other”; Desiderius Erasmus; Ogier Busbecq; Peter Martyr; Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda; Joannes Latinus; Giovanni Pietro Maffei; Rafael Landívar.

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A BOOK ON LATINITY AND ALTERITY IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD WAS RECENTLY edited with the eponymous title by the Australian scholars Yasmin Haskell and Juanita Feros Ruys.¹ It originated from a colloquium held at the University of Western Australia in Perth, certainly a place to which Latin is not inherently native. One may argue the same about the western part of the southern hemisphere, and yet, as we hope to show in the course of this paper, the shores where we are standing now are not necessarily considered in Latin “the other world.”

Four main ways of otherness are studied in “Latinity and Alterity”: humanistic Latin versus Medieval Latin and vernacular; the Latin world versus the East; Latin versus women; Latin versus the New World. Admittedly, alterity in the book is considered primarily under a geographical

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¹ Haskell et Feros 2010.

aspect.² This fourfold investigation of alterity, including both voices from "others" and voices about "others" comes in a certain way as a response to Françoise Waquet's 1998 monograph *Le latin, ou l'empire d'un signe, XVIe-XXe siècle*³ about the fate of Latin in the early modern and modern world, in which Latin is defined mostly as an excluding sign (for the most part of non-European, of women, of illiterate). Haskell's and Ruys's volume researches geographical areas and aspects that are not considered in Waquet's largely Eurocentric book, particularly drawing attention to the concept of positionality,⁴ meaning that a sign signifies different things in different contexts. The current paper intends to contribute toward and to elaborate the understanding of the flexibility and inclusiveness of Latin.

The geographical aspect of alterity seems to be the most significant one. At the same time, its predominance could be challenged. In fact, the geographical place is not a constant, but changes as a factor determining otherness. Let us take in consideration one of the early accounts of the travels to the New World and of its exploration. Peter Martyr of Anghiera (Pietro Martire d'Anghiera) (1457–1526) was an Italian historical writer who spent considerable time at the Spanish court and wrote eight very long *Decades de orbe novo* "Decades About the New World" concerning the discovery and the first contacts with both Americas. Peter Martyr himself is said to have known Christopher Columbus. The following excerpt is from the Fifth *Decade*, and it describes the beginning of Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe. In it there is a curious expression, which also appears in several other places in Peter Martyr's book.

Decades de orbe novo, V, 7 Ad Fortunatas primum, dehinc ad Gorgodum insularum prospectum, quas Portugallicus earum dominus Capitis nuncupat Viridis, appulsi verterunt proras in dexteram a tergo nostri putati continentis, per eius terrae porrecturam quae dicitur Sancti Augustini Castellana impositione pauloque ulterius a Portugallicis Sanctae Mariae, quae ultra lineam aequinoctialem protenditur gradus quinque, decesseruntque ad Antarcticum...⁵

Having stopped first at the Canary islands, then arrived into sight of the Gorgodes, which the Portuguese to whom they belong call Cape Verde, they turned their course to the right, leaving behind the part of the world that we consider ours, <sailing afterwards> along the land stretch called St. Augustine in Spanish and shortly after along

² Haskell et Feros 2010, 2.

³ Waquet, 1998.

⁴ Haskell et Feros 2010, 7.

⁵ The text follows, with some changes in the punctuation, the recent Latin-Italian bilingual edition of *Decades: Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, De Orbe Novo Decades I-VIII*, 2 vols: 1: I-IV; 2: V-VIII. A cura di Rosanna Mazzacane ed Elissa Magioncalda, Genova, Università, Dipartimento di Archeologia, Filologia Classica e loro Tradizioni, 2005.

the land called by the Portuguese Santa Maria, which extends for five degrees beyond the equator, and then left for Antarctica...

The phrase which concerns us is *nostrī putatī continentis*, “of our supposed continent; of the part of the world/the landmass that we consider ours.” Phrases like *crediti continentis*, *putati continentis*, *existimati continentis* are found passim in Martyr with the general meaning “of the alleged continent” and are due to the uncertainty as to what a newly discovered landmass comprehends, and whether it indeed amounts to a continent. In the passage above *noster putatus continens* (with a rare masculine: the classical word *continens* is normally feminine, *terra continens* being implied) obviously refers to the known lands of the African continent, or to a conjunction of the known African and the European and possibly Asian lands. Most probably its meaning would be: the world, the landmass known to us.

Slightly later, in the same Fifth Decade, the same phrase is used to describe a different reality, related to the transition of Magellan from the later-to-be called Magellan straits into the Pacific ocean.

Decades de orbe novo, V, 7 Vastum eo tractu superato captarunt oceanum aliud mare, id est nostrī putatī continentis a tergo, marique illi iungitur, quod Australe in Decadibus appello, a Vasco Nuñez primum reperto...

After they managed to get out of the straits they entered into the vast ocean: into another sea, leaving behind the part of the world that we consider ours; and this sea is connected with that other sea, which in the *Decades* I call the South Sea, discovered first by Vasco Nuñez...

With Peter Martyr, the adjective *noster*, “ours,” seems to change in order to indicate different reality with the change of circumstances. In the first instance, it indicates the African continent, possibly conjoined with all known world, that is Africa, Europe, and Asia. In the second instance, it indicates the American continent, and also possibly all the known world. The term *noster* expands together with the expanding world.

At the end of the Seventh *Decade* of Peter Martyr, this same phrase, *nostrī putatī continentis*, is used twice in the description of the itinerary of Sebastian Cabot who was going to circumnavigate the globe for the second time after Magellan in 1526, but remained instead in Brazil.⁶ Again, it clearly

⁶ *Decades de orbe novo*, VII, 6: Commode propterea littora percurreret illa donec flexuoso Magagliano freto, canopeo syderi proximo traiecto, in dextram a tergo nostrī putatī continentis ... proras diriget, perque capricorni zonam ad equatorem regredietur, in quo spacio insularum numerum reperiet innumerum, sitarum in ea pelagi vastitate... His perlustratis et prudenti diligentia pertractatis, nostrī putatī continentis latus australe universum abradent, applicabuntque se ad colonias Panamam et Natam, in littoribus illis erectas, aureae Castellae terminos.

indicates the landmass/continent/world along whose coast someone traveling from the Magellan straits to Panama would sail, or which would be left behind by someone sailing off the western South American coast through the Pacific ocean. The western shore of South America becomes the limit of "our world." "Noster" is an adjective applicable to the whole world. There seems to be no problem with perceiving the whole world, no matter how much it expands, as *noster*. Nothing in Latin prevents the flexibility with which what is "ours" could change together with the change of circumstances.

The concept of "ours" and "fatherland" in Neo-Latin writers becomes rather complicated. Such is the case of the so-called "Indian" writers, indigenous people from the New World who not only became proficient in Latin, but created Latin literary works as if in their own tongue, in the same way as any other citizens of the Republic of Letters would.⁷ Arguably, the most famous of these writers with a complicated identity is Rafael Landívar (1731–1793), the author of the descriptive poem *Rusticatio Mexicana*,⁸ "Mexican Country Scenes." Born in Guatemala, a member of the Jesuit order and a scholar, he was exiled to Italy when the Society of Jesus was expelled from the Americas in 1767. In Bologna, he wrote, in elegant Latin, *Rusticatio Mexicana* in which he praised the natural beauties of Mexico taken loosely to signify a larger region, including his native Guatemala (the first edition of the work was published in Modena in 1781). The dedication is to Guatemala, a city doubly lost for Landívar, because of his exile, and because of the devastating earthquake of 1773. Landívar is one of the "others," since he was born not European, but he writes in the language of the Europeans. He even writes with such elegance as to surpass the Europeans in the mastery of their own language, if Latin is indeed to be deemed substantially European. Identities are even more complicated. Landívar writes from Europe, seemingly without being allowed or inclined to express too vehemently the sadness he feels about being prohibited from his own home. In America, he had become an "other" in the land of "others." As a Jesuit, he was associated with the Europeans in the land of the Americans. Yet, in Italy Landívar also is an "other" in the land of "others." There, he is an American in the land of the Europeans. Paradoxically, Landívar returns to his native fatherland through the language of his adoptive fatherland, Latin. Latin allows Landívar, after having been doubly exiled, to be doubly reconnected. What is "ours" and the fatherland do not seem to depend exclusively on the geographical location. The poet declares:

⁷ The indigenous Latin writers of the Americas constitute an important and largely unexplored field of Neo-Latin. For some recent perspectives, see Laird 2010.

⁸ Laird 2006.

Me iuuat omnino, terrae natalis amore,
 usque uirescentes patrios inuisere campos,
 Mexiceosque lacus, et amoenos Chloridis hortos
 undique collectis sociis percurrere cymba;
 tum iuga Xoruli uisam, Vulcania regna...
 (*Rusticatio Mexicana*, I, 7–11)

It is truly pleasing for me, for the sake of <my> love for the fatherland, to visit the evergreen fields of the fatherland and to sail through the Mexican lakes and the lovely gardens of Flora with friends gathered from everywhere. Then to visit the top of Jorullo, a realm of Vulcan...

The poem makes the return true, and the Latin language helps conceptualize the fatherland. In the dedication to the poem, it is stated that Guatemala City will arise from the ruins (*surgunt iam celsa sepulchro/ limina, se tollunt ardua templa polo*, “lofty dwellings now are raised from the tomb, high temples touch the heavens”) which could be meant as the restoration of the city through poetic reconstruction. The action of poetic creation constructs reality. Who are the *socii* (“fellows,” “comrades”) about to accompany the poet? They come *undique*, “from everywhere.” Could it be that they are the other citizens of the Republic of Letters, connected with the poet through the language that knows no geographical barriers and creates a space of its own? And what would prevent from including in these *socii* even us, the modern readers, while we admire the swimming gardens and the industriousness and creativity of the Mexican people who have crafted them?

The limitations of the geographical aspect of the fatherland are clearly stated by Joannes Latinus (1518?-ca1594), a black man from sub-Saharan Africa with slave parents, who in the mid-sixteenth century became a Latin professor at the University of Granada and wrote a two-book epic poem about the defeat of the Turkish army in the battle of Lepanto in 1571 by Don John of Austria, brother of the Spanish king Philip. This is how Joannes Latinus defines himself in the prefatory elegy to the poem *Ad catholicum et invictissimum regem Philippum elegia* “An Elegy to the Catholic and Most Invincible King Philip”⁹:

Aethiopum terris venit, qui gesta Latinus
 Austriadae mira carminis arte canat. (7–8)
 Quod si nostra tuis facies, Rex, nigra ministris,
 Displicet, Aethiopum non placet alba viris.

⁹ *Austrias carmen* per magistrum Ioannem Latinum Garnatae studiosae adulescentiae moderatorem, Garnatae, ex officina Hugonis de Mena, 1573. For more about Joannes Latinus see: Fra-Molinero 2005.

Illic Auroram sordet qui viserit albus,
 Suntque duces nigri, Rex quoque fuscus adest. (19–22)
 Nec rerum est Dominus, qui non admiserit omnes,
 Gentem ne excludat Regia forte meam. (41–42)

He comes from the lands of the Ethiopians in order to sing with marvelous art, as a Latin man, the deeds of Don John of Austria... And if, o King, our faces do not please your courtiers, the white face does not please the Ethiopians. If a white man visits the East, he seems unsightly; the leaders are black, there is also a black king... This man is not a lord of the world, who does not accept everyone. Let the royal palace not exclude by any chance my people.

Not only does Joannes qualify himself as *Latinus* because of his mastery of the Latin language, but he also calls into doubt the criteria according to which people are excluded as "others," and emphasizes their relativity, finally asking for universal inclusion of all people.

The geographic and ethnic fluidity of the concept of fatherland in Latin certainly shows that Latin is not at all Eurocentric. What is "ours" undoubtedly expands geographically where the Republic of Letters is concerned. How accepting, however, is Latin to those beyond *res publica litterarum*? For Erasmus, the most famous citizen of *res publica litterarum*, learning is the most important criterion in judging the other, but together with it comes general humanity. This becomes evident if we consider some of Erasmus' travel letters. If we look, just for example, at letter 867¹⁰ describing the rather tortuous European journey from Basel to Louvain, we will discover the way Erasmus judges the others: *vir doctus et humanus* "a learned and cultivated man"; *homo commodissimus et festivissimus*, "a very easy and very jovial man"; *Latini sermonis exacte peritus, tum iureconsultissimus*, "minutely experienced in the Latin language, and also very much so in the law"; *Iuvenis est, sed rara et plusquam senili prudentia, pauciloquus, ... argute loquitur, immo cordate, citra ostentationem doctus non in uno studiorum genere tantum, totus candidus et amico amicus*, "He is a young man, but with rare judgment characteristic more of an old man, not saying too much, but ... saying subtly or rather wisely what he says, learned without ostentation in more than one field of study, a man of complete integrity, a friend to his friends"; *amicus sincerus*, "a true friend" etc. etc. Knowledge and learning are of the utmost importance for Erasmus, but simple human kindness is as well. Erasmus sees all the people of the world as his fellow citizens. When propagating his irenic views in the treatise explaining the proverb *Dulce*

¹⁰ *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P.S. Allen, Oxonii, In typographeo Clarendoniano, 1906–1956, vol. II.

bellum inexpertis, “War seems pleasant to those who have not experienced it,” this is how Erasmus talks about the Turks, or any population against whom there is a general exhortation to wage war: *Eiciamus primum trabem ex oculo nostro, mox eiecturi festucam ex oculo fratris*¹¹ (“Let us first take out the beam from our eye, and then we will take out the straw from the eye of our brother”). Erasmus discusses at some length his view that all people are fellow human beings. The same theme appears in his critique of the unnecessary and seemingly unexplainable human divisions and enmities between different communities in *Institutio principis christiani*, ll. 593–7: *Nunc fere Gallum odit Anglus non ob aliud, nisi quod Gallus est; Anglum Scotus, tantum quia Scotus est, Germanum Italus, Eluetium Sueuus atque item de caeteris; regio regioni inuisa, ciuitas ciuitati. Cur haec stultissima nomina magis nos distrahunt, quam conglutinat omnibus commune Christi uocabulum?*¹² “Now the Englishman almost hates the Frenchman for no other reason except that he is French; the Scot hates the Englishman, only because he <himself> is Scottish, the Italian hates the German, the Swabian hates the Swiss and so on. A country is hateful to another country, a city to another city. Why do these most foolish names pull us apart more than the name of Christ that is common to everybody?”

Actually, Erasmus seems to transcend the sensibilities of his time and to be even more relevant today.¹³ Admittedly, the geographical sphere of Erasmus’ activities is circumscribed to Europe. Some have, however, detected similarities between Erasmus and one of the first men to write about the American indigenous population. Geoffrey Eatough, in a relatively recent article in *Studi Umanistici Piceni*, argues for a connection between Erasmus and Peter Martyr in terms of acceptance of their fellow human beings.¹⁴ By the way, Eatough also considers similar the styles of Erasmus and Peter Martyr—plain and directly truthful. This style comparison could be called into doubt, since the language of Martyr seems rather different from the Erasmian unblemished classical prose, with Martyr often slipping into hybrid and somewhat improvised expressions influenced by Italian or rather Spanish with which he was imbued on a daily basis. In a previous article Eatough also makes a case for Martyr as an author of tolerance who distinguishes between the *otium*-way of life of the Caribbeans, and

¹¹ *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, ordinis secundi tomus septimus, *Adagiorum chilias quarta* (pars prior) edd. R. Hoven et C. Lauvergnat-Gagnière (Amsterdam etc. – Elsevier) IV, 1.1, pp. 39–40.

¹² *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, ordinis quarti tomus primus, *Institutio principis Christiani*, ed. O. Herding (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1974), p. 218.

¹³ About Erasmus’s message being understood better today see Halkin 1994, 296.

¹⁴ Eatough 2009.

negotium-way of the Mayans, analyzing lifestyles, and not discarding all indigenous people as inferior.¹⁵ Peter Martyr is undoubtedly accepting of the native tribes and his arguments were used in the 1550–1551 Valladolid controversy regarding the dignity of the American indigenous people by Bartolomé de Las Casas against Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. In fact, Sepúlveda could be considered among the truly excluding Neo-Latin authors, if not indeed the most excluding one. He not only openly calls the indigenous populations inferior and worthy of enslavement, but also, and much in Caesar's style, describes them in a most detached way.¹⁶ *Barbari* is the word most consistently used by him, as for someone belonging to a totally different, inferior world.¹⁷

Sepúlveda and Erasmus may be taken as representatives of two possible and diametrically opposed theoretical approaches toward the "other." Let us look at someone dealing in practice with others, different not only geographically, but also with a totally different mindset. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (in Latin, Augerius Busbequius) (1522–1592) was a Flemish humanist and an ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to the Ottoman court. He wrote four long letters describing his life in Constantinople and his travels within the Ottoman empire. The more carefully one reads the text of his letters (originally intended, by the way, for a fellow diplomat), the more such a reader will see Busbecq as a remarkably flexible and even, speaking in contemporary terms, "politically correct" Latin writer.

Busbecq is undoubtedly a citizen of the Republic of Letters. His interests in learning extend to botany, but an appreciation of classical antiquity is the cornerstone of Busbecq's mentality. One of the things for which Busbecq remained most famous is, in fact, his discovery of *Monumentum Ancyranum*, Ankara's inscription containing *Res gestae divi Augusti*. There is a characteristic passage in his first letter defining Busbecq's belonging to the classical tradition. Here is what happened once during his travels in the Ottoman empire:

Epistolae Turcicae, I, p. 34 ...faber quidam aerarius mihi magnopere movit stomachum, a quo cum numismata requireremus, ingentem se aulam paucis ante diebus plenam habuisse narrabat: ex quibus lebetes aeneos aliquot conflasset, quod nullum eorum aut usum aut pretium putaret esse. Sane magno mihi erat dolori tantum periisse antiquitatis. Sed ego illum ultus sum ut dicerem, me centum aureos pro iis, superessent modo,

¹⁵ Eatough 1999.

¹⁶ Passim in his *De orbe novo: Johannes G. Sepulveda, De orbe novo*, edidit Antonius Ramírez de Verger, Stutgardiae, Teubner, 1992.

¹⁷ By the way, *barbari* is frequently used by Peter Martyr himself. The Latin translation of the first letter of Columbus about the new world employs the term *incolae, Indi*, and *gentes*. See *The Latin Letter of Columbus Printed in 1493*, London, Bernard Quaritch, 1893.

numeraturam. sic illum non minus amisso eo e faucibus bolo tristem a me amisi, quam ille me ea vetustatis iactura commoverat.¹⁸

...some bronze-smith made me very angry, when after our inquiry about ancient coins, said that a few days ago he had had a huge hall full of them: he then melted them down into a few bronze kettles, since he saw in them no use or value. Of course, I was grieved that so much antiquity had perished. But I avenged myself saying I would have paid one hundred golden coins, had the bronze coins been saved. So I left him no less sad because of the missed profit, than he had made me because of the damage to the ancient artefacts.

There seems to be a very clear line of division between those who belong to the continuity of the ancient world, although geographically disjoined from it, and those, who, although living geographically in the same place where the ancient world existed, clearly do not appreciate it and do not belong to it. Toward the end of the third letter, excusing his Latin style (probably a case of false modesty, since Busbecq writes with elegance), Busbecq asks rhetorically what else is to be expected from this *penitissima barbaries*, “most barbaric land”.¹⁹

The irreconcilable opposition between the Christian and the Muslim world as a commonplace in Neo-Latin literature is discussed by Marc Laureys in his contribution to *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*.²⁰ Such a topos includes a warning to the European powers about the rising threat from the East. We find a similar concern in the third letter where the order, frugality, and military prowess of the Turks are opposed to the disorder and licentiousness of the West.²¹ This opposition, however, is not at all the leitmotif of Busbecq’s Turkish letters. The above-mentioned expression, *penitissima barbaries*, is, in fact, most rare. Words as *barbarus*, *ferus*, *ferox*, *saevus*, *inhumanus* are extremely rare or indeed absent from the letters.

¹⁸ *Augerii Gisenii Busbequii Legationis Turcicae epistolae quattuor*, Parisiis, Ex officina Plantiniana, 1595. About Busbecq’s worldviews regarding the Ottoman Empire and the West see Dominique Arrighi, *Écritures de l’ambassade: Les lettres turques d’Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2011, especially pp. 209–20.

¹⁹ *Epistolae Turcicae*, III, p. 116: Quamquam quid hodie e Graecia bene Latinum aut e Turcia penitissimaque barbarie elegantius expectes?

²⁰ Laureys 2010.

²¹ *Epistolae Turcicae*, III, p. 72: Quae cogitantem horror corripit quid postremo futurum sit cum hanc nostram rationem cum eorum comparo, superare alteros, alteros interire necesse est, ambo certe incolumes esse non possumus. Ab illa parte stant immensae imperii opes, vires integrae, armorum usus et exercitatio, miles veteranus, victoriarum assiduitas, laborum patientia, concordia, ordo, disciplina, frugalitas, vigilantia. Ab hac nostra, publica egestas, privatus luxus, deminutae vires, infracti animi, laboris et armorum insolentia, contumaces milites, duces avari, disciplinae contemptus, licentia, temeritas, ebrietas, crapula, quodque est pessimus, illis vincere, nobis vinci solitum; see also pp. 107–8 about the averse feeling that the Muslims have when Christians are concerned and their readiness to offend Christians.

The tone of Busbecq's writing is truly moderate and so is the position he takes. He appreciates good things in others, is able to see negativity in his own world, and, furthermore, is continuously looking for some common ground when among foreigners. Let us consider as an example one instance of Busbecq's attitude amid "others" in the Ottoman empire. It had come to Busbecq's knowledge that on a certain day the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent would depart from Constantinople with an army in order to help his son Selim in his fight against his other son Bayezid. Busbecq had made arrangements with his Chaush, his Turkish aid and guard, to leave early in order to watch the departure from the second floor of a house which he had rented for the day. When the appointed day arrives, Busbecq finds his own door locked and the Chaush coming up with excuses, the real reason being an order coming from above and trying to prevent a foreigner from watching the Sultan departing to wage war against his own son. Busbecq is fuming with anger, and yet, even amid this anger he states: *Animus fuerat Chiausso me frustrari, homini tamen non malo (Epistolae Turcicae, III, p. 101)*. "The Chaush, not a bad man on his own, was intending to deceive me." Remarkably, Busbecq is capable of perceiving the Chaush simply as another human prompted to act in a certain way by circumstances. With the help of the sympathizing janissaries (Ottoman elite infantry), Busbecq manages to break out and finally to watch the magnificent display of the army. On his return, reprimanded by the Chaush, Busbecq argues:

Epistolae Turcicae, III, p. 103 Quaero denique vtrum me pro oratore habeant an pro captiuo. Respondet pro oratore.... Sin pro oratore, vt dicis, cur liber non sum, si orator sum? Cur domo egredi cum volo, prohibeor? Solent, inquam, captiui includi, non oratores. Libertas apud omnes gentes seruatur oratoribus. Hoc magis est publicum.

"At last I ask whether they consider me an ambassador or a prisoner. <The Chaush> answers "an ambassador"... If an ambassador, as you say, why I am not free if I am an ambassador? Why am I prevented from leaving the house when I want? For, I say, prisoners are usually kept in, not ambassadors. All populations protect the freedom of the ambassadors. This is the accepted custom."

At the end, Busbecq accepts everybody as they are and judges them equally. His Latin writing is one of tolerance and inclusion, although it concerns a population totally different from any that is defined by the use of the Latin language.

This accepting attitude toward the other is not an exception, and not limited to the case of Busbecq. The reader obtains a similar impression from the prolix writings of another Latin author who describes the customs of various populations. Giovanni Pietro Maffei S.J. (1533–1603) spent considerable time in the Portuguese archives to find his material for the

sixteen books of *Historiae Indicae*, “Indian Histories,” describing the Portuguese exploration of new worlds. Maffei seems to appreciate every good feature in others. So, for example, describing China in book six, he praises the industriousness of its inhabitants, or talking about the Japanese in book twelve, their toughness.²² His tone is moderate and friendly toward other populations. One exception may be when it comes to religion; for example, in the first book, Maffei has no other definition for the teachings of the Indian Brahmins except *portentosa mendacia*, “monstrous lies,” and *variae superstitiones*, “different superstitions”.²³ That put aside, the Latin of Maffei’s work is more including than excluding, and it accepts a certain universality of humankind.

We thus see that Latin can be accepting and encompass the *conciues*, “fellow citizens,” of all world. Latin can even surpass religious differences, or go so far as to accept the enemy as a human being. To return to Joannes Latinus, the black poet mentioned before, who, following the Vergil’s tracks, composed a two-book epic poem *Austrias*, “The Song of John of Austria,” celebrating the victory of the eponymous leader over the Ottomans under Ali Pasha at the 1571 battle of Lepanto. In the beginning of the book the Turks are undoubtedly shown as the abominable “other”: *inimica secta*, “hateful sect” (1.344), *Turcarum pestis* (1.357) “the plague of the Turks.” Ali Pasha is described as *serpens* (1.358), “a serpent”. Immediately after that Ali Pasha’s face is indicated as *semifera facies*, “semiwild face” (2.1199). Joannes is elated with enthusiasm for the right cause against the barbarians. However, after victory is won and Ali Pasha is decapitated, this is how he describes the mourning of Ali Pasha’s twin sons.

An tu, magne pater, dederas promissa parenti,
 ut te per fluctus crudeli morte preemptum
 cernentes animis rumpamur tristibus ambo?
 Captivos moriens potuisti linqere natos?
 (*Austrias*, II, 1226–9)

Figite iamque caput geminum sic puppibus altis.
 At patris digno nostri mandate sepulchro.²⁴
 (*Austrias*, II, 1254–5)

²² Ioan. Petri Maffei Bergomatis e Societate Iesu Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI, Antverpiae, Ex officina Martini Nutii, ad insigne duarum ciconiarum, MDCV.

²³ Ioan. Petri Maffei Bergomatis e Societate Iesu Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI, liber primus, p. 36.

²⁴ Wright, Spence, Lemons 2014. In the 2014 edition, there is a question mark after *parenti*, but we have changed it into a comma, since the *ut*-clause elucidates *promissa*. The question, filled with sad irony, follows Virgil’s *Aeneid*, XI, 152 “Non haec, o Palla, dederas promissa parenti/ cautius ut saevo velles te credere Marti,” where Evander is speaking to the dead Pallas. However, there is a varia lectio *petenti* for *parenti* (“Pallas, you had not given me these promises, when I was asking

Have you, great father, promised to your father that both of us should burst asunder with sadness seeing you perished in the sea by cruel death? Could you die and abandon your children in captivity?!...

Now, <o enemies>, stick our two heads on the high sterns: send us to death worthy of our father.

The Turks are not "other" any more, but fellow human beings with whose suffering the poet sympathizes. A few pages later, he paints a thoroughly human portrait of Ali Pasha.

Austrias, II, 1671–5

Hispanos captos Bassan tractabat amice,
Et dabat his vestem, frigus ne laedere posset,
Atque famem miseris generosus saepe levabat.
Qui semper visus pugnare et ducere classem,
Et miles solers, dux fortis gesserat agmen.

The Pasha was treating the captive Spaniards kindly, and used to give them clothes so that they would not suffer cold, and was nobly assuaging the hunger of the poor men. He was always leading his fleet, and he was both a dexterous soldier, and a courageous leader of the troops.

Joannes Latinus achieves certain universality of humankind even over religious difference and over enmity.

It is the intent of this paper to show how Latin is capable of expressing the "other," in different circumstances, and with different intentions of the author. There is a certain flexibility in how the other is perceived in Latin. Latin is a language that crosses boundaries and is inclusive in a much easier way than Waquet suggests: more aspects of alterity could be explored than the ones in *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*. The whole subject, however, remains an open field to study, and although no exhaustive investigation is possible, a more systematic one would be desirable.

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you to want to be more careful in the raging war."), of which Joannes Latinus, who undoubtedly followed Virgil's text, was unaware.

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Titolo. La retorica dell'altro nel latino umanistico (osservazioni su Erasmo da Rotterdam, Busbecq, Pietro Martire, Sepúlveda, Joannes Latinus, Maffei, Landívar)

Sommario. Nel presente articolo si indaga come le nozioni del sé e dell'altro siano trasmesse in alcuni testi latini umanistici. Si prende in considerazione la dinamica delle identificazioni esplicite ed implicite, assieme alle connotazioni in esse suggerite, e si mette tutto ciò in relazione con l'intenzione dello scrittore. Nell'articolo si esplorano inoltre le possibilità e le limitazioni della lingua latina nell'esprimere questi concetti e si sostiene che il latino è una lingua che attraversa i confini e si rivela inclusiva degli "altri" più di quanto talvolta si creda.

Keywords. Latino umanistico; "l'altro"; Erasmo da Rotterdam; Ogier Busbecq; Pietro Martire; Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda; Joannes Latinus; Giovanni Pietro Maffei; Rafael Landívar.