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INTRODUCTION

DÜRER, EARLY EUROPEAN PRINT, AND THE ISLAMIC EAST

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This is a book about Albrecht Dürer's portrayal of Islamic subjects only in the most rudimentary sense. More accurately, it is a collection of stories—chronicles of connections between East and West, Christian and Muslim, the Ottoman, Mamluk, Hapsburg, and Holy Roman Empires—told by way of the German artist's prints. His engravings, woodcuts, and etchings depicting Muslim figures and objects are snapshots of their time that enable us to explore northern European perceptions of the Islamic East through the eyes and hands of a discerning observer who pictured what he saw, heard, and read. As a cosmopolitan interpreter of his world, Dürer astutely represented the inhabitants of the Muslim Levant in his graphic work, demonstrating his knowledge of inter-imperial entanglements in the realms of politics, commerce, and religion.[1] The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines a "knot" as an "intertwining" or a "tangle." *Dürer's Knots* narrates some of the "intertwinings" among the Christian European and Muslim Near Eastern empires made visible in the printed production of one of the most perceptive artists of the early modern period.

In recent decades, a burgeoning art historical literature has emerged on the study of the eastern Mediterranean as a site of early modern cultural exchange among Italy, the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Empire, the Mamluk Sultanate, and the Ottoman Empire. Studies have focused particularly on artistic, commercial, and maritime connections between Venice and Constantinople and the creation of related artworks by Italian and Ottoman makers.[2] Although art historians recognize dynamic links between Venice, other Italian cities, and the Islamic East, they are less likely to appreciate the productive affiliations between the Holy Roman Empire and the Muslim empires during the late medieval and early modern periods.[3] Overland encounters between empires and commercial connections between Nuremberg and Venice and the Levant produced cooperative relationships and precipitated a wealth of northern European depictions of Islamic subjects, which also warrant greater scholarly scrutiny. An examination of Dürer's ambitious images in particular, especially through the lens of their material production and form, elucidates ideas about technological innovation, artistic production, natural resources and trade, abduction, and other cross-cultural concerns that stretched from Germany to North Africa and West Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The prints of this Nuremberg artist, a subject of the Holy Roman Empire, reveal vital links between the Christian realm and its Muslim counterparts to the east, an arena underexplored in the art historical literature.

Dürer's *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 0.1) from around 1502 speaks to his awareness of Christian–Muslim imperial dynamics.[4] The print depicts the arrival in Bethlehem of the kings of the three known continents—Balthasar from Africa, Gaspar from Europe, and Melchior from Asia—to acknowledge the birth of the baby Jesus. Having followed the star to the Holy Land, Melchior kneels before the child sitting on the Virgin's lap, while Gaspar points to Balthasar, who has removed his feathered hat. Close behind them is a mounted Muslim soldier, a figure who appears in neither the New Testament story nor later legends of the holy occasion. He is armed with a bow and a quiver of arrows and is followed by other mounted soldiers carrying two

FIGURE 0.1 (opposite)
Albrecht Dürer
The Adoration of the Magi, c. 1502, from *Life of the Virgin* series
Woodcut
29.9 × 21 cm (11 ¾ × 8 ¼ inches)
Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, gift of the heirs of Mrs. Mary Hemenway

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FIGURE 0.2
Abraham Ortelius
Map of the Ottoman Empire,
from *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*,
Antwerp, 1570
Engraving with hand coloring
37 × 48 cm (14 ½ × 18 inches)
Qatar National Library, World Digital Library

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distinctive flags of the Ottoman Empire, one decorated with the crescent moon and star and the other with a bifurcated sword.[5] Yet the appearance of Ottomans at the birth of Christ is anachronistic. The empire was founded in the final year of the thirteenth century.

The presence of the Ottoman figure is anomalous for another reason as well. Although the Holy Land was under Muslim rule when Dürer created the woodcut in the early years of the sixteenth century, it was under Mamluk control, not Ottoman. Ottoman forces, however, were threatening to overtake Mamluk territories in Africa and Asia at the time. (Abraham Ortelius's 1570 map of the region [fig. 0.2] shows the eventual Ottoman incorporation of Mamluk Egypt and Syria into the empire.) Because the Mamluk Sultanate was comprised of Christian slaves converted to the Islamic faith, Christian Europeans fantasized that the Holy Land would be returned to them by the Mamluks.[6] This aspiration is perhaps referenced in Dürer's woodcut by the devout Black African and Asian kings. Melchior, traditionally called the King of Persia, has laid aside his turban and holds his hands in a Christian gesture of prayer (fig. 0.3). That the engagement between him and the Christ child, who reaches out to him, is a focal point of the composition makes the gesture the most consequential of the scene. The artist also directs our gaze beyond the dilapidated structure to the Ottoman banners in the distance. We are presented simultaneously with acceptance of and resistance to Christianity (see fig. 0.1). By manipulating the traditional iconography of the biblical story, Dürer demonstrates his knowledge of the political and religious undercurrents among empires.

The artist's printed images circulated widely, first among his cohort of learned friends and acquaintances and then beyond his native Nuremberg as they were carried to other regions over land and sea. In his 1512 *Brevis Germanie description* (*Brief Description of Germany*), the historian Johann Cochlaeus describes the appeal of Dürer's prints to commercial purveyors: "Amongst these are the depictions of the Passion of Our Lord, which Albrecht Dürer recently made, engraved in copperplate, and printed himself, drawn with such subtlety and in such true perspective, that merchants from all over Europe buy these prints to provide models for their own artists."[7] The immediate mobility of the artist's depictions of Muslims was particularly vital—functioning as something like the social media of their day—because the subject matter was topical, referenced specific events, and memorialized prevalent ideas and practices.

Over time, however, familiarity with the more recondite incidents and ideas has been lost in the West. As a result, some of what Dürer knew about Muslim history and culture and represented in his prints has become obscure over the past half millennium, regularly leading Western art historians to label their content inscrutable.[8] But like today's participants in digital image platforms, the artist's followers were literate in the pictorial expressions of their generation. The Muslim figures and stories depicted in his prints would have been legible to his contemporaries in ways that they are not to us now. This project attempts to fill in some of those gaps. Jan Białostocki in his exploration of the artist's more enigmatic prints, including *Landscape with Cannon* (fig. 3.2) with its Muslim figures, claims that

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FIGURE 0.3
Albrecht Dürer
The Adoration of the Magi
(detail of fig. 0.1)

certain images used "learned and sometimes personal codes of expression" to narrate the contemporary issues of his time.[9] Białostocki imagines Dürer as an artist immersed in ongoing dialogues and his prints as vehicles for the expression of those issues. Digging into the political, commercial, and religious contexts of Dürer's prints of Muslim subjects provides an important view into what he and his northern European associates knew about the Mamluk and Ottoman Empires and the politics of the eastern Mediterranean. Such investigation also reveals that the artist was more of an informed and opinionated participant in the public discourse around East–West relations than has been previously understood.

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DÜRER'S LIFE AND ART RECONSIDERED

The life of the artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) is a well-told tale.[10] The German artist was a celebrated painter, draftsman, and printmaker as well as a prolific writer of letters, poetry, instructional art manuals, and diaristic accounts of his travels and innermost thoughts.[11] Born in the burgeoning proto-industrial city of Nuremberg to a goldsmith father, he was destined to be a maker and thinker. Early on he trained in the trade of his father, but his painting and drawing skills led him to the visual rather than the decorative arts. During the years of his apprenticeship in the early 1490s, he traveled extensively and probably visited Frankfurt, Mainz, Cologne, Colmar, Basel, Freiburg, and Strasbourg, where he was instructed in the workshops of painters, draftsmen, print designers, and book publishers.[12] While on the road, he encountered news, stories, and gossip as well as books, prints, and other artworks that contributed to the kinds of transformative experiences that a traveler has beyond their hometown.

From the outset, his skills at designing and incising woodblocks and copperplates for printing were exceptional, and thus his contribution to the evolution of early European printmaking as a fine art is considered unparalleled, as acknowledged by scholars, catalogers, and collectors over the past half millennium. His contemporary Erasmus of Rotterdam called him "the Apelles of black lines," comparing him to the renowned ancient Greek painter. Erasmus claimed that Dürer could accomplish with printed black lines on paper what Apelles needed a vast palette of paints to render.[13]

In the twenty-first century, art historians have cataloged his woodcuts, engravings, etchings, and book illustrations with great care, producing informative accounts of each printed sheet.[14] The touted hallmarks of Dürer's elevation of the printing arts are his technical excellence, innovative treatment of subject matter, and clever marketing.[15] These attributes were all evident from the start of his efforts. His 1498 *Apocalypse* series raised the caliber of woodcut production, introducing a wider variety of carved lines that resulted in more detailed renderings of figures in perspectival space, greater tonality across compositions, and dramatic light effects. His treatment of the episodes of the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, also reveals his pioneering approach to traditional subject matter, which he offered to an audience who feared the predicted mid-millennial end of the world, as is evident in his portrayal of *The Babylonian Whore* (fig. 0.4). Seated on a seven-headed beast, the seductress holds a chalice before "the unfaithful" in the foreground, among whom are two Muslim men. Early engravings, such as his c. 1495–1496 *Six Soldiers* (fig. 0.5), reveal similar technical and narrative advances. Within a receding coastal landscape, the lavish dress and suggestive interactions of the multinational delegation, including a mounted and armed Ottoman, distinguish even his earliest prints from those of his predecessors.[16]

Although it may seem that Dürer scholarship is sated with catalogs, critical studies, and exhibitions, his depiction of Muslims and their cultural production has not been given sufficient attention. Julian Raby's classic study, *Venice, Dürer, and the Oriental Mode*, initiated the discourse

FIGURE 0.4 (opposite)
Albrecht Dürer
The Babylonian Whore, c. 1496–1498, from *The Apocalypse* series
Woodcut
38.9 × 28.2 cm (15 15/16 × 11 inches)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, gift of Philip Hofer

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FIGURE 0.5
Albrecht Dürer
Six Soldiers, c. 1495–1496
Engraving
13.4 × 14.8 cm (5 ¼ × 5 13⁄16 inches)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC,
Rosenwald Collection

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in 1982.[17] *Dürer's Knots* builds on its keen observations and insights into the artist's engagement with the Islamic East. Raby, as an Islamicist with a profound interest in connections between the Islamic East and Venice, expertly describes the iconography of German and Italian artists' depictions of Muslim subjects. Larry Silver also has written astutely on the representation of Muslim figures in northern European prints, as well as specifically about Dürer and the Turks.[18] As a scholar of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and northern European print culture, he focuses on how printed images embody the clash of empires, primarily the Holy Roman, Habsburg, and Ottoman Empires. Imperial conflict has been the interpretive framework for most previous treatments of Islamic subjects within northern European art. Charlotte Colding Smith has broadly staked out the field of German and Netherlandish prints and book illustrations of the Islamic world under this rubric. Her work also includes a brief account of Dürer's inclusion of Muslim figures in his biblical prints, from which she concludes, as Silver has, that the artist's depictions of figures and subjects from the Islamic world were so persuasive that they became models for other artists' work.[19] Yet the focus on the transfer of Islamic iconographic motifs among early modern European artists has at times occurred at the expense of the exploration of the printed images' meaning.

Although a comprehensive investigation of Dürer's numerous prints with Muslim subjects is lacking in the vast literature on the artist, this study is not intended to redress that lacunae as such. This project is born of my curiosity about the number of prints and drawings made by Dürer that represent Muslims and their cultural forms, compounded by my wonder at the lack of attention they have received over the past two centuries from art historians. Around thirty of Dürer's more than 260 woodcuts, engravings, and etchings either include a Muslim figure or reference an object from the Islamic East. Of these, *Dürer's Knots* considers an engraving, series of woodcuts, and etching by the artist—his 1498 *Sea Monster* (fig. 1.1), 1507 *Knots* (figs. 2.1 to 2.6), and 1518 *Landscape with Cannon* (fig. 3.2)—that best facilitate the articulation of affiliations between the Holy Roman, Mamluk, and Ottoman Empires around the turn of the sixteenth century. Notably, the prints considered in this study portray nonbiblical subjects. Although the artist's New Testament prints are populated with Eastern figures, some of them Muslim, it is in his depictions of secular subjects that he illustrates contemporaneous political and cultural matters pertinent to the Muslim Levant.

During Dürer's lifetime, two powerful Islamic sultanates were especially significant to Christian Europeans. From 1250 to 1517, the Mamluks controlled parts of North Africa and West Asia, including Egypt and Syria (see fig. 0.2). These regions encompassed Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other important Holy Land sites perceived to be vital to the history and perpetuation of Christendom. The Mamluks also traded with the Venetians and Genoese throughout the eastern Mediterranean and Black Seas, commerce that Germans participated in through their mercantile foothold in Venice. This trade was well known to Dürer from his trips to Venice. At the same time, the Ottomans, who controlled much of the Balkans, Greece, and Turkey, pursued further territories in the Mediterranean and eastern Europe, including

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territories within the borders of the Holy Roman Empire. Nonetheless, both Islamic empires had sultans who were cosmopolitan in outlook and fostered artistic relationships with Europe. Mamluk sultan Qaytbay (r. 1468–1496) and Ottoman sultans Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481) and Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) were patrons of both Muslim and Christian cultural production.[20] This atmosphere of both collaboration and threat was the backdrop to Dürer's emerging practice as a printmaker in the late fifteenth century.

Dürer has not left letters, inscriptions, or essays about how to comprehend this aspect of his work; instead, the evidence of his engagement with the Islamic Levant is embedded in his painted, printed, and sketched depictions of Muslim figures and their material culture.[21] Consequently, we must assess the images by situating them within their historical contexts, interpreting the artist's technical choices, and examining the evidence of the pictorial representations themselves. Because Dürer's prints of Islamic subjects are such capacious carriers of the ideas of their time, we need to revisit them with a renewed focus and urgency, especially as scholars explore global networks across fields of inquiry. Crucially, doing so also prompts a discussion of the early development of printing in Europe that foregrounds its connection to the relationships between Christian and Muslim empires, another theme treated throughout this study.[22]

EARLY EUROPEAN PRINT AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Western history rarely acknowledges it, but early European print culture is inextricably linked to the Islamic world. Although this book focuses on printing in the wake of the seldom remarked upon historical coincidence of Johannes Gutenberg's development of movable type in the early 1450s in Mainz, Germany, and the 1453 conquest of Constantinople, recent research demonstrates that the connections between printing and Islam are of much longer standing. Kristina Richardson's study of *ghurabā'*, the itinerant Muslim Romani people who inhabited the Balkans, northern Africa, and western Asia, presents a new account of premodern Afro-Eurasian printing as a corrective to the dominant European narrative of Gutenberg's invention. Knowing that the *ghurabā'* produced block-printed amulets as early as the tenth century, she proposes that their knowledge of printing moved with them into Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire in the 1410s, linking *ghurabā'*-made woodcuts to the emergence of the earliest Christian devotional prints in Bohemia and Bavaria. She also claims that Muslim itinerant printers used movable type and perhaps laid the groundwork for Gutenberg's development of the printing press.[23] Richardson's examination of the role of *ghurabā'* printers is a provocative precursor to this study, and the subject warrants further consideration.

The concerns of this book commence in the mid-fifteenth century. As mentioned, the activation of Gutenberg's printing press in Germany closely coincided with the 1453 conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire.[24] The overthrow of the former Eastern seat of the Christian world transformed the region into one where the Islamic faith predominated. Both

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mid-fifteenth-century events—one a revolution in communication and the other a geopolitical and religious revolution—had monumental repercussions that forever altered relationships within the eastern Mediterranean between Asia, Africa, and Europe. Nonetheless, this remarkable historical coincidence is seldom discussed in connection to the introduction of printing in Christian Europe, an omission that strikes me as a blind spot, perhaps even a willful blind spot, since these dual episodes triggered extravagant printed accounts of the Islamic East. Scholars traditionally have interpreted the European explosion of printed texts and images of Ottomans and other Islamic subjects as the consequence of their fear of further conquest. Yet, however seductive to an apprehensive Western imagination such an account may be, it does not elucidate the compelling range of inventive images rendered by European artists around 1500, especially those by Dürer.

Notably, the proliferation of printed materials depicting the Islamic world was launched by Gutenberg's press. In the Christian West, we are taught that the first significant publication to emerge from the printing press was Gutenberg's forty-two-line Bible, a marvel of the new technology. Most likely this narrative is endlessly retold because of the favorable light it casts on the intellectual, social, and moral development of Christian European culture. As Richardson states in her study of early printing, "Print history is a deeply political field, as the supremacy of Western modernity rests almost entirely on representing print's origins as uniquely Christian and European and its effects on Latin Christendom as singularly transformative."[25] Histories of Western civilization highlight the view that the printing of Bibles enabled the spread of the principles of Christianity. The new technology replaced the monotonous labor of monastic scribes, who hand-copied the sacred text, with a mechanical process that was faster, more consistent, and less costly. The key outcome of this innovation was the production of more Bibles—more tools of instruction and devotion—to put into the hands of the faithful.

Yet even the hastiest internet search reveals that the Bible was not the first publication issued by the Mainz printer. The earliest known dated text printed by Gutenberg's workshop is an October 1454 indulgence granted by Pope Nicolas V to raise funds to support the Kingdom of Cyprus's defense against perceived Islamic forces.[26] Two months later, in December 1454, and a year before the appearance of his eponymous Bible, Gutenberg's press printed a call to crusade against the Ottoman Empire. It was addressed to God, the pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, European kings and princes, and other Christian authorities—the first of many printed documents appealing for a military campaign to avenge the siege of Constantinople. Titled *Eyn manung der cristenheit widder die durken* (*An Admonition to Christendom against the Turks*) and colloquially called the *Türkenkalender*, the unillustrated, six-page pamphlet is recognized by Gutenberg scholars as a critical artifact of early printing (fig. 0.6).[27] Nonetheless, it is rarely referenced in histories of the origins of printing in the West, whereas the near-contemporary Donatus Latin Grammar book is. Two years later, in 1456, Gutenberg issued another pamphlet urging Christians to pray for those fighting the Ottomans in the Balkans.[28] Gutenberg's earliest printed editions were not sacred texts but calls to arms.

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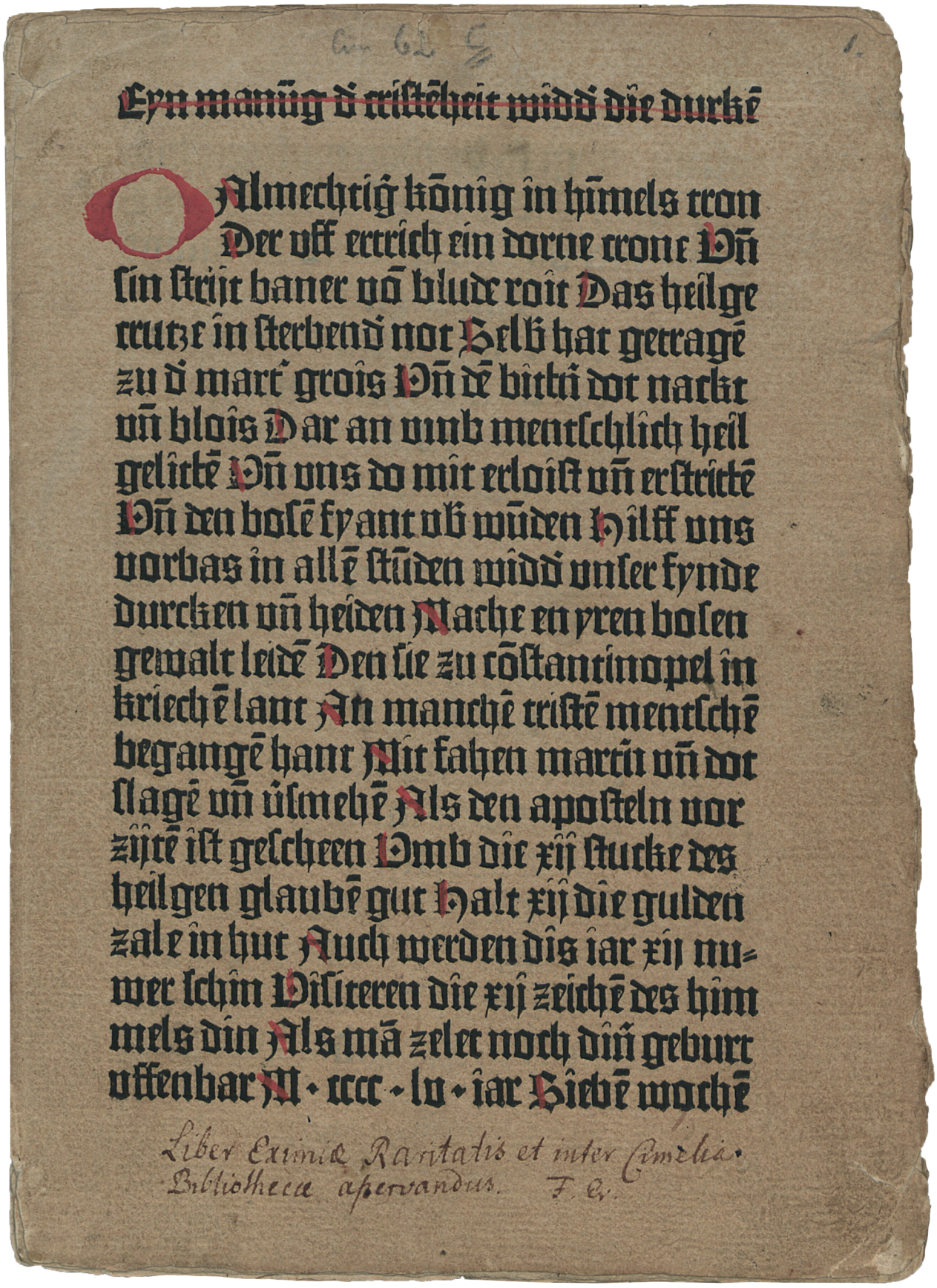

Eyn manūg d̄ cristēheit widd̄ die durkē

O Almechtig̃ kōnig̃ in hīmels tron
Der vff ertrich ein dorne crone Vñ
sin streist baner vō blude roit Das heilge
crutze in sterbend̄ not Helb̄ hat getragē
zu d̄ marc̃ groiss Vñ dē bittē dot nackt
vñ bloiss Dar an vmb menschlich heil
gelittē Vñ vns do mit erloist vñ erstrictē
Vñ den bosē fyant ob̄ wūden Hilff vns
vorbas in allē stūden widd̄ vnser fynde
durchen vñ heiden Mache en yren bosen
gewalt leidē Den sie zu cōstantinopel in
kriechē lant An manchē cristē menschē
begangē hant Mit kalten marcē vñ dot
slagē vñ ūsmehē Als den aposteln vor
zītē ist geschcen Omb die xp̄i stucke des
heilgen glaubē gut Halt xp̄i die gulden
zale in hut Auch werden dis iar xp̄i nu-
wer schin Visiteren die xp̄i zeichē des him
mels din Als mā zelet noch dīn geburt
offenbar M · ccc · lv · iar Hiebē wochē

Liber Eximie Raritatis et inter Gimelia
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FIGURE 0.6 (opposite)
Eyn manung der cristenheit widder die durken (*Türkenkalender*) (*An Admonition to Christendom against the Turks*), 1454, Mainz
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

The existence of these early printed documents related to military measures against the Ottoman and Mamluk Sultanates remains relatively unknown outside of academic circles. Is this because the nature of these early texts runs counter to the technology's alleged noble origins? If Western printing originated with military fundraising efforts and an appeal to take up arms, then the technology's birth and legacy have been mischaracterized. Instead of acknowledging that the earliest known publications weaponized the press to incite violence against Muslims (or to raise money to incite violence), a more benign understanding of printing as a means of disseminating the Bible to the faithful has made it possible for historians to focus on the medium's generative capacities over its more malignant divisive powers. This misapprehension calls for a revision of the history of early European print culture, a rethinking with a less righteous origin myth.

The call to crusade articulated by the 1454 *Türkenkalender* never resulted in the deployment of troops or in any organized campaign against the Ottoman Empire. Too many of Europe's leaders had political, commercial, and personal stakes in maintaining peaceable relationships with their Muslim counterparts. The Venetians and Genoese especially had long-term mercantile associations with the Ottomans and Mamluks, with established trade routes in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Seas that relied on diplomatic agreements among them. Benjamin Arbel argues that while the history of political conflict and military battles is often the most loudly voiced, what often eludes recorded history is that the fundamental material needs of the citizens of sparring states continued to be met through international trade.[29] Underlying the call of the *Türkenkalender* to lay siege to the Ottoman Empire was the notion that Christian Europe and the Islamic East were each monolithic, self-contained entities, not sets of diverse parties, each with distinct interests. Just as strife was present among the various Muslim and Christian realms, so were affiliations that served the needs of the interconnected dominions and their diverse populations.

A METHODOLOGY BASED ON AFFILIATION

Dürer's Knots offers a revisionist methodology, one that scrutinizes artistic production in Europe but is not Eurocentric in its outlook. However counterintuitive, looking to present-day investigations of the natural world, which have undergone a radical methodological transformation, can provide a constructive interpretative model for such a renovated history. Instead of focusing on competition between species, nature scientists are looking at the workings of networks that are mutually beneficial for the different species within an ecosystem. Rivalry as a paradigm of behavior and justification for the relationship between species is being questioned, while affiliations based on cooperation and compensation are now understood as prevalent in nature. Scientists, for example, used to imagine that the underground root systems of different trees vied with one another for water and minerals. Recently, however, dendrologists have found that root systems within healthy ecosystems are interconnected through strands of fungal filament that enable different

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trees, even different species of trees, to collaborate for the benefit of the whole ecosystem.[30] Nature, like humans, engages in complex social interactions.

The inter-empire ecosystem of North Africa, Europe, and the eastern Mediterranean has long been studied by historians of western European art through the lens of competition rather than cooperation.[31] Informed by the partisan politics of national identity, religious difference, and commercial rivalries, the interpretative framework commonly deployed has been conflict among empires.[32] Dürer's engraved *Six Soldiers* (see fig. 0.5) and his etched *Landscape with Cannon* (see fig. 3.2) demonstrate the misunderstanding caused by the persistent imposition of such a paradigm. Although both prints portray peaceful situations that include armed Christian and Muslim soldiers, both have been interpreted as scenes of strife. The Ottoman soldiers in each—the mounted figure in the early engraving and the foremost figure in the etching—have been identified by art historians as captives of the German soldiers who surround them even though neither seems to be held against his will.[33] In the engraving, three in the cluster of figures standing before the Ottoman astride the horse have their backs turned to him, and the two German *Landsknechten*, casually holding their pikes, maintain relaxed postures even though the Muslim soldier carries a knife. The visual evidence suggests something other than impending violence.

New methodologies of affiliative interspecies collaboration are more suitable analytic tools for today's nonhierarchical art history, which needs to look beyond biased, limiting, and oppositional structures as the bases for interpretation. Like the exchanges between trees' root systems that take place underground and out of sight, the connections between empires also sometimes exist beyond what is most visible. Deborah Howard notes that documents describing friendly and profitable mercantile associations between Venetian and Muslim merchants survive in private notarial records and merchants' letters but not in official records, which more frequently describe conflicts such as war and piracy.[34] This book's third chapter investigates the depicted Christian and Muslim soldiers in *Landscape with Cannon* alongside contemporary texts and reveals associations between them that are not based on military antagonism but instead on religious debate and reform.

The foremost goal of this book is to demonstrate Dürer's knowledge of the entanglements of the Ottoman, Mamluk, and Holy Roman Empires, and how informed his northern Europeans patrons were about the interactions among them, thus making the appearance of Muslim figures and subjects in his engravings, etchings, and woodcuts comprehensible to them. Historians of southern European art have more consistently recognized connections between Italian and Near Eastern art forms, while historians of German art have been less likely to articulate artistic affiliations between the Holy Roman Empire and the Islamic sultanates. Another objective of this book is to show that Germany also maintained commercial, cultural, and political associations with the Mamluk and Ottoman Empires, and that those relationships, which were not just military and antagonistic, are embodied in the print culture of the period. Acknowledging the multicultural, imbricated narratives of the Islamic East and Christian West facilitates the development of a more multifaceted art history, one that emphasizes cooperation over conflict.

FIGURE 0.7 (opposite)
Master of the Vienna Passion
El Gran Turco (*Sultan Mehmed II*), c. 1470
Engraving
24.5 × 19.7 cm (9 ½ × 7 ¾ inches)
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

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Dürer was not alone in his portrayal of themes related to the Muslim East. They had been appearing in European prints for nearly three decades.[35] As early as 1470, the Florentine Master of the Vienna Passion inscribed an imaginary likeness of Sultan Mehmed II with the words "El Gran Turco" (fig. 0.7).[36] The Ottoman sultan himself possessed a hand-colored impression of the engraving, which is included in an album with other Florentine prints compiled for him during his reign.[37] Whereas in the late fifteenth century painted portraits of Muslim figures predominated in Italy, north of the Alps printed images and books depicting the Islamic East prevailed. Some of the earliest depictions of Muslim figures were engraved by the most important northern European artists of the time, including Israhel van Meckenem, Martin Schongauer, and Master of the Housebook. The prints also were collected by significant European patrons. Hartmann Schedel, an illustrious citizen of Nuremberg and the author of *Schedelsche Weltchronik* (*Nuremberg Chronicle*), owned an impression of van Meckenem's portrait of a distinguished older Muslim man with curly hair and flowing beard that the collector, in his customary way, colored by adding a dab of red paint to the man's lips, animating his wise expression (fig. 0.8). Ferdinand Columbus, whose print collection was assembled in the early decades of the sixteenth century and housed in Seville, also included an impression of van Meckenem's engraving. The collection's contemporary inventory describes the depicted figure as wearing "a Turkish-style headdress."[38] Non-European headgear and weapons, such as turbans and curved swords, were used by artists to distinguish non-Christian figures from their Christian counterparts. The foremost figure in Schongauer's engraving, conventionally titled *Two Turks* (fig. 0.9), prominently carries a blade at his hip whose handle is decorated with a crescent moon. Bronwen Wilson has argued that Venetian artists in their depictions of Ottomans could not rely on physiognomy to discern subjects of the different empires; hence they used dress to differentiate them from their Christian contemporaries.[39] This was a northern European practice as well. Other cues of Muslim identity included bows, arrows, and ornately decorated quivers and horse blankets, as well as the musical instruments of the Ottoman military, as is evident in a print from around 1490 by Master of the Housebook of a mounted Ottoman rider who has a drum at his knee (fig. 0.10). Comparing the Housebook Master's rider and the mounted Ottoman in Dürer's *Adoration of the Magi* (see fig. 0.1) suggests that Dürer was aware of his predecessor's engraving.

During Dürer's apprenticeship years, three popular books were published in northern Europe that informed his perception of the Islamic East. Although each condemned the Muslim empires and their appropriation of formerly Christian lands, the books also offered introductions to the Islamic East's history, inhabitants, their customs, and their languages. Over the following three decades of his career, the artist borrowed visual motifs from the books' illustrations, while avoiding their prejudicial stance toward the Ottoman and Mamluk Empires and their inhabitants. The German cleric Bernhard von Breydenbach's 1486 *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (*Journey*

FIGURE 0.8 (opposite)
Israhel van Meckenem
Old Man Wearing Turban,
c. 1480–1490
Engraving
19.5 × 12.4 cm (7 ½ × 4 ⅞ inches)
Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich

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FIGURE 0.9
Martin Schongauer
Two Turks, c. 1470–1491
Engraving
8.6 × 5 cm (3 ⅜ × 2 inches)
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harry Brisbane Dick Fund

FIGURE 0.10 (opposite)
Master of the Housebook
Ottoman Rider, c. 1488–1492
Drypoint
16 × 10.4 cm (6 ¼ × 4 inches)
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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to the Holy Land), an elaborately illustrated pilgrimage report printed in Mainz, was the first of the volumes; it offered practical information about travel between Venice and the Holy Land as well as rich descriptions of the region's cities and people.[40] The text makes strident claims of eyewitness experience, which no doubt legitimated the publication's woodcut illustrations in the eyes of an artist like Dürer. By declaring that Breydenbach and Erhard Reuwich, the Utrecht artist who accompanied him on the journey, observed everything pictured in the volume, the *Peregrinatio* became a model book for artists. Along with woodcut cityscapes of such important sites as Venice, Jerusalem, Modon (fig. 0.11), Rhodes, Famagusta, and Candia, the volume also includes an illustrated catalog of the inhabitants of the Holy Land, including Saracens (fig. 0.12), Ottoman Turks, Jews, Syrians, Ethiopians, and Greeks, and featured detailed depictions of their dress, headgear, musical instruments, and weapons. The woodcut illustrating an Ottoman military band (fig. 0.13) labels the soldiers *genetzer* (Janissary) and *turci* (Turk). The group includes mounted figures armed with bows, arrows,

FIGURE 0.11 (below)
Erhard Reuwich
View of Modon, from Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (*Journey to the Holy Land*), Mainz, 1486
Woodcut with hand coloring
Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich

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and pikes and others playing customary Ottoman instruments, the *zurna* (wind instrument) and *nakkar* (drum).[41] The figures wear an array of headgear, including a hat that resembles the one worn by the Florentine engraver's "El Gran Turco." The depicted Janissary below the *genetzer* inscription, a member of the sultan's select infantry, wears a high *börk*-style turban that folds and hangs down his back, while the drummer in the foreground labeled *turci* wears a style of turban made of fabric wound around a vertical ribbed cap called a *taj*.

Dürer's knowledge of the *Peregrinatio* is confirmed by his appropriation of images from the volume in his own prints and drawings, such as the Venetian carrack from the illustration of Modon that appears in his *Sea Monster* engraving (see fig. 1.1). Breydenbach's publication is a key example of the proliferation of printed accounts about the Islamic East that appeared in the decades after the conquest of Constantinople that not only helped shape the dialogue about networks of exchange with the region but also demonstrated the new and productive possibilities of printing.[42]

FIGURE 0.12 (following, left)
Erhard Reuwich
Saracens and Arabic Alphabet, from Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (*Journey to the Holy Land*), Mainz, 1486
Woodcut with hand coloring
Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich

FIGURE 0.13 (following, right)
Erhard Reuwich
Ottoman Military Band, from Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (*Journey to the Holy Land*), Mainz, 1486
Woodcut with hand coloring
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ſunden·oder zů eyner vbung deß criſtenlichen volcks vñ furſten·die ſel
ben gottes vnd yr vyndt zů beſtritten Aber ich yn diſem allem nichts
freuenlichen vßſprechende·verlaß diſe matery den gelertern· diß hyn zů
geſatzt·nach dauids ſententz·daz die vrteyl gottes ein groſſer abgrund
ſyen·vnnd als eyn ander prophet ſpricht· Wer weyß den willen gottes
oder wer iſt ſyn radt geweſen ꝛc·beſlyeſſende alſo mit ſancto paulo· O
hoͤhe der richtum gottlicher wyßheit vñ kunſt·wie vnbegrifflich ſyn die
ſyne vrteyl vnd vnerforſchlich ſyne werck·da mit ſy gnůg geſaget von
den ſarracenen·

Die ſarraceni bruchen arabiſch zung vnd litter·welche litter hye vnden ſteet yn rechter form getrucket·

Dal	Dal	Reh	Zeidh	Gzým	Tech	Te	Be	Aleph
ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	ت	ت	ب	ا
Ayn	Dadz	Ta	Dadhua	Sad	Sadzým	Gzýn	Zaym	Fe
ع	ظ	ط	ظ	ص	ڤ	ڤ	ف	ف
Helze	Nůn	Mým	Lam	Lam	Caph	Kabh	Ffea	Gaým
ه	ن	م	ل	ل	ك	ك	ق	ق
Walsalam. pax	Ye	Lamalyf	Waů					
ه	ى	لا	و					

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Yn solicher maß rythen die Turcken zů frydsammer zytt wan sie ettwas triumph oder sust freud vnd lust wollen gebruchen vnd haben Aber zů kriegs zytten bruchen sie gar by sollich gewandt doch ettlich ander gewere.

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The *Peregrinatio* also was intended to raise concern about recent Ottoman conquests and, even more emphatically, to encourage crusade and the re-Christianization of the Holy Land. Yet even though the text called for military action, the volume also provided tools to cultivate closer affiliations, such as tables of six Near Eastern alphabets: Arabic, Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Syriac, and Hebrew.[43] Being able to read eastern Mediterranean languages was crucial for diplomatic and trade negotiations. Besides providing a set of images and iconographic models, Breydenbach's volume offered the young Dürer a constellation of ideas about who the inhabitants of the Muslim Levant were and how Europeans might communicate with them.

Other popular publications were equally important to his developing conceptions of the Islamic East. Hartmann Schedel's 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle* was published by Dürer's godfather, Anton Koberger. The volume is illustrated with woodcuts by Wilhelm Pleydenwurff and Michael Wolgemut, to whom Dürer was apprenticed from 1486 to 1489. Among its myriad descriptions of kingdoms, cities, monuments, rulers, and saints, the publication offers a detailed history of the Ottoman Empire, from its founding through the 1453 siege of Constantinople to the late-fifteenth-century reign of Sultan Bayezid II.[44] It is, however, "Ottomannus," the first sultan, who is pictured in Muslim dress carrying a curved sword and dagger and wearing a *börk*, the folded-over turban of the elite Janissary soldiers (fig. 0.14). The history of the Ottoman Empire presented in a lavishly printed book, illustrated with an image of the eponymous sultan, would have further fed the young Dürer's eager mind. Not only did the *Nuremberg Chronicle* deliver knowledge of a fabled empire, but the volume did so via the technique of printing, an area of the developing artist's training for which he had a great talent.

The following year, 1494, and forty years after the publication of the *Türkenkalender*, the fearmongering Strasbourg satirist Sebastian Brant wrote the first secular bestseller, *Narrenschiff* (*Ship of Fools*), contributing to the growing list of European condemnations of the Islamic sultanates and calls to take up arms against them. The youthful Dürer, probably during his journeyman's visit to Basel in 1492–1494, created designs for some of the woodcuts that illustrate *Narrenschiff*.[45] Brant recognized that printing accelerated the production and circulation of information, an idea that Dürer also embraced during his years of travel and training. In Brant's 1532 eulogy for Johann Bergmann von Olpe, his Basel printer, he boldly expressed what printing made possible during Dürer's lifetime:

> What in the past could barely be written in a thousand days by one, / art now helps to handle in a single day. / Earlier the libraries of scholars were sparse. … / In earlier days many a town had at most a few books, / today we find books even in modest homes. … And all of this is thanks to the art and work of German printers.[46]

Although Brant and Dürer were alike in their appreciation of the new technology, Brant's publications convey a more critical message.[47] In the most inflammatory chapter of *Narrenschiff*, "On the Decline of the Faith," Brant

FIGURE 0.14 (opposite)
Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff
Ottomanus, from Hartmann Schedel, *Registrum huius operis libri cronicarum* (*Nuremberg Chronicle*), Nuremberg, 1493
Woodcut with hand coloring
Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich

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Ottomannus

Ottomannorum turchorum regni principium

Turchi ottomanni ab ottomanno eorum primo principe nuncupati. q̄ nostris temporibus totam ferme asiam minorem ⁊ greciam partim armis partim seditionibus sibi subdiderunt. tempestate hac adhuc iohanne pontifice p̄dicto p̄sulante ab ottomanno quodam turcho exigui census ⁊ obscuri principia sumpserē. a quo postea Ottomanni turchi appellati sunt. Hic primus turchorum rex. orta iter turchorum principes seditione auctoritatem breui ⁊ nomen adeptus est tempore, vrbes ⁊ oppida nō pauca partim vi partim deditione in suam potestatem recepit, qui moriens orchanes filius successit. qui rem inchoatam a patre longe lateq̄ ꝑpagauit. quem secutus amurates filius duobus de grecoꝝ imperio discrepantib⁹ ab altero qui superiꝰ timebat in auxilium accersitus consulto bellū ꝓtrahens vbi ambo consumptis viribus fractos aiaduertit in eos arma conuertit ⁊ plurimū grecie sibi subiecit. Is vita functus duos reliquit filios solomanū ⁊ pazaitem. solomāno extincto res vniuersa ad pazaitem deducta est. qui primus q̄ a Tamerlane caperetur res magnas in grecia gessit. dimissus nil dignum egit ⁊ inglorius apud asiaz obiit. cuius filij complures. quoꝝ primus calopinus natu maior quintus rex regnum post patrem obtinuit. cui vita functo Orcani filio tenella etate adolescentulo relicto. Is quorundam principum auxilio ad regnū deuenit. qui paulopost a moise patruo extinctus fuit. ⁊ non multo postꝰ ipe patruus nullo supstite filio decessit. quem mahumethes frater tercius ex pazaite filius subsecutus. rex sextus regnū obtinens. magnas res in europa gessit turchoꝝ regulos vi atq̄ armis oppressos regnis exuit. ipoq̄ mortuo amuratem filium dimisit heredē. qui mustaphā patruū supatū ⁊ interemptū victor vniuersum regnum obtinuit. Hic mahumetum habuit filiū virū preclarissimum. qui duo imperia ⁊ duodecim regna acquisita suo adiecit dominio. de quo infra fiet mēcio. hicq̄ deficiens pazaitem primogenitum impatorem adhuc extantē dimisit. hec ē ottomannoꝝ ꝓgenies et origo. adeo q̄ turchoꝝ nomen auctum est vt q̄ olim asia vocabat nūc turchia vocitēt. a turchis em vniuersa possidetur.

Odericus or. minor

Odericus vir sanctus de ordine minorum in asia ⁊ india euangelizando discurrit miraculis clarus. ⁊ quatuor sanctorum martiruꝝ corpora de ciuitate borines transtulit p̄ mare ad superiorem indiam in ciuitatem carram nō sine miraculis. ⁊ descripsit peregrinationem suam.

Bartholomeus natione pisanus ordinis p̄dicatorum theolog⁹ ⁊ insignis decretorum doctor p̄ hoc ipm tempus pisis floruit ⁊ multa laude digna composuit. Inter que utile opus ⁊ quasi diuinū ad cōfessorum instructionē edidit qđ summā pisanā seu magistructā appellauit. eā em (ipo referēte) pfecit anno dñi. 1338

Albertus brixianus eiusdem pfessionis ⁊ litterature licet maioris sanctimonie virum cum eodem claruisse ⁊ miraculis floruisse tradunt. qui p̄ter sanctitatem maximam ⁊ ipe summā celebrē de casib⁹ cōposuit. cui aliq̄n beatū augustinū cum beato tho. aquinate apparuisse tradunt. eiq̄ dixisse thomas. mibi par est in gloria virginali sed in immundicia cordis prior.

Ludolph⁹ carthusiēsis

Ludolphus alemanus ordinis carthusiensium prior argentinensis vir doctrina et morum sanctitate cōspicuus. hac ipa tempestate poptime vitam dñi nri ihesu xpi egregio volumine. ⁊ quodā celesti artificio. imo pocius diuina reuelatione cū studio fabricauit. in quo certe se ostendit venerabilem virum ⁊ oim rerum tam diuinarū cū humanarū. ⁊ potissimū ipius ihesu xpi vite put potuit hoi ee possibile plenissimā habuisse notitiā. alia q̄z laude digna hic deuot⁹ atq̄ venerandus p̄ edidit.

Thomā de argentina ordinis heremitarū generalē eo tpe floruisse ferūt. q̄ sup q̄tuor sententiarū libris ⁊ ipe cōmentaria dignissima edidit. quib⁹ scolastica in germania maxime vtunt. Cū plurimum aliorum scriptis p̄stare censeantur. etiā cōstitutiones ordinis in formam redegit.

Ubertinus carrarien̄sis

Ubertin⁹ carrariēsis marsilij patruelis hoc anno iure gentiū ex ipius marsilij testamento padue dominatum suscipiens regnauit annis sex. Hunc cum mastin⁹ veronensis princeps magnis affecisset cladibus tandem lacessitus eidem vrbem tradidit. quia venetis ⁊ luchino vicecomite ꝓcurantibus pax cōfecta est ⁊ vbertino ciuitas reddita. quem statim benedictus pontifex aplica ⁊ imperiali auctoritate ipm in ea cōfirmauit. ⁊ deinceps quo ad vixit ipam in pace possedit. ipo denicq̄ mortuo cum Marsilius eius filius successisset. code anno a iacobo vbertini patruele cōspiratione facta interfectus fuit. ⁊ ipe primatū vrbis suscepit.

Astesanum de ast cisalpine gallie ciuitatem ordinis minoruꝝ omni doctrina excellentissimum ꝓfessum hisdem temporibus celebrem ac p̄clarissimam summam tam in theologia q̄z in legibus edidisse tradunt.

(continued...)

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