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A Heroic Tale: Marin Barleti's Scanderbeg between orality and literacy

By Minna Skafte Jensen

To the memory of Androkli Kostallari

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Barleti's book

Albanian Marin Barleti's account of his great compatriot Scanderbeg's life was published in Rome 1508-10. Its title is *De Vita Moribus Ac Rebus Praecipue Aduersus Turcas, Gestis, Georgii Castrioti, Clarissimi Epirotarum Principis, qui propter celeberrima facinora, Scanderbegus, hoc est, Alexander Magnus, cognominatus fuit, libri Tredecim, per Marinum Barletium Scodrensem conscripti*. (About the excellent Prince of the Epirots, Gjergj Castrioti's, life, character and deeds, especially against the Turks. Because of his famous exploits he was surnamed Scanderbeg, that is, Alexander the Great. Thirteen books by Marin Barleti of Shkodra.) An informative title, indeed! Its theme is a hero, his life-work was performed in Epirus, was directed against the Turks, and was on a level with ancient times.

Scanderbeg lived from 1405 to 1468. His biographer, the priest Barleti, was probably born c. 1450 and died c. 1520. After the Turks' final conquest of Albania he emigrated to Italy, where it seems that he spent the rest of his life in Venice and Rome. He wrote his great book across a distance in time and space, which adds a tragic flavour to the description of Scanderbeg's glorious victories over the Turks: in spite of the hero's incomparable deeds Albania now lies in ruins, for his work crumbled after his death. [1]

The prologue establishes this sombre framework, but as soon as the author begins the description of his hero, the melancholy present pales into insignificance against the excitement of heroic valour and victorious exploits. But the point of departure is sad. Just imagine what would happen if Alexander the Great returned! Or Pyrrhus, who in his day fought so brilliantly against the Romans! They would hardly be able to recognize their country, but would leave again full of contempt, because it was no longer a home of freedom as in their day. The present squalor is so overwhelming that the author fears he will be unable to convince his readers that Albania was glorious not only in antiquity, but also during the immediately preceding period. Freedom reigned supreme, where now slavery has spread. In those times the whole world looked to Epirus in admiration, where now the only question is whether fortune will never weary of plaguing the country.

The work is dedicated to Donferrante Kastrioti, Scanderbeg's grandchild, but also to posterity, and its double purpose is to offer a treasury of moral examples from reality and to ensure for the Albanian nation the kind of immortality that is to be found in fame and is treated by writers. Thus, the scene is now occupied by three protagonists – Barleti, Donferrante and Scanderbeg as author, addressee and hero respectively.

A certain identification develops between author and hero: Barleti feels that he has ventured into a battle in which he is to defend his hero's deeds against lurking oblivion – from all around he hears Scanderbeg's deeds calling out to him. And he has decided not to let the scale of the task and his own timidity deter him from writing, just as Scanderbeg himself was not deterred from acting. His book is first and foremost an act of gratitude towards his native country, *patriae praecipua pietas*.

Author, addressee and hero

There is no distance between Barleti and the narrator. The 'I' that is incessantly speaking – speculating, commenting and moralizing – is the priest from Shkodra. On a few occasions he refers to his own experience, as when for instance he remembers how the Turks at a certain point led an army against Shkodra so cunningly that "we only noticed them when they were standing at the gates of the town". Mostly he functions as an 'objective' narrator who does not describe what takes place inside his characters, but has them reveal their intentions by means of words and deeds, or he refers to what has been told to him. Only on rare occasions does he shift into the role of the 'omniscient' narrator, and this is especially in dramatic situations, as when before the decisive battle between Scanderbeg and Sultan Murad he informs the reader of what each of the two combatants are thinking. There is no doubt about whose side he is on. From the point at which Scanderbeg creates his first army he calls it *nostri*, our soldiers. Now and then he sounds as if he were taking his reader on a guided tour through the events: when for instance the troops perform an especially lucky move, he may exclaim that "it was a wonderful sight", and a vivid description of a night raid is concluded by: "But now let us return to the camp together with Moses". Sometimes his comments are sarcastic: "Perhaps more fear than danger was present", or triumphant: "This is how the barbarian who had set out in search of prey did himself become the prey".

He also comments upon his own role. Thus, he often discusses the order in which to proceed, or whether he may be allowed a digression. In the preface he excuses himself for having assumed such an overwhelming burden by referring to the fact that nobody else seems to be ready to do so. That this is not just the false modesty Renaissance authors regularly express is suggested by the fact that midway through the work he introduces a second preface, in which he continues and expands the metaphor of the burden. He compares himself to a wanderer who has now carried his baggage halfway along the road, but is doubtful whether he will manage the other half as well. Out of consideration for both the reader and himself he promises to shift the burden from one hand to the other, place it on his neck or shoulder, and sometimes even take a break. In short, he promises to vary his narrative and also allow some space for diversion. In both prefaces he also underlines his personal desire for writing. [2]

Considering that Barleti's work is addressed to Scanderbeg's grandchild, the latter has a surprisingly small role to play compared to that normally accorded by writers in this period to their addressees. He is not the object of a panegyric, and in the second preface he is not even mentioned. That the biography has nevertheless been addressed to him all along is indirectly expressed at the end when Scanderbeg is dying. The hero then calls together all the Albanian princes as well as various others, among them some envoys from Venice who happen to be around. He leaves his little son Johannes to their care, and after pointing to him as his successor he gives a speech in which he instructs his son in the duties of a good monarch. An obvious reading of this speech is that these are not only Scanderbeg's words to his son, but also the author's to the hero's grandson.

Another addressee, who is however mentioned time and again, is posterity. Barleti's motive for writing stems from his conviction that he has an important message for future generations. It is his responsibility that Scanderbeg's deeds and Albanian greatness should not be devoured by voracious oblivion, *edax oblivio*. An especially important part of this audience is formed by Venetian readers. "The Venetian senate and people" are everywhere mentioned with the greatest respect, even when Venice betrays Scanderbeg by entering into an alliance with the Turks, and in the ideologically loaded scene at Scanderbeg's deathbed the city is praised in detail. That Barleti also hoped to find readers at the courts of Rome and Naples is to be deduced from the praises he heaps on great deceased princes such as King Alfonso of Naples and Popes Pius II (Aeneas Silvius) and Paul II. Barleti is not, however, addressing a specific audience. His potential readers are all those who get hold of his work, and the author conducts a running dialogue with them, wonders whether they will believe him, and assures them that his work contains useful moral lessons. [3]

The hero, Georgius Castriotus Scanderbegus, is the figure that unifies the whole composition, which follows his life. His exploits fall into two main parts: the wars against Amurathes (Murad II, 1404-51) and Mahometes (Mehmed II, 1432-81), Books 1-6 and 7-13 respectively. Scanderbeg is a blameless hero, a fact that even before his birth is made clearly evident by means of dreams and omens (although the author is sceptical of such phenomena), just as he is, of course, a youngest son. [4] As a child he and his brothers are taken hostage by the Turkish Sultan, at whose court he is given an excellent education in languages, horsemanship and use of armour, and where already as a young boy he shows himself able to endure hunger, thirst, heat, pain and deprivation of sleep. He becomes everybody's favourite, and the Sultan soon begins to give him honourable tasks. His Turkish career culminates when he is entrusted with leading an army against the Hungarian Hunniades. Scanderbeg, who has long been planning to return home, allows the Turkish army to be defeated in order that he himself with a select retinue can ride towards Albania, where by means of a stratagem he occupies the main fortress, Kruja. He summons the Albanian princes to Lezha and succeeds in establishing a united front against the Turks. The latter send one army after another into the country, and Scanderbeg defeats them all by expert utilization of the terrain and constant changes of tactics. He achieves due recognition as the defender of Christianity and is supported by the republic of Venice, the kings Alfonso and Ferdinand of Naples and the relevant popes. At his death he leaves to his descendants a free and independent country.

Barleti repeatedly stresses the national aspect of his work. Scanderbeg is not only an impressive hero, but also the saviour of his native country. When he is compared with Alexander the Great and Pyrrhus, these are not arbitrarily chosen models from antiquity, but national heroes, for Alexander's Macedonia and Pyrrhus' Epirus are for Barleti synonymous with his own country. Mostly he calls it Epirus, but also often Albania. In a digression early in the work he elucidates his view upon the history of the nation based on the Roman historiographer Pompeius Trogus and his own contemporary, Pope Pius. Thus, the Albanians originally lived in Colchis on the Black Sea, from where they brought their language. They first emigrated to the Albanian hills near Rome. When Hercules as one of his twelve tasks had killed Geryones and was driving the latter’s cattle from Spain through Italy, he stayed for a time in the Albanian hills. From there the Albanians followed him, and they now live in Macedonia and the Peloponnese.

With this brief survey Barleti joins a widespread contemporary discussion in which authors endeavoured to fit their own nations into the general history either of the Bible or of Greco-Roman mythology. For instance, there was in the 16th century a heated conflict between Sweden and Denmark over the origins and early history of their peoples. With his theory Barleti was able to give his own nation a history just slightly older than that of Rome, since

it appears from Virgil's *Aeneid* that the story of Hercules and Geryones took place one generation before Aeneas' arrival in Italy. That Barleti treats the theme at all reveals that he is aware of being a pioneer not only in describing Scanderbeg, but also by introducing his nation into the European community. [5]

Narrative style

The general plan of the work is chronological, describing the hero's feats year by year, and this annalistic procedure is every now and then underlined by remarks of the type: "This was a good year for Scanderbeg and his people". Some of the books have their individual themes. For instance, Book 5 is concerned with the Turks' occupation and conquest of Sfetigrad and has one of Scanderbeg's officers, Moses, as the protagonist, while Book 8 is dominated by the description of how Moses betrays the hero, deserts into Turkish service, is defeated by Scanderbeg and finally returns into his favour. Book 10 tells the story of Scanderbeg's expedition to Italy, and Book 11 of his death. The many battle descriptions move back and forth between panoramic overviews of the armies and a focus on the deeds of individual persons, and in more than one case formalized duels substitute for battles between the two armies. The narrative is also varied by means of changes in rhythm and point of view. For the main part it proceeds at a leisurely pace, but at times things are speeded up considerably. For instance, at a certain point the Turkish and Albanian armies are already drawn up in opposing formations, when Scanderbeg receives news of the approach of another Turkish army. He immediately sets out together with a few select horsemen, charges the approaching army, defeats it, takes its commander captive and returns the selfsame night to his camp – all within 8 lines. At the same time the huge biography is structured with the help of narrative threads running through the work across long periods of time and connecting Scanderbeg personally with other protagonists. Thus, he had close relationships with both sultans during his childhood in Adrianople, with Murad as his stepson and with Mehmed as his brother and rival. As youngsters Mehmed and Scanderbeg have tested their strengths by bending a bow, and Mehmed was defeated by Scanderbeg, but not by any of the other young men at court. The father-son relation between Murad and Scanderbeg gives a special pathos to the first part of the work because of the ethical problem involved: Barleti does not, of course, seriously question the moral rightness of Scanderbeg’s decision to leave the Turkish empire in order to fight against it, and we are also told that his position at court was precarious, and that in all probability the Sultan would have got rid of him had he stayed. Nevertheless his lack of gratitude towards Murad is an accusation that can be used by the Turks in speeches, and in this way it exists as a disquieting element all the way through the first half of the biography. Within Scanderbeg’s army there is his relationship with Moses and also another, somewhat longer thread relating to Amesa's betrayal. Just like Moses, Amesa was Scanderbeg's nephew and one of his officers, but he was ambitious and did not feel suitably recognized. The conflict is suggested early in the work when at a certain point Scanderbeg corrects him in the presence of the assembled army, but only in Book 9 is the tale fully developed.

Thus, the drama of the work is very much based on the fundamental question of personal ethics. Everything takes place as if on a stage, with narrator and reader as attentive and evaluating observers. Barleti presents his characters lucidly by opposing them to each other in lively scenes. As an example we may look at the beginning of Book 3, in which the Albanian revolt against the Turks begins to take the form of a personal conflict between Scanderbeg and the Sultan. Each protagonist has a strong position to start from: Murad, because he has just defeated a large Christian army at Varna in Hungary, and Scanderbeg, because he has defeated the Turkish army that the Sultan had sent into

Epirus in order to force the rebels back into the pen. But the Sultan is old and tired and wants to spend his last years in peace and quiet. Therefore he tries "his well-known tricks and lies which used to be effective against others", and sends Scanderbeg a letter in which he speaks to him as a father to his son, accusing him of ingratitude, enumerating all his benefits towards him, and offering him peace on not very favourable terms. Scanderbeg answers with an excellent piece of classical rhetoric: "The Christian soldier, Gjergj Kastrioti, also named Scanderbeg, Prince of the Epirots, greets the Ottoman Murad, Prince of the Turks. On previous occasions, you maintain, you have outdone me in many kinds of benefactions; today I shall defeat you in modesty and disciplined speech. For according to me, nothing is so clear a sign of a slavish mind as inability to refrain from coarse language and shameless speech, even towards the most menacing enemy. Therefore I have received and seen both your letter and your envoy with great tranquillity of mind, and, to be true, your letter caused my hilarity rather than my irritation, when right from the beginning of the letter you dared impute great ingratitude and perfidy to me, only to lament just afterwards in a slightly milder mood the perdition of my soul, while you yourself – without recognition of your own sad fate – eagerly recommended your protracted error. Without heeding the rights of war and the order of nature you proposed to me unwisely, if not to say rudely, many conditions for peace of a kind that ears can hardly bear hearing, as if you were the victor and I the defeated. My dear Murad, even though your many evil words might provoke even the most patient of men to evil speech, I understand them as an expression partly of age and an old man's wandering thoughts, partly of grief. This is so much easier for me as I have myself decided to fight against you, not with abuse and quarrelling, but with weapons and the anger of a just war." Scanderbeg then denies that the Sultan has given him benefits, and enumerates instead all the evils he has done him by depriving him of his native country, killing his brothers and even planning to do away with him. "How much longer (*quousque tandem*!) did you expect me to acquiesce with such an arrogant master? ... Please retain in the future your sharp arrows of menace, and do not persevere in reminding us of the Hungarians' fate as an example. Everybody, my lord, has his nature and his talents, and we have to bear with patience the fortune given us by the gods. We shall not, however, seek advice from an enemy about what has to be done, nor ask you for peace, but the gods for victory. Accept our greetings. Given in our camp, the day before *idus sextiles* 1444."

The letter not only infuriates but also worries the Sultan. "In order nevertheless not to reveal to his subjects any trace of hesitation, it is told that he stroked his old chin and feigned laughing while he said: 'So you are seeking a glorious name in death, you traitor, so that is what you are? We shall give it to you, we shall, you may be sure; we shall participate in our foster-child's funeral procession and as uninvited guests attend his funeral feast, you great King of the Albanians, so that you shall never in the underworld have to deplore having found a humble death.'" [6]

The opposition between classically trained, proud Scanderbeg and old, vehement Murad continues through the first half of the biography. The conflict culminates in Book 6 when together with his son the Sultan in person leads an army into Epirus and occupies Kruja. Here Murad dies after having first solemnly transferred his crown to Mehmed. In his deathbed speech he underlines how in spite of all his victories he has still not subdued Epirus; therefore his death has a touch of tragedy, and the speech is, of course, at the same time a strong indirect praise of Scanderbeg and the Albanians. The Murad–versus-Scanderbeg motif not only opposes age against youth, vehemence against discipline, but also, first and foremost, the force of an overwhelmingly superior nation against the endurance of a small indomitable people.

The fathers of history

Much in Barleti's theme invites comparison with the first ancient historian whose work has survived, Herodotus. Both he and Barleti describe how an inferior force defeated a superior force, and both understand the events as a struggle for freedom. That the former defeated the latter was due first and foremost to the fact that the smaller force was fighting for a greater goal. But while Herodotus' work is full of euphoria because the Greeks defeated the Persians, Barleti's point of departure is a melancholy present that casts a deep shadow over even the most vigorously narrated passages. In both cases the superior force is a despotic oriental empire, and the narrative shifts back and forth between our heroes and the despot – Barleti's word for the Sultan is *tyrannus*. Furthermore, even though both authors are mainly intent on praising the exploits of the victors, they are not without feeling for the pathos of the losers' fates.

There also similarities in the circumstances under which the two historians were writing. Each of them was the first to give a written account of memorable events that had taken place in their immediate pasts, and their sources were mainly oral. Herodotus now and then refers to written sources, mostly in his long digression about Egypt. Barleti initially maintains that he has had neither annals nor historical narratives at his disposal. Later in his work he qualifies this assertion slightly and says that for a certain event he has had "hardly any written sources", and every now and then he launches into a polemic against other, unnamed authors. F. Pall has demonstrated that Barleti draws upon Italian humanist historians in his treatment of non-Albanian matters; but for his main theme, Scanderbeg and his deeds, he is probably building solely on what has been told to him. As an introduction to his description of Scanderbeg's achievements as the ally of King Ferdinand of Naples against John of Angevin he complains that in the many tales about this war he has been unable to find a single word about his hero and considers this an act of ingratitude on the part of the Neapolitan historians. [7]

Herodotus and Barleti also resemble each other in how they handle their sources. They build up a picture that is as consistent as possible on the information they happen to have, and if details seem strange or contradict each other, they quote the various views on the question and decide what seems most probable on the basis of normal common sense. For instance Barleti writes: "Here an interested reader might ask: What was the purpose and advantage of the decision Kastrioti made, only to retreat before the enemy when he almost felt him breathing down his neck, and towards Lezha rather than in other directions. But I do not hesitate to implement the explanation I myself find satisfactory in order to satisfy other people's ears as best I can, all the more so because those whose care and trustworthiness I have tested during the composition of this whole work and whom I have followed willingly do not diverge from my opinion." On special occasions they may also distance themselves from a source, such as when Barleti with tongue in cheek mentions that what his hero in this case ventured upon "may perhaps more call forth posterity's admiration than confidence". Neither Herodotus nor Barleti were eyewitnesses to the events described, but among their informants they had people who were. They both employ two levels of the past, the immediately preceding past, which is their subject, and a distant past. For Barleti this distant past is the heyday of Macedonia and Epirus c. 300 B.C. known from classical literature, and for Herodotus it is the Trojan War and other mythic events described in epic poems. Of both it might be said that they stand on the threshold between orality and literacy. [8]

Nevertheless there are fundamental differences in what they were doing. Herodotus lived in a culture that was predominantly oral, whereas physically and geographically Barleti had moved directly from an illiterate tribal society to the most highly developed literate city-culture of his times. Herodotus' literacy was simply an alphabet, a means of transferring

his own spoken language to papyrus. (That this was not as simple as it might sound is another question and not my subject here.) Barleti's Latin literacy had behind it a tradition of almost two millennia, rich in relevant models distributed over a whole spectrum of genres, each with its time-honoured characteristics. Herodotus composed for his fellow Greeks, whereas Barleti wrote of his compatriots for a foreign readership. With a slight simplification it might be said that Herodotus lived in the cultural centre of his day and had its language as his vernacular, while Barleti arrived from the periphery and tried to appeal to the central culture by using its normal forms of communication. That he might have written in his own language, Albanian, probably did not occur to him. He had been educated in a small enclave of learning, Shkodra, probably by Italian Franciscans, and to him written language must have been exclusively Latin; this was probably also his most important and perhaps only spoken foreign language. It would have been difficult for him to write in Albanian, whereas he had been trained in writing Latin since he was a child. And who would have read him if he had written in his own language? Only a small minority of the Albanian population had been taught to read, and that would in any case have been in Latin or Greek. The earliest written Albanian text known today is a baptismal ritual from 1462, which in no way inaugurated a written literature in Albanian. From the following centuries only scattered texts have been preserved, mostly for religious use. Albanian written literature in any quantity begins in the 19th century, and a broad reading public was only established after the Second World War and the abolition of illiteracy by the socialist authorities. For Barleti the only natural linguistic choice must have been Latin, and in choosing Latin he chose not only a language and an alphabet, but also a way of thinking.

Biography and mirror of princes

That Barleti understands his own era in the framework of Greco-Roman antiquity is obvious already from the reference to Alexander the Great on the title page. In this he is in complete concord with the Latin style of his day. The Renaissance literature of the 15th and 16th centuries offered Barleti a choice among a number of literary forms that were all further developments of ancient Roman forms. His subject, the great hero and his fabled deeds, would for instance have suited an epic, and his explicit purpose of ensuring the hero's glory for posterity was also clearly matter for an epic. Other possibilities were history or biography, and probably letter or speech. Previously he had composed a historical work, a description of the siege and capture of Shkodra by the Turks, printed in Venice in 1504. When he decided to compose a biography, he chose a highly modern form. Renaissance interest in the individual had endowed biography with unprecedented popularity, and this was accompanied by the introduction of autobiography as a literary genre. Reflecting this pattern, Plutarch's comparative biographies of Greek and Roman magnates were translated from Greek into Latin, while the legends of medieval saints were losing their popular appeal. When the priest Barleti formed his portrait of the pope's ally, Christianity’s leading protagonist against the Muslims, he chose a purely pagan version of the genre and represented his hero as a great commander from classical antiquity returned to life, while the Bible was left totally out of consideration as a possible frame of reference. On rare occasions he reveals scruples. For instance, in the middle of the description of how young Scanderbeg escaped the suspicious Sultan's attempts on his life, he writes: "But why am I so naive as to speculate in vain over Murad's ineffective plans of revenge and silly councils, as well as the wise measures Scanderbeg took against him, instead of just simply referring his salvation to God?" However, after a few pious remarks about how God both protected the hero from the Sultan and arranged that the Hungarians began a war against the Turks just at this moment and thus gave Scanderbeg a chance of returning home, Barleti is soon back in his normal classical-rationalist way of thinking. [9]

The biography of princes existed as a literary form in two main types: the hero might be represented as the great warrior or as the philosophical ruler. Scanderbeg was immediately qualified for the warrior model, but Barleti carefully supplemented his portrait with elements from the philosopher model: Scanderbeg was well educated, since at the Sultan's court he had been taught Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Italian and Illyrian languages and literatures and later on had expanded this education with studies of ancient Greek and Latin historians on inspiration from the archbishop of Durrës, Paulus Angelus. [10]

The author praises his wisdom, courage and strength, both explicitly in comments and implicitly through the ways in which his fantastic deeds and the reactions to them from his surroundings are described. Much is made of the political wisdom with which he treated, both his equals and his subjects. For instance, Scanderbeg was careful not to offend the other princes and therefore did not summon the decisive meeting to Kruja, but to Lezha, which was under Venetian rule: here nobody could feel above or below the others. In regard to his soldiers, he was constantly intent on how best to train them and to maintain their continued fighting spirit, and it is underlined that he usually listened to their opinions on all important questions. He himself was always in the front rank and shared all toil with his soldiers. Envoys, friendly or inimical, were excellently treated, and Scanderbeg also knew how to exchange gifts with foreign princes in a way that was appropriate for both giver and recipient, or he might provoke a Turkish prefect by donating him with a ploughshare, a sickle and other agricultural tools as an expression of his not being of noble family and as such not a worthy opponent. Scanderbeg is portrayed by a large number of positive characteristics: he was gentle, friendly and fortunate, in possession of virtue, prudence, patience, physical strength and unfailing mental energy, he was a cautious and experienced commander and displayed a divine rather than human clemency. Similar concepts from the same period and the same kind of milieu have been pointed out by Marianne Pade in her discussion of King Alfonso's entry into Naples in 1453 as described by Antonio Panormita: the procession features a number of female figures personifying the characteristics of the ruler: *Fortuna* (fortune), *spes* (hope), *fides* (trust), *charis* (charm), *fortitudo* (courage), *temperantia* (containment), *prudentia* (prudence), *justitia* (justice) and *clementia* (clemency). What Alfonso was parading, in the full sense of the word, was the same as his ally Scanderbeg is praised for. Of Barleti it might be said, as Burckhardt said of another biographer of this time: "A wind of the century blows through his pages". [11]

Barleti's presentation of Scanderbeg has, however, more nuances than what such a list of concepts would immediately suggest. In a situation in which the hero let his soldiers kill conquered Turks, but did not want to risk his own reputation for clemency, it is stated: "He did not openly accept their cruelty, but did not forbid it either". In another context, when he had taken Albanian prisoners of war and treated them well, he is first praised for piety and generosity; but afterwards the author considers whether this was perhaps just a ploy, since his clemency enabled Scanderbeg to achieve what he had been unable to achieve by military means. The narrator is directly critical of his protagonist when in Books 3-4 he has got himself involved in a war against Venice. Book 4 is introduced as follows: "While riots rather than a war were taking place among the Christians, and Scanderbeg was growing old before the walls of Denim, Murad was having all sorts of considerations..." In this case it is clearly the narrator's opinion that the hero ought to have been focused on the Turks rather than on Christian enemies. Soon after Scanderbeg is compared to Amesa, since he has now committed the error he had corrected in his nephew. When Scanderbeg besieges the city of Daynium and vainly tries to conquer it, the narrator's full sympathy is with the common Albanians in the besieged city, who are praised for their courage and perseverance against the otherwise invincible Scanderbeg. As a matter of fact, if compared with contemporary panegyrics in general in which every prince is a new Augustus and every poet a new Homer or Virgil, Barleti's picture of his hero is surprisingly

reserved and varied: Scanderbeg is impressive, but not infallible. [12]

The author repeatedly underscores that moral instruction is one of his purposes: Scanderbeg's achievements are not only worth remembering, but also learning from. In this sense his work is closely related to another well-known literary form in the Renaissance, the mirror of princes, in which humanists teach rulers how they ought to exercise their power. This aspect is especially strong towards the end when Scanderbeg is speaking to his son. But Barleti is also launching a polemic against those who give moral advice to rulers while leaving important historical events undescribed, since the best teaching is to be derived from the study of true models.

How true was Barleti's description if considered by modern standards? I am not qualified to answer that question, but that the biographical genre as such was not necessarily very particular about what we would call historical precision has been recently exemplified by Martin Raether. In 1520 Machiavelli composed a biography of a prince in Lucca, Castruccio Castracani, based on another description written 25 years earlier, which has been preserved. Raether is thus in a position to observe Machiavelli's procedure directly and document how he gives his panegyrical and didactic purpose absolute priority as against considerations of historical correctness. Among other things, Machiavelli asserts that his hero dies unmarried and without offspring, although his source is explicit about Lucca's being the happy father of 11 children! As for Barleti, even a non-historian notes that the 'family-relations' between Scanderbeg and the two Turkish sultans are in conflict with the age of the persons involved. Except for that his description seems to have passed the scrutiny of historians relatively unchallenged. At least, Barleti's presentation is essentially what is found when Scanderbeg is looked up in standard handbooks. This confirms P. Bartl's conclusion that in spite of errors of chronology Barleti is still fundamental to any study of Scanderbeg. [13]

History and epic

During the Renaissance it was regularly discussed whether biographies were history. The discussion was not concerned with historicity as against fiction, but with style. Since ancient times historiography had been considered a rhetorical task, an ideal realized not least by Livy. A historian composes coherently and does not let quotations or references interrupt the narrative, and he has the involved persons state their opinions in the form of speeches. In this way the author dramatizes his work: the reader is offered the possibility of considering the points of view of each party from within – in context, so to speak. The technique had been introduced by Herodotus and provided with a rationale by Thucydides, and thus it had established itself as a regular element in ancient historiography. According to Renaissance theories of literary form, biographies were composed in this way if they were considered part of historiography, but given a form closer to Suetonius if they were seen as a separate genre. [14]

Barleti's standpoint in this discussion is clear. He loves to incorporate both speeches and letters and does so with virtuosity. These two subgenres both flourished as independent genres in several forms. Of special interest in this connection is the fact that fictional letters from oriental rulers, such as sultans, were common as popular entertainment. Barleti sticks exclusively to ancient models, and his Turkish letters do not in any manifest way take advantage of an exotic potential. A regular incident before each battle is that the commanders exhort their soldiers, and it is not least in these speeches that the ideological message of the work is expressed: again and again both Scanderbeg and more humble

Albanian commanders stress the importance of fighting for freedom, and on some occasions even the Turks do so. The speeches are rhetorically elegant and regularly refer to examples from ancient literature, first and foremost from Livy. Here the reader is not allowed any criticism or ironical distance; we are supposed to accept without reservation that Scanderbeg's soldiers were able to appreciate references to some Marcellus, Torquatus or Corvinus. Since Scanderbeg's classical education has been described, the reader is not surprised by his skill as a Latin rhetorician. The same kind of internal logic is at work in relation to Paulus Perlatus, commandant of Sfetigrad, who delivers a speech brimful with classical examples. A little later when Sfetigrad has fallen and Perlatus leaves the story, it is said of him that he was an unusually well educated man. On the other hand, Scanderbeg is amused by an elegant speech given by a Turkish "barbarian". – The narrator himself also uses many ancient examples in his dialogue with the reader, for instance that Scanderbeg is just as competent a drinker as Papirius Cursor, just as cunning a tactician as Fabius Cunctator, etc. Normally Barleti does not mention the quoted authors, but only the figures he chooses to take as examples, and there are relatively few direct quotations. His work is not overloaded with ancient allusions; the style is educated rather than learned. The comparisons give life to the characters in Barleti's text and place them within an ancient framework; the narrator makes sure that the reader feels at home and understands that the subjects treated are on a par with what can be read in classical literature. [15]

Barleti probably drew on of both Quintus Curtius' Latin biography of Alexander and Arrianus' and Plutarch's Greek biographies, which had been translated into Latin by humanists at the Neapolitan court, where also Barleti's main model, Livy, had been a focus of humanist interest. Barleti has many affinities with Livy. Both writers are attracted by working with history because they find their own eras depressing, and at the same time they share an elementary pleasure in narrating as a counterbalance to their fundamental pessimism. Barleti’s characters think, speak and act just like Livy's Romans; Francesco Pall has even demonstrated that long passages in Barleti have been lifted directly out of Livy with only the names of persons and localities changed. Barleti is also Livian in questions of morality: His heroes are first and foremost those who without hesitation sacrifice themselves for a cause, and the admired enemy of the Romans, Hannibal, has patently influenced Barleti's Scanderbeg. [16]

Also ancient epic – mainly Homer and Virgil – are evident models. The structure of Barleti's work imitates the *Aeneid*: 12 books with an especially important insertion between Books 6 and 7 so as to divide the work into two halves. In the 15th century Maffeo Vegio had added a Book 13 to the *Aeneid*, in which the hero's life is continued up to his death, and similarly Barleti has reserved a Book 13 for the description of Scanderbeg's death. His heroic biography is composed of the ingredients of ancient epic: battle scenes, individual valour, sieges, duels, night raids, embassies, celebrations, funerals and competitions, even a catalogue. He loves heroic deeds for their own sake and regrets the invention of powder and shot because it will change the very essence of war, so that the individual's courage and strength will no longer have the importance they used to have. Now and then he refers directly to Homer, often only called "the poet" – as was usual in ancient times. For instance, it is said of one of the Turks that he resembled Homer's Tydeus, being small and square, but a great warrior. Homer is mainly referred to in the second part of the work, and the model is the *Iliad*, hardly ever the *Odyssey*. Furthermore, some aspects of Homer's style are imitated by Barleti, especially the similes, but he does not use the characteristic Homeric repetitions at all.

Lucan's epic the *Pharsalia* is drawn into the story in a central passage without Barleti explicitly mentioning it. In Book 9, in which Amesa is fighting on the Turkish side, the decisive battle takes place on the Emathian plain. It is described how the Turkish

commander leads out his army early in the morning before the day has grown hot. The grass is wet with dew – as it was once wet with Roman blood. It is as if the plain is thirsting for new blood, and sinister omens forewarning imminent disaster are given: for example one of the standard bearers suddenly falls to the ground, weighed down by his standard, and some people even maintain that it is raining blood, and that huge flocks of vultures have assembled. These details are all allusions to the *Pharsalia*: here, too, it is a sinister omen that the standards become heavy, and Barleti's vultures arrive directly from feasting on bodies in Lucan after the Battle of Pharsalus. The Roman poet makes much of the description of the plain as thirsty for blood, and after the battle it is defiled forever, the corn cultivated there grows up discoloured by blood, and for all eternity the plough will rake up Roman bones. The fields of Thessaly will see new armies, and even before the blood from the battle of Pharsalus has dried, they will offer themselves as a stage for new crime. In Lucan the passage is a prophecy of the Battle of Philippi, but with his allusions Barleti makes the battle between Turks and Albanians a further fulfilment of Lucan's prophecy. That this battle took place exactly where the two most famous battles of the Roman civil wars had taken place gives to the encounter between Scanderbeg and Amesa a feeling of fatality, and Barleti does not resist the temptation for a brief digression on the importance of omens as against the question of free will. Here the ancient literary model has added an extra dimension to the narrative: the present is not only a reiteration of the past, but also a fulfilment of it. [17]

Albanian background

What remains of the Albanians in this Roman picture? The question is difficult to answer because of the lack of other sources. Barleti especially stresses their trustworthiness and love of freedom, and even though he describes his compatriots from the emigrant's point of view, he does not let himself grow sentimental. The tone is rather one of fond indulgence: they are not the most obvious defendants of Christianity. In a situation in which they accompany Scanderbeg and his army with ardent prayers for victory he writes: "Never before had God been so overwhelmed with prayers by the more bellicose than pious people of Epirus"!

An especially vivid passage is the description of Scanderbeg and his soldiers after their first great victory. The soldiers have been allowed unlimited plunder in the Turkish camp (but no rape!), and afterwards they walk slowly along, hampered by their enormous booty, evoking admiration from the people who see the army pass. The leaders begin making fun of the soldiers because they have been transformed from courageous warriors into mere cattle raiders, and from defenders of Albanian independence into common shepherds, and the soldiers begin teasing each others by turn, now one and now another. They imagine how Alybassa and the remnants of his army would have been annoyed if from some point they had been able to contemplate the miserable army they have been conquered by, incompetent and humble men, intent only on collecting spoil. "In this way the soldiers were hilarious over their belongings and easing the toils of the march by means of all kinds of ridicule until they reached their own camp, where the sentinels came out before the wall and were saluted by enormous shouting."

The hilarity and the teasing convey an authentic atmosphere. Exactly in a situation like this joking is in its proper place, since its function is, among other things, to avert the risk attached to overwhelming success. Both single individuals and the whole army are derided, and even the great goals of the battle, individual courage and national freedom, are not spared. It must be genuine oral carnivalesque irreverence that reveals itself through the Latin form. [18]

Only rarely does Barleti hint at the fact that his compatriots possess an oral poetry. Would this have been possible? Perhaps so. If we compare with Danish authors who had a similar purpose, that of asserting Denmark as a worthy member of European civilization, it is natural to point to Saxo's history of Denmark from c. 1200, in which native oral poetry is referred to as a parallel to poetry in the Old Testament and classical Rome. Or we might skip to the other side of Barleti and mention Anders Sørensen Vedel's collection of ballads from 1591. In his preface he claims that in the ballads the Danes have a beautiful old poetic tradition, well able to compete with the cultural heritage of other countries. Barleti does not attempt anything similar, and when he refers to the various expressions of his own culture, he regularly does so with a certain distance. For example, he mentions an orally established contract and notes: "I shall leave to the lawyers to estimate the legal validity of this, if we shall not in any case prefer to accept the decision of war." At another point he describes a traditional funeral. The widow invites, "in accordance with the usual practice of the people", many other women, and they celebrate the dead man with laments that continue without interruption day and night. They list all the deceased's virtues and achievements and also refer to his ancestors and the rest of his family. But, like many other customs, this tradition is disappearing. Barleti does not seem to have expected his audience to respect the qualities of his countrymen's oral traditions. [19]

Such elements in Barleti's description of Scanderbeg's life as are supernatural are treated sceptically or quickly passed over. This is the case for the omens that preceded his birth; but Barleti mentions with more acceptance that the hero was born with a drawing of a sword on his right arm – here his comment is that it is strange how explicitly nature may inform human beings about its plans. The author apparently understands this as information of another kind than a mother's dreams and similar matters. In the Renaissance a scientifically accepted opinion held that nature had its own coded language in which it made clear to men what place each phenomenon had in her overall system. – Barleti also relates in passing that Mehmed and Scanderbeg tested their strengths with a bow. This is an epic element, known from *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and the *Odyssey* and with a certain dissemination also in fairytales. In Barleti it may be a loan from Homer. But it seems more probable that he has taken it over from the oral tales about the hero on which he builds his work, since in the *Odyssey* it is not a competition between two rivals, but among all Penelope's suitors on one side and Odysseus and Telemachus on the other; there would be an obliquity in the possible classical imitation uncharacteristic of the way in which Barleti usually handles his models. – When in Book 12 Scanderbeg goes to Rome in order to convince the Pope to become an ally, we are told that he travelled in the disguise of a poor shepherd. Afterwards this disguise is no longer mentioned. Again this may be understood as a sign that Barleti knows a more mythical version of Scanderbeg's journey than what he offers us. In general it is noteworthy how rarely Barleti's description comes close to fairytale, considering that much of the information he was able to get hold of about his hero must have had a more or less mythical form. Apparently he considered it his task to rationalize the story and eliminate whatever he did not find credible. [20]

Barbarism and civilization

Barleti regularly calls the Turks "barbarians", but not "infidels" as might perhaps have been expected. This suggests that the battle is not so much between belief and unbelief as between civilization and barbarism. The barbarians are especially characterized by savagery and perfidy. Barleti associates *perfidus* (unreliable) so closely with *barbarus* that the two words become almost synonymous. The cunning of the Turks is demonstrated right from the beginning of the work, when young Scanderbeg is in favour at the Sultan's court, but nevertheless has all the time to feel menaced by death, until the end when the

last contact Scanderbeg has with the Turks is that they send him rich presents in the hope of tempting him to give up his fight. In general the barbarians exploit their economic superiority through corruption. For instance this is how they lure Moses and Amesa into treachery. In contrast, Scanderbeg can say at the end of his life: "I never committed or instigated treachery or fraud".

The barbarians are cruel, too, Mehmed more so than Murad. Against this is placed Scanderbeg's clemency, which, however, is most often shown towards his own people such as Moses and Amesa. Towards the enemy his clemency manifests itself in the fact that he never indulges in unnecessary bloodshed, even though his hand does not tremble when he kills. Even barbarian savagery is described in a relatively moderate way. The most gory passage is in Book 8, when it is related how Mehmed treated the prisoners of war, and here the narrator is almost excusing (and implicitly deriding) them when he explains that the Turks may have lost control of themselves because they were so unaccustomed to winning, and that perhaps they felt provoked by the fact that Albanians and Hungarians are hard to sell as slaves because they do not acquiesce with servitude. The cruelty is not so much a constituent element in Barleti's barbarians as their perfidy. [21]

This is, in fact, an unusual opinion of barbarians. Much more often trustworthiness is associated with savages and perfidy with the civilized. In connection with the most famous false present in world literature, the Trojan horse, Virgil has Laocoon say: "I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts". The highly civilized, perfidious Greeks are contrasted with the simple, trusting Trojans. Tacitus' Germans constitute a critical parallel to the civilized and degenerate Romans of his day, and in Lucian we find the classical descriptions of the wild Scythians, who keep their word until death, again with the civilized, perfidious Greeks as their opposites.

In a scene from Scanderbeg's youth the Turks are compared with even more barbarian peoples when first a Scythian and then two Persians arrive at the Sultan's court and provoke his warriors to duel. In both cases Scanderbeg is the one who fights them and wins. The Scythian demands that they must be naked and fight only with their hands, and the narrator's comment is that he behaved almost like a savage animal. The Persians, for their part, are even more fraudulent than the Turks: they fight two against one, and although it has been agreed that Scanderbeg must fight first with one and then, if he is victorious, with the other, he ends up having to conquer both at the same time. In this way the typical characteristics of the barbarian Turks, savagery and perfidy, are compared with even more extreme cases.

An element that is usually part of the description of barbarians, but which Barleti does not use at all, is illiteracy. The barbarian Turks are just as diligent letter writers in the work as the Europeans, and just as Scanderbeg at the Sultan's court has had not only a heroic education as befits the noble savage – having learnt to ride on horseback, handle a bow and speak the truth – but has also been taught languages, it is later told of Mehmed that he was able to read Greek, Persian and Arabic. What barbarians do not know, however, is Latin, and Scanderbeg did not achieve his familiarity with Greek and Latin classics at the barbarian court. [22]

Compared to the Turks, then, Scanderbeg is presented as civilized, but how does he compare with other Christians? This is the topic of Book 10, but that the question might be intricate is introduced early in the work when a Venetian commander in Book 3 speaks to his soldiers just before a battle with Scanderbeg. In this speech the Venetian calls him a barbarian since he has been educated by the Turks. But in Book 10 our hero is invited to Italy as an ally of King Ferdinand of Naples, and the journey develops into a veritable triumphal procession. In Ragusa, where his army embarks, festivals and foot-races are

arranged, and courteous and elegant speeches are made in honour of both Albanians and Ragusans. When Scanderbeg disembarks in Bari, John of Angevin is so shocked that he raises the siege of the town, and King Ferdinand comes out accompanied by the whole population to meet Scanderbeg as its liberator. Before the decisive battle the French commander assures his soldiers that there is no reason to fear Scanderbeg and his army, for even though they have won many victories they have only fought with Turks. Now that they are going to meet real men things will be different. Nevertheless the Albanians win the day, and the Book ends with celebrations of the victory in Naples. The King delivers an extreme panegyric of Scanderbeg, calling him his father and donating him three Apulian towns. But the highest appreciation as a full member of Christian civilization is given to Scanderbeg when in Book 12 he goes to Rome to ask for the Pope's support. Not only has his fame preceded him so that both Pope and cardinals immediately receive him with the greatest friendliness, but when Scanderbeg delivers an elegant speech to them, in which he first praises them in great detail and next states his request, he immediately obtains everything he asks for. [23]

In short: The barbarians are first and foremost perfidious and only secondarily savage, not as savage and perfidious, however, as Scythians and Persians. Scanderbeg is the quintessence of trustworthiness and clemency, he is just as educated as everyone else in the centre of Christian civilization – and much more warlike!

Barleti's unusual concept of the barbarians is understandable when their counterpart is considered: Scanderbeg and his Albanians. For the author a model that opposed a gentle, well-educated, literate, but also decadent and perfidious civilization with a savage, uneducated, oral, courageous and trustworthy primitive society would not have been workable. It would have been easier the other way round. But for Barleti it is important to fit his nation and its culture into the world of Western Europe, and mainly of Italy, and he achieves this by describing his compatriots as a civilized contrast to the Turkish barbarians. On the other hand, the portrait he gives of the Albanians has many nuances: Scanderbeg and several of his attendants are well educated and modest, but most of the Albanians are not. In many cases Scanderbeg is moderate when his officers want to fight, and when at times he allows his soldiers to run wild, he does so in order to meet their wishes, as part of his prudence as a commander. However, in trustworthiness and love of freedom they are all equal. When in Book 1 Scanderbeg arrives in Albania, he does not have to start off by raising an opposition. The other Albanian princes are just as eager for the war as he, but lacked a leader. And none of his soldiers is in doubt about the fact that they are fighting for freedom.

Heroic biography between epic and novel

The period of the wars between Albanians and Turks during the 15th century might be called a typical heroic age in the Chadwickian sense, full of violent events suitable for oral heroic poetry. And Scanderbeg actually did become a theme in an epic tradition among the Albanians who settled in Apulia, whereas he does not seem to have had a similar afterlife in Albania proper under Turkish rule. At any rate, when in 1832 J.G. von Hahn was searching for traditions relating to him in the region of Kruja, he was unsuccessful. For the European reading public, however, the hero's fame was made with Barleti's Latin biography. It became a bestseller, was reprinted many times and gradually translated into most of the vernaculars. Its history was traced in a bibliography compiled by G.T. Pétrovitch in 1881 and is discussed by J. Matl in a work from 1968, in which he concludes that a considerable interdisciplinary cooperation would be necessary in order to conduct a careful investigation of the many threads that run from Barleti into later European

literature. Not everything would have pleased good old Barleti. That school dramas have been composed about his hero is in full accord with the didactic message of his own work. But he would certainly have frowned upon the fact that Scanderbeg became the hero of sentimental love lyrics and romances. He himself was particular about Scanderbeg being very disciplined in sexual affairs. When Barleti's Scanderbeg marries, he does so almost absent-mindedly, on the recommendation of his friends and with intermediaries to take care of all practicalities, the quest for a suitable bride included, and even in marriage he is abstemious in order not to sap his warrior energy. Neither Pétrovitch nor Matl mentions that Scanderbeg is one of the persons depicted in the Danish author Holberg's *Heltes sammenlignede Historier efter Plutarchi Måde* (Comparative stories of heroes in Plutarch's manner), 1739. Holberg's way of describing him is to all practical intents loyal to Barleti, but the original biographer would hardly have appreciated that his hero was ranged among exotic, non-European heroes. [24]

With his book Barleti leapt from his national background and Albanian oral literary forms to Italian city culture, featuring print and entertainment literature. His education had prevented him from composing in an oral epic tradition – learned authors' attempts at taking possession of popular genres belong to later periods. But in his eagerness to publish historically true material from which his readers could learn, he was actually working for the same purpose as oral epic. A Latin humanist epic, on the contrary, would presumably have seemed to him too literary and unsuited to a description of deeds from real life, not to mention the question of whether he himself had poetic talent. His being a great prose author does not necessarily mean that he was also a great metrician. The form most suitable for his message thus had to be the biography. In this form he could concentrate on his protagonist and his achievements and still insist on the truth of the tale. Historiography proper, such as for example a description of the Albanian resistance to the Turks, could only have been a sad story. By so strictly limiting himself to the description of Scanderbeg's life Barleti spared himself and his readers the fall of Kruja, the conquest of Durrës and the final Turkish victory. At the same time his work had an entertainment value comparable to that of both oral epic and bourgeois novel. By means of the protagonist the author formed the heroic age of his people in a way that could grip readers who had a completely different experience. His tale of Scanderbeg is no moralistic-psychological development novel. His hero has all his qualities right from the start and keeps them unchanged throughout. But his road to well-deserved acceptance by the highest authorities of the world is also a kind of development. Barleti's biography places itself between epic and novel in Lukác's model of forms, a fact that actually corresponds very well to the author's attempt at bridging the chasm between the Albanian and Italian cultures around 1500.

Notes

[1] The present article was originally written in Danish for Johan Fjord Jensen's *Festschrift*: *Fortælling og erfaring*, ed. by O.B. Andersen et al., Aarhus 1988, 135-58. I have not revised it or added to its bibliography. The analysis is based on Caspar Hedio's edition, Strasbourg 1538, to which quoted page numbers refer. Barleti's life and work have been carefully studied by Francesco Pall: "Marino Barlezio: Uno storico umanista" (*Mélanges d'histoire générale* 2, 1938, 135-318). I have also used P. Bartl s.vv. "Barletius" and "Scanderbeg" in *Biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas*, hrsg. v. Mathias Bernath und Felix v. Schroeder, I-IV, Munich 1974. I have not had access to modern Albanian studies of Barleti. – I thank The Cultural Committee of Albania for a grant in 1974, when I first read Barleti, Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, where I had excellent study facilities in 1987-88, Bjoern Andersen of the Albanian-Danish friendship association *Migësia*, who invited me to translate the article and undertook its electronic publication, and John D. Kendal for revising my English.

[2] Shkodra: p. 103. Scanderbeg and Murad's thoughts: pp. 137-9. *Nostri*: p. 18. Wonderful sight: p. 124. Moses: p. 128. Fear or danger: p. 123. Barbarian: p. 72. Burden: pp. 2 and 194-5.

[3] Oblivion: p. 59. Venice: pp. 36, 41, 160, 368. Alfonso: p. 279. Pius: p. 332. Paul: pp. 355-6.

[4] An "inventory" of a heroic life has been compiled by Jan de Vries: *Heldenlied und Heldensage*, übersetzt vom Verfasser, Bern, Munich 1961 (*Sammlung Dalp* 78).

[5] History: pp. 36-7. Pompeius Trogus 42.3.4. Aeneas Silvius: *Descriptio Europae* 15 (Hedio's edition of Barleti p. vi.r). Virgil: *Aeneid* 7.655-69 and 8.185-275. Danish-Swedish polemics over history: Karen Skovgaard-Petersen: "Margaretica: Et bidrag til den dansk-svenske pennefejde i det 16. århundrede" (*Historisk Tidsskrift* 87, 1987, 209-36). Cf. Lars Boje Mortensen on Saxo's similar opinion of the place of the Danish people in world history: "Saxo Grammaticus' view of the origin of the Danes and his historiographical models" (*Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Age grec et latin* 55, 1987, 169-83.)

[6] Tempo: p. 359. Bow contest: p. 198. Amesa corrected: p. 91. Quotations: pp. 65-70.

[7] Hardly any: p. 230. Polemic: pp. 70-71. Pall (cf. note 1) pp. 177-86. Neapolitan historians: p. 285.

[8] Interested reader: p. 261. Tongue in cheek: p. 25; the phrase is taken from Livy 2.10.11.

[9] Biography and individualism: Jacob Burckhardt: *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien, ein Versuch*, hrsg.v. Werner Kaegi (1859), Stuttgart, Berlin, Leipzig 1930, 236-46. Agnes Heller: *Der Mensch der Renaissance*, übers.v. H.-H. Paetzke, Köln-Lövenich 1982, 220-78. – Plutarch: Marianne Pade: "Danske ligtaler i det 16. århundrede" (Marianne Alenius & Peter Zeeberg (eds.): *Litteratur og lærdom*, Copenhagen 1987, 95-106) 97. – Biography in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Jozef IJsewijn: "Die humanistische Biographie" (*Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung* 4, 1983, 1-19) 9-14. – Scruples: pp. 13-14.

[10] Two types: Marianne Pade: "Alfonso I's triumf i Napoli, brugen af antikken i det repræsentative sprog" (*Museum Tusculanum* 57, 1987, 203-21).

[11] Meeting in Lezha: p. 36. Soldiers: p. 316. Ambassadors: p. 199. Ploughshare: p. 334. – *Mitis, facilis*: p. 11, *fortuna, virtus, prudentia*: p. 24, *patientia, corporis robur, indefatigabilis vigor animi*: p. 25, *cautus princeps*: p. 54, *veteranus dux*: p. 133, *divina verius quam humana clementia*: s. 251. Pade (cf. note 1). Burckhardt (cf. note 9), 239.

[12] Dubious clemency: p. 21. *Pius* or *callidus*: p. 85. Criticism: p. 91. Amesa's error: p. 99. Praise of Daynium: pp. 99-100.

[13] Historicity: Pall (cf. note 1), 199-228. Josef Matl: "Georgius Castriota (Kastriot) Scanderbeg in der belkanischen und europäischen Literatur" (*Bulgarische Jahrbücher* 1, 1968, 101-10) 105. Bartl (cf. note 1). Armin Hohlweg: "Der Kreuzzug des Jahres 1444: Versuch einer christlichen Allianz zur Vertreibung der Türken aus Europa" (*Die Türkei in Europa*, hrsg.v. K.-D. Grothusen, Göttingen 1979, 20-37) 29. – Machiavelli: Martin Raether: "In ogni fortuna principe, Der Fürst als Persönlichkeitsideal des Dichters Machiavelli" (*Wolfenbütteler Renaissance Mitteilungen* 11, 1987, 101-17).

[14] IJsewijn (cf. note 9) 4-5.

[15] Turkish letters: Franz Babinger: *Laudivius Zacchia, Erdichter der "Epistolae Magni Turci" (Neapel 1473 u.ö.)*, Munich 1960 (*Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Kl*. 1960, 13) 38. – Marcelli: p. 135. Perlatus' speech: pp. 140-44. Epilogue: p. 147. *Elaborata barbari oratione*: p. 28. Papirius: p. 25. Fabius: p. 34.

[16] Pall (cf. note 1) 278-97.

[17] Gunpowder: pp. 131 and 198. Tydeus: p. 334. Amesa: pp. 265-70. Lucan: *Pharsalia* 7, 161-63, 539-44, 853-4.

[18] *Numquam ab Epirotica bellicosiori magis, quam religiosiori populo tot precibus Deus fatigatus*: p. 91. *Ioci cantusque*: pp. 54-5.

[19] Saxo: Karsten Friis-Jensen: *Saxo Grammaticus as Latin Poet: Studies in the Verse Passages of the Gesta Danorum*, Rome 1987. (*Analecta Romana Inatituti Danici* Suppl. 14.) – Contract: p. 77. Funeral: 239-40.

[20] Omens: p. 5. Bow contest: p. 198. Disguise: p. 355.

[21] *Nihil umquam fraudis, nihil doli aut feci, aut machinatus sum*: p. 367. Mehmed: pp. 240-41. Bloodier descriptions are related by Ernst Werner: *Die Geburt einer Grossmacht – Die Osmanen (1300-1481): Ein Beitrag zur Genesis des türkischen Feudalismus*, 3. Aufl., Berlin 1978, 284.

[22] *Aeneid* 2.49. Lucian: Especially the dialogue *Toxaris or Friendship*. Of Herodotus and the barbarians, see Francois Hartog: *Le miroir d'Hérodote: Essai sur la représentation de l'autre*, Paris 1980. – Duels: pp. 8-9. Mehmed's knowledge of languages: p. 197.

[23] Venetian: p. 79. Frenchman: p. 298. Scanderbeg and the pope: pp. 355-8.

[24] H.M. Chadwick: *The Heroic Age*, 2. ed., Cambridge 1926. – Georges T. Pétrovitsch: *Scanderbeg (Georges Castriota): Essai de bibliographie raisonnée*, Paris 1881. – Matl (cf. note 13), information of von Hahn: 105. – Scanderbeg's marriage: pp. 199 and 252.