

Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf in Italy:

Networks, Projects and Universal Church at the turn of the 17th and the 18th Century

The subject of this article is a well-known traveller, Pietist, diplomat and scholar of Oriental languages: Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf (1655-1712).¹ In a description often quoted by scholars, he defined himself through two elements: travel and conversation: “Ever since my youth I have wished to talk and travel [...]”.² He then added another constitutive element of his identity: religion or, more precisely, his being 'Christian' in the pietist sense of a man reborn in Christ.³ In a few lines, he thereby distilled his sense of self and his story, referring to the journey that took him to the Holy Land between 1698 and 1700.⁴ That journey had been the turning point of his life, as documented by several written accounts and an iconographic source: the oil portrait with the tattoo of Jerusalem in the foreground, preserved at the Francke Foundations in Halle. Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf, a “polyglot globetrotter and international networker of the Pietists”,⁵ came from a patrician family from Erfurt and was the nephew of the famous orientalist Hiob. He also studied Oriental languages at Jena and later moved to England, where he was secretary to Prince George of Denmark until 1691. After leaving the office, the prince granted him a pension that allowed him to travel, and devote himself to his religious projects. At the same time, however, he continued serving both English and Danish interests, mostly

¹ On Ludolf see: Joachim Tetzner: *H.W. Ludolf und Russland*, Berlin 1955; Id.: Hermann Goltz: *Ecclesia Universa. Bemerkungen über die Beziehungen H.W.Ludolfs zu Rußland und zu den orientalischen Kirchen*. In: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 28, 1979, 19-37; Renate Wilson: *Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf, August Hermann Francke und der Eingang nach Rußland*. In: *Halle und Osteuropa: zur europäischen Ausstrahlung des hallischen Pietismus*. Ed. by Johannes Wallmann, Udo Sträter, Tübingen 1998, 83–108; Alexander Schunka, »An England ist uns viel gelegen.« Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf (1655-1712) als Wanderer zwischen den Welten. In: *London und das Hallesche Waisenhaus. Eine Kommunikationsgeschichte im 18. Jahrhundert*. Ed. by Holger Zaunstöck et al. Wiesbaden 2014, 43-64; Id.: *Zwischen Kontingenz und Providenz. Frühe Englandkontakte der halleschen Pietisten und protestantische Irenik um 1700*. In: *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 34, 2008, 82-114; Adelisa Malena: “Promoting the Common Interest of Christ”. H.W. Ludolf’s “impartial” Projects and the Beginnings of the SPCK. In: *British Protestant Missions and the Conversion of Europe, 1600-1900*. Ed. by Simone Maghzenani, Stefano Villani. London 2020, 140-62; Ead.: *Speranze, progetti e reti interconfessionali in Europa fra Sei e Settecento. Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf e Francesco Bellisomi*. In: *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 134, 2023. Issue 1, 11-54.

² Halle, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen (hereafter AFSt)/ H D 71, 57v. Tetzner: *H.W. Ludolf und Russland* [see note 1], 21-22; Schunka: »An England ist uns viel gelegen.« [see note 1], 63.

³ On Protestants pilgrims in the Holy Land: Mordechai Lewy: *Religious Ambiguity at the Periphery of the Habsburg Mediterranean: Protestant Pilgrims and their Interactions with Franciscan Friars in Jerusalem in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. In: *The Habsburg Mediterranean 1500-1800*. Ed. by Stefan Hanß and Dorothea McEwan. Wien 2021, 201-228.

⁴ Joachim Tetzner: *Briefe H.W. Ludolfs aus Kleinasien und Ägypten am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts*. In: *Der Islam. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients* 33/3, 1958, 326-336; *Von Halle nach Jerusalem. Halle – Ein Zentrum der Palästina-Kunde im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Ed. by Hendrik Budde and Mordechai Lewy, Halle 1994; Anne Schröder-Kahnt: »beym Umgange mit allerhand nationen und religionen ein und ander Vergnügen bescheret«. *Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolfs Reise in den Orient*. In: *Durch die Welt im Auftrag des Herrn. Reisen von Pietisten im 18. Jahrhundert*. Ed. by Anne Schröder-Kahnt and Claus Veltmann. Halle 2018, 161-173.

⁵ Stefano Saracino: *Accessing the Bodies and Souls of the Greeks with Medicine and Music: a Comparison of Jesuits and Pietist Missionary Practices in the Ottoman Empire*. In: *Jesuit and Pietist Missions in the Eighteenth Century. Cross-Confessional Perspectives*. Ed. by Markus Friedrich and Holger Zaunstöck. Halle 2002, 77-103.

through unofficial diplomacy.⁶ Between 1692 and 1693, Ludolf travelled to Russia where came into close contact with the entourage of Peter the Great and established relations with leading politicians, scholars, and members of the Orthodox church. On his return to Oxford, he published a Russian grammar book.⁷ In the same period his relations with August Hermann Francke were established and intensified progressively in years to come. On a religious level, Ludolf and Francke had very similar positions and shared converging though not identical aims. The relationship of mutual trust that bound them together enabled them to cooperate on projects for missions and relationships with other Christian churches: in particular towards the various Eastern Christian denominations. Ludolf was a member of the Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) from its foundation in 1699. Together with his disciple Anton Wilhelm Böhme (1673-1722), he was the main mediator in relations between Halle and the SPCK.⁸ Throughout his life Ludolf pursued the ideal of a ‘universal church’, understood as an impartial community of men and women who had been ‘reborn’ in Christ, regardless of their denominational affiliation.⁹

Italy was an intermediate stop on Ludolf’s journey to the Holy Land and the Near East and, as such, has so far been somewhat neglected by studies. However, the aim of the present article is not only to provide additional information in this regard, but rather to understand what significance relations with Italy had for Ludolf, and for the projects which he shared with Francke. Each of the sections in the article corresponds to one of the Italian stops on his journey: Venice, Livorno, and Rome.

1. The journey to the Holy Land had begun in the Netherlands in 1697; from there Ludolf had reached Halle in the fall, visiting Francke for the first time, and gaining his support for the journey. For Francke’s initiatives and for relations between Halle and the Near East, Ludolf’s trip was of decisive importance. He left Halle in March 1698 and arrived in Venice in May.¹⁰ He kept Francke briefed during the various stages of his trip. Their correspondence is full of information on places and people, and on commercial, diplomatic, and broadly cultural networks, as well as providing future travellers advice on routes, means of transport, the costs involved, and on useful contacts and languages. In Venice, Ludolf was received by Francke’s brother, the merchant Heinrich Friedrich (1661-1728), and came into contact with the German merchant community that was based at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi.¹¹ He reported to Francke on the encounters he considered significant.¹² First and foremost,

⁶ Schunka: »An England ist uns viel gelegen.« [see note 1], 46.

⁷ Henrici Willhelmi Ludolfi Grammatica Russica [...]. Oxford 1696.

⁸ Daniel L. Brunner: Halle Pietists in England. Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Göttingen 1993; Malena: Promoting [see note 1].

⁹ Goltz: Ecclesia Universa [see note 1]; Malena: Promoting [see note 1].

¹⁰ AFSt /H D 71, 1: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Halle, 17.02.1698.

¹¹ Magnus Ressel: Protestantische Händlernetze im langen 18. Jahrhundert. Die deutschen Kaufmannsgruppierungen und ihre Korporationen in Venedig und Livorno von 1648 bis 1806. Göttingen 2021.

¹² AFSt/H A 112, 269-270: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 11-21.05.1698.

those with the Pommer family, who played a key role in relations between Halle and the Ottoman Empire via Venice, providing economic support and making available the infrastructure of their trade networks. The commercial infrastructure was indeed of decisive importance for Ludolf's projects and, more generally, for Pietist missionary initiatives. Ludolf could rely for the English side on the Levant Company and for the German side on German merchants in Venice and their trading hubs: in particular Smyrna and Constantinople.¹³

The Pommers were also crucial to the spread of Pietism in the Protestant community in Venice. Johann Christoph Pommer, who died in 1708, left a large sum of money to the Halle orphanage, as well as to charitable institutions in Venice.¹⁴ In the following decades they were also active in the ransom of Christian slaves in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵ Writing to Francke from Venice in May 1698, Ludolf – as in other cases – acts as an intermediary in the search for a mentor for the children of Johann Jacob Pommer, Johann Christoph's nephew: "I have spoke[n] again with Mr Pommer and told him a good choice of a tutor for his nephews children might serve two ends at once. First to have the youths well instructed, and secondly to fitt out the tutor for doing service to Gods Universal Church. Because he might apply himself to the vulgar Greek and edify by his conversation". The candidate should have some knowledge of the Italian language "because the children speak nothing but Italian yet".¹⁶ This is a typical example of many of the relationships Ludolf sought to establish, that is, finding individuals who could play several roles at the same time, with different purposes. Mentors seemed particularly appropriate for these multitasking roles. In this case, a teacher for the children who was also able to edify them in piety, interested in turn in learning languages that – like vulgar Greek – could be useful for the educational and religious projects aimed at the East. Regarding Pommer's and other Germans' faith in Venice, Ludolf observed: "Mr Pommer is of pious inclinations, and I believe hath not many fellows here for Christianity amongst our countrymen". Pietism, although still a minority, was beginning to spread in the lagoon city, as the circulation of some books seemed to suggest: "[Pommer] hath got Mr Arnolds book about primitive Christianity", and so did another merchant "namely Mr Lauber".¹⁷ The latter was most likely Matthias Lauber, who was one of the Germans in Venice closest to Pietism.¹⁸ From a few, as yet little, clues, it can however be assumed

¹³ Ulrich Moennig: Die griechische Studenten am Hallenser Collegium orientale theologicum. In: Halle und Osteuropa, 299-329, here 304.

¹⁴ Venice, State Archive (hereafter ASVe), Notarile Testamenti, 516, cedola 242 (J.C. Pommer's Will. Venice, 14.07.1704).

¹⁵ Magnus Ressel: Venice and the redemption of Northern European slaves (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries). In: Cahiers de la Méditerranée, 87, 2013. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/cdlm/> (last access: 20.03.2023).

¹⁶ AFSt/ H D 71, 6: H.W. Ludolf to A. H. Francke, Venice, 23.05.1698.

¹⁷ Gottfried Arnold: Die erste Liebe der gemeinen Jesu Christi, das ist Wahre Abbildung der ersten Christen, nach ihren lebendigen Glauben und Heiligen Leben [...]. Frankfurt 1696.

¹⁸ Ressel: Protestantische Händlernetze [see note 11], 403.

that some of Gottfried Arnold's works began to circulate in early 18th century Venice even outside the German community.¹⁹

Still, Ludolf did not only associate with Protestants. He lodged for some time at a certain “Signor Erico of Eisenach [...], who outwardly professes the Romish religion”, although inwardly convinced “that true Christianity is something more noble, than is pretended to, by the greatest part of the so-called Christians”.²⁰ This comment – which we find in similar form in other cases – is significant. Indeed, it hints at his religious and ecclesiological conception. Ludolf considered all denominational churches as “partial churches”, made up of a small number of true Christians but with a majority of hypocrites. “Signor Erico”, although outwardly professing the Catholic faith, belonged to the minority that could recognise “true Christianity”. His full name was Johann Peter Erich (1640-1706) – latinized to Johannes Petrus Ericus – and he was a linguist and a teacher of languages and geography in Padua and Venice. He was related to Heinrich Friedrich Francke’s family and was the author of printed works, including a handbook of the Italian language for foreigners and a work on the origins of the human language.²¹ This topic did not fail to arouse the interest of a language lover like Ludolf, who reported to Francke: “He is mightily taken up to prove that all languages are descended from the Greek, and hath published last year [...] *Antropoglottonia* [...]”. This scholarly comment was followed by more concrete remarks: “He hath been useful to me because he is well acquainted having spent thirty years here. You may set his name down in the catalogue of my acquaintances”.²² In Ludolf’s correspondence these kinds of annotations, as well as lists of names, recur again and again. Names were divided into: “friends”, “acquaintances”, “useful contacts”, etc. Such a taxonomy was indicative of the different forms of relationships that Ludolf entertained and suggested to future travellers. His extraordinary linguistic and diplomatic skills facilitated him in social interactions. He therefore assumed a pathfinder role for the Pietist projects and tried to provide maps of interesting contacts on several levels: travel and logistics; intellectual exchange; linguistic knowledge; religious projects; and educational projects (pointing out potential teachers and students, for example). In this regard he recommended to Francke the son of Erico – who was living in financial straits – a particularly gifted nine-year-old boy, whom he asked to be welcomed to Halle “to give him education among your poor children”.²³

¹⁹ In the “forbidden library” of the latter Bortolo Zorzi, there was a copy of “Gothofredi Arnoldi historia et descriptio theologiae mysticae, seu theosophiae arcanae et reconditae, itemque veterum et novorum mysticorum, Francofurti, apud T. Fritsch, 1702”. Federico Barbierato: *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop: Inquisition, Forbidden Books and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice*. London 2017, 340.

²⁰ AFSSt/H A 112, 269-270: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 11-21.05.1698.

²¹ [Johannes Peter Erich] *Renatum e Mysterio Principium Philologicum* [...]. Padova 1686; *Le prime linee, o lettioni della lingua italiana: per regolarne il disegno de’ suoi signori scolari*. Venezia 1674; *In ejusdem principio philologico promissa Anthroglottogonia sive humanae linguae genesis*. Venetijs 1697.

²² AFSSt/H A 112, 269-270: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 11-21.05.1698.

²³ AFSSt/H A 112, 271-274: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 29.05.1698.

Through Erico, Ludolf had met a Dominican friar, the mathematician and theologian Tommaso Pio Maffei of the convent of Saints Peter and Paul “who hath both learning and eyes of the understanding enlightened”.²⁴ And he added: “at the second interview God was pleased to open our hearths to one another. He told me he had thought of applying himself to the German tongue. He shewed me a manuscript of his own making, *De oratione [...] et revelatione*; dedicated Jehova trinuno, which dedication convinced me of his having something in his soul that is real”. Here we are confronted again with a key expression in Ludolf’s language which is dense with meaning in the Pietist context: ‘real’, ‘real Christianity’, ‘true Christianity’. It was a reference to the text that had been at the very origin of Pietism, namely the *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christenthum* by Johann Arndt.²⁵ In this case, he associated this expression with a Dominican friar. Ludolf’s relations with the Catholic world, undoubtedly marked by competition in the missionary field, would also have involved forms of dialogue and cooperation, although of a limited nature.

He added that he met “a Jew of Palaestina, whom I saw for mercy at London, and is now returning home. Another Portuguese Jew, Jacob Aboab [...] hath promised me all possible assistance, if I pursue my design of going to Jerusalem”.²⁶ Moreover, Ludolf tried to establish contacts with the Greek community and was committed to searching for books in Vulgar Greek that he could send to Francke.²⁷ In Venice, he once again met the Archimandrite Chrysantos Notaras (1655-1731), the nephew of the Jerusalem Patriarch Dositeos, whom he had already met in Moscow and who suggested to him the idea of a journey to Jerusalem. Chrysantos, who succeeded his uncle as Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1707, was a man of considerable culture and political ability. Ludolf held him in high esteem and considered him invaluable for Francke’s pedagogical projects, for relations with the Eastern churches, but also for the universal church.²⁸

He also mentioned the German-born bookseller Gabriele Hertz, son of printer Giovanni Giacomo: “[He] seems to me a man of religiousness [as well as] sense”. Hertz had sold him the volumes of the *Letters* of Cardinal Petrucci, one of the leading exponents of 17th-century Italian mysticism condemned by the Roman Inquisition for Quietism in the late 1680s.²⁹ Petrucci’s works, like those of

²⁴ AFSt/H A 112, 269-270: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 11-21.05.1698. On Maffei: Antonella Barzazi: *Gli affanni dell’erudizione. Studi e organizzazione culturale degli ordini religiosi a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento*. Venice, 2004, 49-51.

²⁵ Johann Arndt: *Vier Bücher von wahren Christenthum, das ist, von heilsamer Buße, herlicher Reue und Leid über die Sünde, und wahren Glauben [...]*. Magdeburg, 1610. Martin Brecht: *Das Aufkommen der neuen Frömmigkeitsbewegung in Deutschland*. In: *Geschichte des Pietismus*. Vol. 1: *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achzehnten Jahrhundert*. Ed. by Martin Brecht. Göttingen 1993, 113-204, here 130-150; *Frömmigkeit oder Theologie: Johann Arndt und die Vier Bücher von Wahren Christenthum*. Ed. by Hans Otte, Hans Schneider. Göttingen 2007.

²⁶ AFSt/H A 112, 269-270: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 11-21.05.1698.

²⁷ AFSt/ H A 112, 271-274: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 29.05.1698.

²⁸ AFSt/ H A 112, 271-274: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 29.05.1698.

²⁹ Pier Matteo Petrucci: *Lettere e trattati spirituali e mistici [...]*. Venice: Hertz, 1681. On the Italian Quietism see: Adelisa Malena: *The So-Called Italian Quietism: Siena in the 1680s*. In: *Early Modern Prophecies in Regional and National*

Miguel de Molinos, had been put on the index, so Hertz had sold him forbidden books: he therefore wrote to Francke that he would get them to him through his brother “for I can not carry them neither safely through Italy”. He added that: “Hertz and his brother have the most famous bookseller shop here at Venice. Their father was of Würzburg, and printed all Cardinal Petrucci’s works”.³⁰ In this regard it should be remembered that there had long been a strong interest in so-called Quietism in Pietist circles: Molinos’ *Spiritual Guide* had been translated into Latin by Francke in 1687 and into German by Gottfried Arnold in 1699.³¹ Petrucci’s *Letters* were translated into German and published in the printing house of the Halle orphanage, with an ‘impartial’ preface by Gottfried Arnold in 1705: it is thus possible that Ludolf was involved in this cultural transfer.³² The letter’s postscript brings us back to the materiality of books and postal correspondence: “I have left here a bundle with your brother, which he had promised me to send unto you, when he sends goods to Nurnberg”. He specified its content: Petrucci’s letters, Aesop’s fables in Vulgar Greek, the books of “signor Erico”, a Hebrew abecedary, and a book “of my friend P. Mapheo”.³³

2. On August 18 1698, Ludolf wrote to Francke that he had arrived in Livorno.³⁴ The port city of Livorno was in the early modern age a cosmopolitan city, although it was not free from tensions, conflicts, and internal boundaries.³⁵ Anyway, thanks to the so-called Livornina of grand duke Ferdinand I de' Medici (1593), Livorno granted immunities and privileges, and ensured limited but significant religious toleration to “merchants of any nation”, including Jews and non-Catholics. The city was founded in 1575 with the aim of promoting Tuscan trade also by encouraging immigration. Among the first to settle in the port city were Jews and Marranos fleeing the Iberian peninsula. Towards the end of the century, Greek, French and Corsican craftsmen and sailors, Armenian, English, Flemish and German merchants also arrived. Each of these ethnically-based ‘nations’ was organised with its own statutes and self-governing bodies.³⁶ Clearly perceiving the main characteristic

Contexts. Ed. by: Lionel Laborie, Ariel Hessayon, Leiden 2020. Vol.2: 201-245; Jansenismus, Quietismus, Pietismus. Ed. by Hartmut Lehmann, Hans-Jürgen Schrader und Heinz Schilling. Göttingen 2002.

³⁰ AFSt/ H A 112, 271-274: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 29.05.1698. On Hertz’s printing press see Federico Barbierato: Giovanni Giacomo Hertz. Editoria e commercio librario a Venezia nel secondo ‘600 (Part 1). In: *La Bibliofilia* 107, 2005, Issue 2, 143-170; Id: (Part 2). In: *La Bibliofilia* 107, 2005, Issue 3, 275-289.

³¹ [Miguel de Molinos] *Manuductio spiritualis, extrinsecans animam, eamque per viam interiorem ad acquirendam contemplationis perfectionem*, [...]. Sultzbach 1687; *Der geistliche Wegweiser, dienende die Seele von den sinnlichen Dingen abzuziehen und dieselbe durch den innerlichen Weg zu der vollkommenen Beschauung und zum innerlichen Frieden zu führen* [...]. Frankfurt 1699.

³² *Kurtze, Geistliche und Gottselige Brieffe von Hrn. Petro Mattheo Petrucci, Weiland Bischoff zu Jesi und Cardinal Geschrieben*. [...]. Halle 1705.

³³ AFSt/ H A 112, 271-274: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Venice, 29.05.1698.

³⁴ AFSt/H D 71, 9r. H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Livorno, 18.08.-10.09.1698.

³⁵ Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, Stefano Villani: “People of every mixture”. *Immigration, Tolerance and Religious Conflicts in Early Modern Livorno*. In: *Immigration and Emigration in Historical Perspective*. Ed. by: Katherine Isaacs. Pisa 2007: 93-107.

³⁶ Stefano Villani: *Unintentional Dissent. Eating Meat and Religious Identity among British Resident in Early Modern Livorno*. In: *The Roman Inquisition. Centre versus Peripheries*. Ed. by Katherine Aron-Beller, Christopher Black. Leiden 2018, 373-394.

of this mercantile city, Ludolf wrote to Francke that it seemed to him that everyone in Livorno was talking about nothing but business and money: “it’s hard to meet with anybody here that loves to talk about anything, [...but] getting of money”. Nevertheless, even there he had succeeded in finding someone to engage with in “edifying discourse”. For instance “my landlord Master Claude Aineau, a French [...] who hath lived amongst Protestants, is an honest fellow and may be serviceable to anybody that should hereafter bring him a ‘salute’ from me”. And then “Elia, an old Jew of Constantinople who teaches me Turkish and keeps a coffehouse here, is my very good friend, but speaks little Italian, so that to converse with him one must know Turkish”.³⁷ The list of his Livorno contacts included local scholars, such as the apothecary Giacinto Cestoni, who allegedly had had troubles with the Inquisition and who seemed to Ludolf to be “a lover of strangers”.³⁸

He had also good connections with Russian “gentlemen” and merchants, some of whom he had already met in Venice. They were the sons of aristocratic families who had accompanied Peter the Great on his 'grand embassy' to Western Europe, together with merchants and sailors, who played a role in the Tsar’s plans to turn Russia into a maritime power.³⁹ Among the diplomats Ludolf met in Venice and Livorno was the prince Andrej Jakolevic Chilkov (1676-1716), sent to Italy to learn maritime techniques. Ludolf was impressed by his outspokenness and religious sensibility.⁴⁰

Last but not least, in Livorno he was familiar with the English community and particularly with merchants like Jacob Turner and his sons, Edward Gould and Francis Harrimann. The community was a small one, but “very visible from the economic, political and religious points of view”.⁴¹ Ludolf’s English acquaintances are therefore another important part of the composite Livorno society, marked by the circulation of individuals and groups. Ludolf’s 'on the move' presence, as well as his comments on the city and his instructions, are good examples of the mobility that was the city's main characteristic. For him, it was an essential stop on the way to the Near East, but he believed that Livorno’s air and climate were unhealthy and its prices too high, so he advised travellers to spend as little time as possible there. He provided information about the links between Livorno and the East, and warned against arriving in those places in the height of summer. In the second part of the letter, Ludolf announces to Francke his plan to embark on a ship from Marseille “in which I intend to go to Smirna”. He had been invited by Jacob Turner to stay for the winter there. Moreover, in his journey he was accompanied by John Turner – Jacob’s son – who embarked with him from Livorno to

³⁷ AFSt/ HD 71, 9: H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, Livorno 18.8.1698.

³⁸ Ugo Baldini: Art. “Cestoni, Giacinto”. In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (hereafter DBI), 24, Rome 1980, 298-301.

³⁹ Stefano Villani: *Ambasciatori russi a Livorno e rapporti tra Moscovia e Toscana nel XVII secolo*. In: *Nuovi Studi Livornesi*, 14, 2008, 37-95.

⁴⁰ AFSt/ HD 71, 9: H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, Livorno 18.8.1698.

⁴¹ Frattarelli Fischer, Villani: “People of every mixture” [see note 37], 101.

Smyrna, where the Turners had a trading post. The young man was preparing for a career as a merchant and his father had entrusted him to Ludolf to improve his study of French, Italian and geography.⁴²

In his letters to Francke, Ludolf points out that anyone wishing to travel to the Orient “hath great need of Italian language”.⁴³ On several occasions, he made similar comments and used Italian in daily conversations. Writing to Francke from Jerusalem in 1699 about the Franciscans in the Holy Land with whom he had been staying, he noted: “there are fathers from all European nations [...], and Italian is the *lingua communis*”.⁴⁴ Italian is even used in conversations with merchants, diplomats, and their families in the Near East. In another letter to Francke, specifying the requirements for a preceptor for the children of Isaac Rombout, a Dutch merchant in Constantinople, he pointed out that the candidate must know Italian, because the children speak Turkish, vulgar Greek and Italian.⁴⁵ Thus, in these networks and projects aimed at the Eastern churches, the role of Italy and the Italian language seems to have some relevance. Therefore, one can perhaps assume a missionary use of short and simple prayer texts by August Hermann Francke, translated into Italian during these years. Writing to Francke from Constantinople in April 1699, Ludolf asked him to send him the “*libellum tuum Italicum de methodo orandi*”, via Venice and from there to Smyrna.⁴⁶

After leaving Livorno, Ludolf stayed for a couple of months in Smyrna in the winter of 1699, hosted by the Turners. He dedicated himself to the study of Turkish and vulgar Greek and had to cure himself of fevers.⁴⁷ In March of the same year, he arrived in Constantinople, where he stayed for a few months. In his letters to his brother Georg Melchior, he often mentions that Turkey is an ideal place to study languages and is admired for the language skills by the wives of European merchants and ambassadors.⁴⁸ The stop in Constantinople was a short but very important stage of Ludolf's journey, especially for Francke's missionary projects to the East. According to agreements made with Francke before his departure, immediately after him, and following the path he had traced, two young theology graduates from Halle, Anhard Adelung and Christoph Salchow, were sent there. They - later followed by two other colleagues - stayed in Constantinople for a few years in order to establish contacts with the Greek Orthodox Church, to disseminate Christian texts, and to recruit Greek students for the Collegium Orientale in Halle, founded in 1702. Thanks to Ludolf's good diplomatic connections, they obtained the protection of the Dutch embassy and the support of the British and Danish consular

⁴² AFSt/ H A 112, 19r. H.W.Ludolf to A.H.Francke, den Haag, 18.07.1697.

⁴³ AFSt/ H D 71, 9: H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, Livorno 18.8.1698.

⁴⁴ AFSt/H D 71, 26r-27v. H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Jerusalem, 19/29.10.1699.

⁴⁵ AFSt/H D 71, Bl. 16v-17v, H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Constantinople, 01.05.1699.

⁴⁶ AFSt/H D 71,15, H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Constantinople, 24.04.1699.

⁴⁷ AFSt/ H C 144a, 63. H.W. Ludolf to G. M. Ludolf, Constantinople, 11.03.1699.

⁴⁸ AFSt/ H D 71, 15, H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Constantinople, 24.04.1699.

networks in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ The aforementioned Isaac Rombout, who was very close to Pietism, played a key role as a supporter of the initiative.⁵⁰ Adelung and Salchow opened a pharmacy/ambulatory there, that was active for a few years and served multiple functions: it was a sort of cover for missionary activities; it was decisive in establishing relations with the Ottoman society; it provided a useful service to the local population; it offered support to Christian slaves and, moreover, it was a source of sustenance for the young Halle emissaries.⁵¹ Ludolf, in his recommendations to them, had explicitly mentioned the usefulness of medical skills as a bargaining counter and as a means of making oneself known and appreciated.⁵²

On 16 September, Ludolf, armed with an Ottoman pass, set off on an English ship carrying mainly Greek and Armenian pilgrims to the Holy Land, after stops in Tekirdağ, Cyprus, and Chios. On 9 October, from Jaffa, he finally reached Jerusalem, the longed-for destination of that pilgrimage which represented for Ludolf not only the turning point of his life but also the emblem of the condition of Christians on earth.⁵³

On the way back he reached Cairo, and arrived by land in Alexandria.⁵⁴ From here he returned by ship to Livorno in mid-April 1700, where he was quarantined for two weeks in the lazaret.⁵⁵ Taking advantage of his confinement, Ludolf continued to dedicate himself to correspondence and conversation. In the lazaret he had in fact met a Bosnian with whom he could “practise Muscovite, having in its country a dialect of Slavonian so close to Muscovite”.⁵⁶ Moreover, he expressed to Francke his intention to visit Rome and to travel back to England through France.

3. During the summer of 1700, Ludolf actually stayed in Rome for some time. He wrote to Francke about it when he was already far from Italy and - after stopping in Paris via Lyon - had arrived in Holland.⁵⁷ He explained his choice with reasons of caution: the same caution he recommends to the travellers from Halle who were following in his footsteps. He insists on the necessity of dissimulation when dealing with Roman Catholics. Therefore, only after leaving Catholic countries did he write to Francke about what he considered the most fruitful outcome of his stay in Rome. There he had met a priest, Francesco Bellisomi (1663-1741), an abbot of Pavia, who in his opinion was able to “recognize essential Christianity” and presumably - he wrote - “with God's help will be able to make himself an

⁴⁹ AFSt/H D 71, 45r-48r: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Amsterdam, 02.09.1700; AFSt/ H D 71: 62-63, H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, London, 25.10.1700.

⁵⁰ AFSt/ H D 81, 888e. I. Rombout to A.H.Francke, Toulon, 01.02.1701 (in Italian). He wrote to Francke that he had left with Christoph Salchow on 08.12.1700 from Venice for Rome, passing through Loreto, to observe that place of pilgrimage.

⁵¹ Cfr. Saracino: *Accessing the Bodies and Souls* [see note 5].

⁵² AFSt/H D 71, 45r-48r: H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Amsterdam, 02.09.1700.

⁵³ See notes 3 and 4.

⁵⁴ AFSt/ H D 71, 28: H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, Cairo, 20.12.1699.

⁵⁵ AFSt/ H D 71, 29-30: H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, Livorno, 15.04.1700.

⁵⁶ AFSt/ H D 71, 29: H.W. Ludolf to A.H.Francke, Livorno, 15.04.1700.

⁵⁷ AFSt/H D 71, 45-48. H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Amsterdam, 02.09.1700.

instrument of much good knowledge”. He recommended that Francke use great prudence and keep Bellisomi's name secret, because relations with Protestants could have endangered the priest. Finally, he advised “trusted friends” travelling to Italy to contact Bellisomi, and informed Francke of the prelate’s Roman address: “alle tre can[n]elle”.⁵⁸ That meeting had many consequences for Ludolf, for Francke, and for Bellisomi.⁵⁹ One year after his meeting with Ludolf, Bellisomi, who was acquainted with several Protestants, was put on trial by the Roman Inquisition and convicted.⁶⁰ After spending ten years in prison he wandered around Europe for many years. His main interests seem to have been intellectual and editorial, rather than religious: he was in contact with various European scholars and was himself the author of printed works.⁶¹ He always benefited from the moral and material support of Ludolf, Francke, and a wide Pietist network that centered on Halle (via Venice).⁶² Until the end of his days, Ludolf was concerned about the fate of the Italian exile and in his will, he bequeathed him a sum of money, entrusted to his executor, Anton Wilhelm Böhme.⁶³ Bellisomi, after all, exploited with some skill his identity as a former prisoner of the Inquisition, persecuted in “Popish territories”, and inwardly faithful to the evangelical creed. He died in Pavia in 1741, apparently without having converted to Protestantism, although he had repeatedly prospected that possibility with his Protestant patrons.⁶⁴

The trust Ludolf placed in Bellisomi is illustrated by a short text in Latin addressed to him.⁶⁵ It consists, according to Ludolf's opening statement, of an answer - written in France, on the way back from Rome - to Bellisomi's question regarding the current state of Protestantism. Recognising how much the Italian prelate cared about the universal church, Ludolf set out for him what he considered to be the main ferments in the Protestant context at that time. He identified the origin of the renewal movement of the evangelical church in the early 17th-century publication of Arndt's work. He then

⁵⁸ AFS/H D 71, 45v.

⁵⁹ See now: Nicholas Mithen: *Mystical theology, ecumenism and church-state relations: Francesco Bellisomi (1663-1741) at the limits of confessionalism in early eighteenth-century Europe*. In: *History of European Ideas*, 45, 2019, Issue 8, 1089-1106; Malena: *Speranze* [see note 1]; Ead.: *Note su Francesco Bellisomi (1663-1741), bibliofilo in fuga nell'Europa confessionale*. In: “Con licenza de’ superiori”. *Studi per Mario Infelise*. Ed. by Flavia De Rubeis and Anna Rapetti, Venice 2023.

⁶⁰ The main sources on him are two pamphlets: *A short account, of the many extraordinary mercies, God in his infinite goodness has conferred upon Franciscus Bellisomus, as well in his almost ten years imprisonment in the Inquisition at Rome, as in his unexpected deliverance*. [London?] 1712; *Species Facti*. In *Sachen des Herrn Marchesen Francisci Bellisomo, abtens ad S. Mariam ad Perticas, Römischen Prälatens und Referendarii utriusque signaturae in Rom, mit der Congregation des heil. Officii der Inquisition, vom Jahr 1701 biß 1727*. Jena 1728.

⁶¹ *Tria theologiae opuscula* [...]. Pavia 1689; *Dell’ autorità degli imperatori nel governo esteriore degl’ affari ecclesiastici*. [Wien] 1724 (2nd ed.: Jena, 1728); *Le prove praticate nelli tempi presenti dagl’ Inquisitori di fede sono manchevoli* [...]. Leipzig 1724.

⁶² *A.H. Franckes Briefe an den Grafen Heinrich XXIV. j.L. Reuß zu Köstritz und seine Gemahlin Eleonore aus den Jahren 1704 bis 1727 als Beitrag zur Geschichte des Pietismus*. Ed. by Berthold Schmidt and Otto Meusel. Leipzig 1905, 3, 21, 26-28, 34.

⁶³ AFS/H A 185, 28v, A.H. Francke to A.W. Böhme, Halle, 01.05.1712.

⁶⁴ A.H. Franckes Briefe an den Grafen Heinrich XXIV. j.L. Reuß zu Köstritz [see note 64], 27.

⁶⁵ AFS/H D 23: 1-3. H.W. Ludolf to F. Bellisomi [undated]. Printed in: Malena: *Speranze* [see note 1], 49-52.

dwelt on the role of Philipp Jacob Spener and that of August Hermann Francke, and the strong opposition they aroused. He introduced the theme of chiliasm, mentioning the Petersen couple and their marginalisation. He finally established a parallelism with the 'nadere reformatie' in Holland and with the Philadelphian Society in London. This writing is interesting for more than one reason: it contains an early retrospective of the origins and developments of the Pietist movement up to the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries; it places German religious ferment within a broader European context; it is a testimony of the eschatological expectations that were gathering at that time, and the debates around them. Furthermore, it is significant for what it reveals of Ludolf's religious positions - here manifested with apparent freedom - and his 'missionary' strategies for the project of a universal church. In an apocalyptic perspective, he considered his times as the final phase of a battle between darkness and light whose "signs" could be distinguished in the agitation sweeping through churches of all denominations and shaking their foundations. This vision is one of the threads running through his correspondence, yet it is manifested with varying degrees of depth and clarity, depending on the letter's recipient. Ludolf connected signs and "upheavals" of different sorts with the approaching of the end of times: wars, political and ecclesiastical divisions, waves of religious ferment, but also climatic upheavals and natural disasters.⁶⁶

Similar topics are to be found in Ludolf's letters to another of his Italian correspondents, whom he met during his stay in Rome in 1700: the theologian Ivan Paštrić, (1636-1708) of the Propaganda Fide College.⁶⁷ In the college - as more generally in Rome - Ludolf had perceived a climate of suspicion and mistrust towards him. He adopted the usual prudence and dissimulation that he advised in his instructions to travellers, to whom he recommended always using the study of foreign languages as a pretext, without revealing their religious aims.⁶⁸ Yet even in an apparently hostile place, he seemed to have found a potential collaborator in his universal church project. Nevertheless, these letters are characterised by a subtle interweaving of dissimulation and 'missionary' goals. If the style, the key words, but also the languages used - Italian, with inserts in Greek - seem in line with Ludolf's call for caution, the religious message actually opens to an invitation to work together for the universal church. Writing to Paštrić in 1703, he noted how "in this country, as elsewhere, there is a spiritual ferment of souls". Although "the learned men are more zealous in defending the opinions and external worship of their sect than in promoting the essential practice of Christianity through their example", there was, however, also a small minority of true Christians. And he concluded by announcing that: "The glorious period of the church, when the gospel of Christ is put into practice, will come about on

⁶⁶ AFS/H D 23, 71-72 H.W. Ludolf to C. Rastowietskij, Copenhagen, February 1704. On the earthquake in Abruzzo and central Italy in early 1703.

⁶⁷ Tomislav Mrkonjić: Pastrizio (Paštrić), Giovanni (Ivan), in DBI 81. Roma 2014, 703-705.

⁶⁸ AFS/H D 71, 45-48. H.W. Ludolf to A.H. Francke, Amsterdam, 02.09.1700.

the day when the examples of those who have experienced *metamorphosis* become more frequent". Despite their denominational diversity, he invited the Catholic Paštrić to cooperate: "Although our hypothesis may differ on this point, I nonetheless hope that we can practice Christ's great law by loving one another. The greater light our light, the greater our reason and our capacity to pray to God and involve the other".⁶⁹ The word "hypotheses" returns often in Ludolf's epistolary and acts as a sort of picklock to open up possibilities for communication and contact with people of other denominations. Defining different theological positions as "hypotheses" allows them to be compared and possibly evaluated but also - if necessary - to be put aside, at least temporarily. Thanks to his training and experience in diplomacy, Ludolf seemed able to use valuable communication and negotiation tools in pursuit of his impartial religious agenda.

4. The Italian stops and contacts Ludolf was able to make were decisive for his journey to the Holy Land and paved the way for the Pietist travellers who would follow him. They were very instrumental for Francke's missionary projects aimed at the East and the Eastern churches, also for forging useful relationships for the educational institutions in Halle, and in particular for the Collegium Orientale. Ludolf's - and through him, Halle's - relationship with Italy should be considered a dynamic one. As these pages have shown, Italy is an important gateway for contacts 'in loco'; for connections with the East (routes, means of transport, intermediaries and infrastructure); for the Italian language, which was apparently an important requirement for those who travelled to the East, but also for the other languages that could be practised in Italy (in Ludolf's case: Turkish in Livorno, Greek in Venice, many Oriental languages in Rome, etc.); for the printed materials in different languages that could be found in Venice, and to a lesser extent in Rome.

Cities that were characterised by the mobility of human beings, goods, books, and ideas - such as Venice and Livorno - played a key role. In further research it would be interesting to investigate in greater depth the relations with these cities of Ludolf and the other Pietist travellers: with the different environments which they came into contact with and, where possible, the perception that - in turn - those 'porous' communities had regarding the travellers and their goals. In the Venetian case, for instance, Ressel's research has reconstructed the spread of Pietism within the German community. However, its echoes outside the community, in a wider Venetian context, still remain in the shadows. It should be underlined that, in addition to practical information, the Ludolf's epistolary contains some reflective and self-reflective elements. They allow us to grasp more specific traits of his religious vision and spirituality and the ways in which he tried to realise his projects through travel and network building. Ludolf's 'Italienreise' allowed him to get to know the 'Papists' more closely, observing them at eye level. His correspondence reveals the complexity and many facets of this

⁶⁹ AFS/H D 23, 142v-143v H.W. Ludolf to I. Paštrić, Copenhagen, 26.11.1703.

relationship, which involved individuals but also religious orders and missionary agencies such as the Society of Jesus or the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The feeling of hostility and mistrust is evident in many cases, as is the competition in the missionary arena. Yet, it also emerges the possibility of establishing links of varying intensity and different levels of interaction with individuals: from language practice to intellectual dialogue, from information about teachers and students to deeper involvement in Ludolf's religious projects.

As we have seen, his aim was not proselytism to a universal Church structure. From Ludolf's point of view, denominational divisions were not just overcome but condemned as an expression of pride, selfishness, and sectarianism. On this basis, he opposed the various projects of unification between Protestants that were being discussed at that time.⁷⁰ Indeed, he assumed that they were sterile and useless, since they only concerned external forms. The only true church possible was, for him, the universal and impartial church, formed of reborn Christians. This perspective seems to me to go far beyond mere anti-confessionalism. Indeed, his ideal of the universal church also contains a 'pars construens', which is in a sense its most radical aspect. The invisible church made up of "true Christians", would become visible whenever networks and shared projects came into being. Therefore, Ludolf's goal was to create links and develop shared actions between true Christians regardless of their denominational membership, Catholics included. To pursue this end, he used all the material, cultural, and spiritual means at his disposal, and devoted his life 'on the move', which he understood as 'peregrinatio'. Reading his Italian journey in this perspective allows us to understand it in greater depth and - on the other hand - adds a further piece to what we know of Ludolf's universal church and the ways in which he also tried to make his utopian project a concrete and realistic one.

⁷⁰ Schunka: »An England ist uns viel gelegen.« [see note 1]; Malena: Promoting [see note 1].