

## FRANCESCO MATURANZIO'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH NICHOLAS OF MODRUŠ\*

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This article discusses the correspondence between a Croato-Dalmatian prelate at the papal curia, Nicholas bishop of Modruš, and a Perugian humanist Francesco Maturanzio, who for more than two years, from the spring of 1472 until the summer of 1474, enjoyed the loose patronage of the bishop. Maturanzio spent most of this period studying Greek on Rhodes and the majority of the letters are in fact his reports to the patron in faraway Rome on his own personal affairs and the turbulent political events in the East. The article analyzes and contextualizes the correspondence while chronicling Francesco Maturanzio's and Nicholas of Modruš's client-patron relationship. Finally, the appendix includes an edition of the correspondence.

**Keywords:** Renaissance humanism, epistolography, patronage, Rhodes, Rome, Francesco Maturanzio, Nicholas of Modruš

Francesco Maturanzio (1443–1518) was in his time a well-known humanist whose studies and long career as a teacher took him from his hometown of Perugia

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across Italy and beyond and in contact with many prominent figures of his time.<sup>1</sup> He spent his younger years studying in Perugia, Ferrara, and, most notably, in Vicenza with Ognibene da Lonigo, before in 1472 undertaking a two-year-long study of Greek on the island of Rhodes. His teaching career, which began in 1474 after his return from Greece, saw him move to Perugia, Rome, Vicenza and Venice, before, at long last, in 1498 he permanently settled down in his hometown and spent the rest of his life as a teacher and, later on, as the chancellor of the commune. Maturanzio was a prolific humanist author who owed his reputation to his orations and poems, but even more so to the commentaries he prepared on Statius and the orations and rhetorical works of Cicero – commentaries which came out in print during his lifetime, and which continued to be reprinted well after his death. His numerous letters, the copies of which he preserved for his letter-book, present us with an image of an accomplished Ciceronian and offer us many insights into the numerous relationships he cultivated over the years, whether with family and friends or with men of influence and power whose favor he tried to secure.

Among several influential figures whose support Maturanzio coveted as he tried to gain a stable job was Nicholas bishop of Modruš (*ca.* 1425–1480), a prominent Croato-Dalmatian prelate at the papal curia, who took Maturanzio under his wing in Venice in the spring of 1472.<sup>2</sup> Nicholas was himself an ambitious author, who despite his academic background in theology had already developed an interest in antiquity, and who now, by supporting Maturanzio's Greek studies, became the first Croato-Dalmatian prelate to step into the role of a patron of the *studia humanitatis*. Nicholas was in Venice on a diplomatic and military mission on the behalf of Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–1484). He was tasked with supervising the construction of papal galleys which had been commissioned to serve, together with the Venetian and Neapolitan galleys, in the joint naval expedition that was to be sent to the East to raid the Ottoman coast of Asia Minor. The Christian allies coordinated their operations with Uzun Hasan, leader of the Aqquyunlu Turkmen (r. 1452–1478), who was supposed to attack the Ottomans from the east. Nicholas's

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<sup>1</sup> On Francesco Maturanzio see the foundational monograph by Guglielmo Zappacosta, *Francesco Maturanzio: umanista perugino*, Minerva Italica, Bergamo, 1970, which offers a detailed biography of the humanist as well as an edition of a selection of his orations, poems and letters. In addition, an edited volume was recently published with important contributions exploring various aspects of Maturanzio's life and humanism: *Francesco Maturanzio: Studi per il cinquecentesimo anniversario della morte (1518-2018)*, published as *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia patria per l'Umbria* 116.1 (2019).

<sup>2</sup> I am currently preparing the biography of Nicholas of Modruš. In the meantime, on his profile and status at the papal curia in the early 1470s, see Luka Špoljarić, "Nicholas of Modruš and His *De Bellis Gothorum*: Politics and National History in the Fifteenth-Century Adriatic," *Renaissance Quarterly* 72.2 (2019), 457–491. For a chronological overview of his life, see Giovanni Mercati, "Notizie varie sopra Niccolò Modrussense," in his *Opere minori*, vol. 4, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican, 1937, 205–267.

task was to lead the papal galleys from Venice to meet up in Brindisi with Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, the supreme commander of the papal fleet who brought the rest of the papal galleys from the Tyrrhenian Sea, and from there the two were to join the rest of the Christian fleet operating in the Aegean Sea.

As Nicholas of Modruš prepared to embark from Venice, Maturanzio joined him on his command ship and then proceeded to commemorate their journey to Greece with a series of poems in the bishop's honor. This was the first of Maturanzio's two cycles of encomiastic poems celebrating Nicholas of Modruš and is today preserved as part of Maturanzio's personal manuscript that contains his poetry dating from various periods of his life, MS Ottob. lat. 2011 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Given its content, as well as its purpose to strengthen the client-patron relationship, this cycle of poems was probably presented to Nicholas of Modruš in a lost dedication copy, likely on the occasion of the bishop's departure from the East.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, after they spent the summer raiding the Ottoman coastal cities, most notably Smyrna, Nicholas of Modruš and Cardinal Carafa returned with the fleet to Italy, reaching Naples in December 1472 and entering Rome in triumph in January of 1473. While Maturanzio remained on Rhodes, determined to advance his knowledge of ancient Greek, he also made sure to keep in touch with his patron in Rome. Thus, after the winter of 1472/1473, he began to write letters to Nicholas, sending altogether nine of them to Italy by the spring of 1474 when he finally set sail for home. The fact that he received only one response from Nicholas did not deter him. Three more of Maturanzio's letters followed in the summer of 1474 after he returned to Italy, as he tried to re-establish his connection with the bishop and secure his help in getting another job. Although a year or two later Maturanzio sent one more letter to Nicholas, asking for the bishop's help in a judicial case, the summer of 1474 effectively marked the end of their client-patron relationship, however loose it may have been.

These fourteen letters that comprise the known correspondence between Francesco Maturanzio and Nicholas of Modruš are all preserved in copy, as part of Maturanzio's letter-book kept today in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana under the shelf mark MS Vat. lat. 5890. This article analyzes and contextualizes the letters while chronicling the Maturanzio and Nicholas of Modruš client-patron relationship, as it developed from the time Maturanzio spent on Rhodes and Nicholas in Rome to their subsequent reunion in Fano. The appendix presents the first edition of this correspondence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I intend to publish and discuss these poems elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> The first rapid transcription of this correspondence, containing several errors, was included as an appendix in my dissertation; see Luka Špoljarić, *Nicholas of Modruš, 'The Glory of Illyria': Humanist Patriotism and Self-Fashioning in Renaissance Rome* (PhD Dissertation), Central European University, Budapest, 2013, 264–280. This article offers the first proper edition of the corpus. Benedetta d'Anghera is currently preparing the edition of

## 1. The Letters from Rhodes

Francesco Maturanzio wrote his letters from Rhodes in the period between the spring of 1473 and his departure in the spring of 1474. Even though during this period he received only one response (*Epist.* 3), the Perugian humanist kept sending letters to maintain contact with Nicholas of Modruš and continued to frame their relationship as that of a client and a patron.

Two themes dominate Francesco Maturanzio's letters from Rhodes. One includes news and pleas of personal nature. In the beginning, Maturanzio kept his patron informed of his progress in Greek (*Epist.* 1.10–14, 2.23–29, 4.3–6, 6.27–33). His initial plan was to move to Crete and to study there with the well-known Greek scholar Michael Apostolios. However, as he made sure to inform his patron, he soon changed his mind on the advice of some local people he had befriended, and before long he began studying with Metrophanes, the Greek metropolitan of Rhodes (in office 1471–1498). The problem was that, initially, Metrophanes was not committed to this task, so Maturanzio pleaded with Nicholas to write a recommendation letter on his behalf or to secure such a letter from a cardinal. Although Nicholas immediately requested one such letter for Maturanzio, it could not be prepared in time to be sent with his own response (*Epist.* 3.2–4), and it apparently never reached Rhodes.<sup>5</sup> Aside from asking for a recommendation letter for his teacher, Maturanzio also pleaded with Nicholas to send him money to buy books in Heraklion (Candia) on his way home (*Epist.* 9.9–15). However, this plea was also fruitless. And these were not the only requests made by Maturanzio. He asked Nicholas to secure another blanket recommendation letter from one of the powerful cardinals for his journey home (*Epist.* 5.164–166) and he entreated Nicholas to take other people into his protection: Maturanzio's brother, presumably the cleric Angelo (*Epist.* 1.17–19) and one *frater Ripanus Ordinis heremitanorum* (*Epist.* 10), very likely Giovanni Paci di Ripatransone (*Johannes Paxius Ripanus*) who was in 1476 to become the prior of the Augustinians in Bologna.<sup>6</sup>

The other theme that dominates Maturanzio's letters from Rhodes covers the current political developments in the East. Nicholas of Modruš had played a rather prominent role in the papal naval expedition against the Ottomans in 1472

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Maturanzio's entire letter-book. For her initial findings, see Benedetta d'Anghera, "Per una edizione delle Epistole di Francesco Maturanzio: ricognizione delle fonti manoscritte," *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia patria per l'Umbria* 116.1 (2019), 245–255.

<sup>5</sup> This is clear from the fact that it is the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, Giovanni Battista Orsini, whom Maturanzio credits as the person who played the key role in convincing Metrophanes to put an effort into his teaching (see *Epist.* 11.30–35).

<sup>6</sup> On Giovanni Paci, see the introduction in Rolando Perazzoli (ed.), *L'umanista bolognese G. Garzoni e il teologo ripano G. Paci: Le Epistolae familiares e il De rebus Ripanis*, Archeoclub d'Italia, Ripatransone, 1999.

and so, his client reasoned, would have appreciated news on the progress of the war in 1473. And there was plenty for Maturanzio to report. The summer of 1473 witnessed the long-awaited showdown between the Ottomans and the Aqquyunlu Turkmen led by Uzun Hasan — *Asambeus* (Hasan-bey) as Maturanzio calls him — whom the Italian humanists regularly portrayed as successor to the noble Persians of antiquity, who would destroy the barbarian Ottomans and then convert to Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Unlucky for Maturanzio and the Christian alliance, Uzun Hasan suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Otlukbeli in August of 1473 and completely relinquished any further plans of attacking the Ottomans. Maturanzio made sure to combine his reports on the progress of Uzun Hasan's campaign with the account of the operations of the Christian, now mostly Venetian, fleet commanded by Pietro Mocenigo (*Epist.* 5–7).<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, he also informed his patron of the dramatic anti-Venetian coup that took place on the island of Cyprus (*Epist.* 8).<sup>9</sup>

Maturanzio was an accomplished Latinist, who in his letters showcased his learning by introducing numerous references, both explicit and implicit, to the Latin classics, including Cicero, Velleius Paterculus, Horace, Vergil, Lucan, Persius, Juvenal and Ausonius. Particularly interesting, however, are Maturanzio's quotations from Greek authors, Thucydides, Aeschylus (both taken, it seems, from the letters of Libanius), Theocritus and Euripides, which were not only meant to demonstrate his own proficiency in the language, but also counted on the proficiency of his addressee, who had studied Greek with Andronico Callisto, a scribe in the service of the Greek Cardinal Bessarion, and even produced his own translations of two orations by Isocrates.<sup>10</sup> In terms of length and ambition, one should single out *Epist.* 5, written on 26 August, which Maturanzio considered an exercise in historiographical writing, composing it with language and phrases drawn from

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<sup>7</sup> On the Aqquyunlu under Uzun Hasan, John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 1999, 87–123. On the perception of Uzun Hasan in the Italian political and intellectual circles, see Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 2008, 223–231.

<sup>8</sup> For the operations of the Christian fleet during these years, see Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vol. 2, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia PA, 1978, 298–320; and the documents published by Enrico Cornet (ed.), *Le guerre dei Veneti nell'Asia 1470–1474*, Tendler, Vienna, 1856.

<sup>9</sup> On the turbulent political events that unfolded on the island Cyprus at the end of 1473 and the beginning of 1474, see George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1948, 651–654 and 657–696.

<sup>10</sup> On Nicholas of Modruš's Greek studies, see Antonio Rollo, "Interventi di Andronico Callisto in codici latini," *Studi medievali e umanistici* 4 (2006), 367–380; and Luka Špoljarić, "Nicholas of Modruš and his Latin Translations of Isocrates' *To Nicocles* and *To Demonius*," *CM XXIV* (2015), 5–48.

the works of ancient historians,<sup>11</sup> and twice calling it “the commentaries on this summer’s events” (*huius aestatis commentaria*).<sup>12</sup> This letter, as well as the one that followed immediately after (*Epist.* 6 and 7), can be read in parallel with the well-known account of Koriolan Cipiko, the Dalmatian patrician from Trogir and also a proficient Latinist, who served in the Venetian fleet as a commander of the Trogir galley. On his return home Koriolan wrote a detailed account of the campaign, the *Petri Mocenici imperatoris gesta*, which, like Maturanzio’s letters, is filled with references to classical antiquity.<sup>13</sup> The major difference between Maturanzio and Cipiko is that Cipiko wrote his account with hindsight, after Uzun Hasan’s defeat at the hands of the Ottomans, while Maturanzio’s letters provide us with a window into the changing perspectives in the Christian camp, from hope spurred by the “Persian’s” push into Asia Minor to fear following his crushing defeat at Otlukbeli.

Maturanzio’s letters also provide some information about the messengers who were supposed to deliver them to his patron in Rome. Those that can be identified (to an extent) include: the messenger of the Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller, who delivered the letter that discussed Uzun Hasan’s campaign (*Epist.* 5; cf. *Epist.* 4.7–10); “Marso”, called by Maturanzio as “our Marso”, implying that he was close to both Maturanzio and Nicholas of Modruš and so may have journeyed with them to Greece in 1472 (*Epist.* 1; cf. *Epist.* 2.2–3); “Iacopo” (*Iacobus*), a person close to Cardinal Carafa and Nicholas of Modruš (*Epist.* 4.2–6); and the anonymous messenger from the Perugian district (*Epist.* 9.7–8).

Judging from Maturanzio’s repeated pleas, Nicholas of Modruš seems to have responded only once (*Epist.* 3). Part of the reason may lie with the fact that Maturanzio was simply too far and, as Nicholas himself said in his letter, there were no messengers (trustworthy enough) travelling East. Then again, one should also not exclude the possibility that Nicholas did send some letters that never reached Maturanzio. Nicholas’s only extant letter shows not only that he was by now an influential power broker at the papal curia securing recommendations from cardinals with ease, but also that he still felt responsible for Maturanzio as his patron. On another note, this letter, with its combination of paratactic syntax and jeremiadic tone (heightened by an allusion to Juvenal), serves as a powerful witness to the bitter atmosphere among the curial prelates in the first years of Pope

<sup>11</sup> Thus, for instance, *occidione occisa* (*Epist.* 5.112; cf. Liv. 4.58.9), *robur equitatus* (*Epist.* 5.120; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.11), *subitarius exercitus* (*Epist.* 5.133; cf. Liv. 41.17.9).

<sup>12</sup> *Epist.* 5.5 and 137.

<sup>13</sup> For the edition of the work see, Renata Fabbri (ed.), *Per la memorialistica veneziana in latino del Quattrocento: Filippo da Rimini, Francesco Contarini, Coriolano Cippico*, Padua, Editrice Antenore, 1988, 139–230. For the English translation and commentary, see Coriolano Cippico, *The Deeds of Commander Pietro Mocenigo*, trans. Kiril Petkov, Italica Press, New York, 2014.

Sixtus IV's pontificate, when the pope's nephew, the infamous young cardinal Pietro Riario, kept a tight control over the papal government.

The bitter tone of Nicholas of Modruš's letter can only be understood in the context of his career. Several months before writing this letter Nicholas had returned from the naval expedition to the East in which he had a prominent part to play. On top of that, he now was working on his major historiographical work, the *De bellis Gothorum*, which sought to provide historical legitimacy to the political alliance Nicholas himself helped broker between the Croatian and Bosnian lords threatened by the Ottomans and King Ferrante of Naples.<sup>14</sup> Riding high on this prominence, Nicholas tried to assert himself as the ideal candidate to replace Carafa as the commander of the papal fleet in the follow-up expedition that was planned for the summer of 1473, and, on top of everything, he even dreamed of being made a cardinal. His hopes, however, came to nothing. In March of 1473 the command of the papal fleet for the next expedition was given to Lorenzo Zane and two months later no fewer than eight new cardinals were promoted by Pope Sixtus, none of whom was Nicholas. Nicholas in fact seems to have found himself reduced to the status of a *familiaris* of Pietro Riario. It is right around this time that he composed the ranting letter to Maturanzio. As he bitterly complained to his client on Rhodes: "The state of my affairs is such as it can be for a man of virtue in a city where virtue has no place", in a city where the power is held by "Gaius Caligula", i.e. Pietro Riario (*Epist.* 3.7).<sup>15</sup>

Ironically, in January of 1474, when Riario died, it was Nicholas of Modruš who was chosen to deliver the funeral oration and praise the infamous cardinal at what was one of the largest funerals that Rome had seen in recent memory. The oration, which would soon appear in print and would make Nicholas of Modruš's name known across Italy, was well received by the audience. It was "an oration that should by no means be disparaged" (*orationem haud admodum contemnendam*), as Leonello Chiericati, bishop of Rab and *familiaris* of Cardinal Marco Barbo, wrote in a particularly interesting letter to his patron, presenting us thus with a unique witness to the reception of this oration from someone who was actually in the audience when it was delivered.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Špoljarić, *op. cit.* (2); and Luka Špoljarić, "Zov partenopejskih princeza: Frankapani i Kosače u bračnim pregovorima s napuljskim kraljem Ferranteom" [The Call of Parthenopean Princesses: The Frankapani and the Kosače in Marriage Negotiations with the Neapolitan King Ferrante], in *Napuljski obzori hrvatskoga kasnog srednjovjekovlja* [Neapolitan Horizons of the Croatian Late Middle Ages], ed. Luka Špoljarić, Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest FFZG, vol. 52.3, FF Press, Zagreb, 2020, 121–188.

<sup>15</sup> That Nicholas targeted Pietro Riario when speaking of Caligula has been convincingly suggested already by Mercati, *op. cit.* (2), 228.

<sup>16</sup> MS Vat. lat. 5641, fol. 29r: *Quantum ad d. S. Syxti attinet, hodie celebrate sunt eius exequie in ecclesia S. Apostolorum magnificentissimo apparatu: missam cantavit reverendissimus dominus Mediolanensis, orationem haud admodum contemnendam habuit*

## 2. Returning to Italy, Presenting the Patron with a New Work in his Honor

While in Rome Nicholas of Modruš delivered his funeral oration for Pietro Riario, on Rhodes Francesco Maturanzio waited for the winter to pass to return to Italy. Finally, on 6 May 1474, he boarded a Venetian ship headed for home. He first made a ten-day stop in Heraklion on Crete, where he bought several Greek manuscripts, including one of Aeschylus and Aristophanes and the other of the *Suda*.<sup>17</sup> His journey from Crete to Venice was turbulent and fraught with danger, whether posed by the Ottomans or the rapidly changing winds, but after several

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*episcopus Modrusiensis. Concursus omnis hominum generis, aetatis et sexus is fuit quales non facile quisquam in morte pontificum meminit.* There were some doubts in historiography as to who actually delivered the funeral oration, since, aside from Nicholas of Modruš, Nicolò Perotti also wrote a funeral oration honoring the deceased cardinal which is preserved only in manuscript. This led some to assume that it was Perotti who delivered the oration, while Nicholas of Modruš only had his printed. Chiericati's comment dispels these doubts. On Nicholas's oration, see Neven Jovanović, "Nadgrobní govor Nikole Modruškog za Pietra Riarija" [The Funeral Oration of Nicholas of Modruš for Pietro Riario], *CM XXVII* (2018), 123–143. MS Vat. lat. 5641 also includes letters of another of Barbo's secretaries, Giovanni Lorenzi, dating from the 1480s, which were published by Pio Paschini (ed.), *Il carteggio fra il card. Marco Barbo e Giovanni Lorenzi (1481–1490)*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, 1948. The letter Lorenzi sent from Rome to Barbo on 31 August 1485 provides interesting information regarding another prominent Croato-Dalmatian prelate and humanist at the papal curia, *Cypicus*, i.e. Koriolan Cipiko's son Alviz. Apparently Cipiko spoke ill of the recently deceased cardinal Pietro Foscari all around Rome and among the cardinals after he found out that he was not mentioned in Foscari's testament. In fact, he even seems to have tried to convince the vice-chancellor, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, and Barbo himself to have the testament nullified. Aside from discrediting Cipiko as mad and rash on account of his national background, Lorenzi also did not have kind words to say about his poetry, calling him "insufferable on account of his poetic frenzy". See BAV Vat. lat. 5641, fol. 20v: *Cypicus, natione Dalmata, id est furiosus et temerarius, addito etiam lymphatione poetica intolerabilis, postquam intellexit se in testamento non expressum nominatim, totam commovit familiam et per Urbem, per cardinales ea de sanctissime memorie domino Foscario dixit et seminavit que de iniquissimo homine excogitari vix possent. Et quantum in eo fuit, nixus est omni seclesta via testamentum rescindere, etiam implorato vicencancellarii auxilio, a quo repulsus ad D. V. R. venit, ut audio.*

<sup>17</sup> These have been identified by Philippe Hoffmann as MS 571 (H56) and MS 295 (E43) of the Biblioteca comunale Augusta of Perugia, though there are several more manuscripts that Maturanzio procured there; see Philippe Hoffmann, "La collection de manuscrits grecs de Francesco Maturanzio, érudit pérugin (ca. 1443–1518)," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge-Temps Modernes* 95 (1983), 89–147 (92–93). For a comprehensive analysis and inventory of Maturanzio's library, see Donatella Nebbiai and Maria Alessandra Panzanelli Fratoni, "La biblioteca dell'umanista," *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia patria per l'Umbria* 116.1 (2019), 343–494.



weeks he at long last reached Venice. He soon departed for Vicenza from where on 19 July 1474 he sent a letter to Nicholas of Modruš describing in detail his journey home and trying to establish contact with the bishop he still considered his patron, yet from whom he had not received a word for more than a year.

What happened next can be reconstructed from other letters in Maturanzio's letter-book. When Maturanzio returned from Vicenza to Venice, he found there Nicholas's long-awaited response – unfortunately not preserved today – which Nicholas had left for him with a certain *messer* Antonio. With this lost letter Nicholas invited Maturanzio to visit him in Fano, where he had assumed the office of governor in May of 1474.<sup>18</sup> Maturanzio accepted the invitation and stayed with Nicholas of Modruš during late August or early September.

Francesco Maturanzio decided to use the visit to present his patron with a new work dedicated in his honor. As mentioned above, in 1472 he had already composed one cycle of encomiastic poems celebrating Nicholas and chronicling his role in the war against the Turk. Now he presented him with a book of poems on the feast days of the Virgin Mary, which he composed on Rhodes and on his journey back. In addition, Maturanzio added here the second cycle of encomiastic poems, in which he presented himself as a poor poet returning from the East and seeking patronage from the powerful bishop. The manuscript of this book of poetry which Maturanzio prepared for Nicholas is not preserved today, but these poems from 1474 can be found right alongside those from 1472, in Maturanzio's own manuscript containing poetry from various periods of his life, now MS Ottob. lat. 2011 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. These poems, both the Marian and those in the two encomiastic cycles, present us with interesting details about Nicholas of Modruš and speak much of the high expectations that Maturanzio had of him during these years.<sup>19</sup>

For almost two years Maturanzio had enjoyed the loose patronage of Nicholas of Modruš. He had probably received some financial help from Nicholas when he accompanied him to Greece in 1472, but after the bishop had left for Italy, Maturanzio was physically no longer part of his household: he no longer lived with

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<sup>18</sup> Maturanzio soon forwarded this letter to his brother Angelo to prove to him that he still enjoyed the bishop's favor. See MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 89v–90r (100: Angelo fratri): *Patavium veni ubi dies aliquot commoratus sum. (...) Venetias cum venissem principis mei Nicolai Episcopi Modrusiensis benignissimas litteras apud magistrum Antonium nostrum offendi, quas nostris inclusas ideo ad te mittere volui, ut cognoscas me non falso illius in me benivolentiam praedicare solere, nec deesse mihi in quo spem bene et honeste vivendi reponere et collocare possim. Has Bartholomeo Ruffato ostendas et legas, vehementer rogo.*

<sup>19</sup> I intend to publish and discuss these poems separately. On Maturanzio's poems on the feast days of the Virgin, see Emore Paoli, "La devozione di un umanista: i carmina mariani di Francesco Maturanzio," *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia patria per l'Umbria* 116.1 (2019), 207–227.

him and he no longer received food nor any sort of pay. The book of poems was meant to help change that and ensure his place in the bishop's *familia*.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Epilogue: Later Contacts

However, soon after coming to Fano Maturanzio realized that his hopes had been unfounded. Though Nicholas had several, perhaps a dozen people as part of his *familia*, at the moment there was no place there for a humanist – or rather another humanist alongside the bishop's secretary Bernardino Bennati.<sup>21</sup> It was in Fano that Maturanzio began his search for another prelate to take on the role of the patron. To this purpose, with full support of his host, Maturanzio sent letters to his influential friends: Bartolomeo della Rovere bishop of Ferrara,<sup>22</sup> and to a certain Gurello from Naples, who was staying in Rome and whom Maturanzio asked for help in getting a position in a household of one of the cardinals.<sup>23</sup> After

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<sup>20</sup> On the *familiae* of Roman prelates and the place of humanists in them, see John F. D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD, 1983, 39–60.

<sup>21</sup> Bernardino Bennati was Nicholas of Modruš's secretary who regularly wrote his official letters, as can be seen from the numerous original letters the bishop sent as governor of Spoleto between 1475 and 1477; see Archivio di Stato di Perugia, Sezione di Spoleto, Comune di Spoleto: Lettere ai priori. He is also the nominal addressee of one of Maturanzio's encomiastic epigrams in honor of Nicholas of Modruš.

<sup>22</sup> MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 93v (109, *B. Episcopo Ferrariensi*): *Nuper incolumis e Graecia redii. Dies aliquot Fani apud Praesulem Modrusiensem, qui me tam benignis semper prosecutus est officiis, et relaxandi animi et reficiendi corporis gratia commoratus sum. Propediem, ut spero, Perusiae ero. Te quantum in me est rogo, ut mei memor esse velis, qui haerere tibi, si qua in re usui esse possum, paratus sum.*

<sup>23</sup> MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 93v–94r (110, *Corellio*): *Illud a te vehementer peto, ut de statu tuo omni ad me scribas et, si qua in re adiumento mihi esse potes (potes autem plurimis), studium tuum et favorem non deneges. Cupio istic vivere et cuipiam cardinali industriam meam, quantulacunque est, dedicare et condonare. (...) Fani nunc sum. Sed propediem Perusiae ero. Illuc te rogo ad me scribas.* Maturanzio sent the letter to Gurello to Rome via Marko Paskvali, Nicholas of Modruš's nephew, who told him he will be staying in the city with Petreio, one of the minor humanists associated with Cardinal Ammannati Piccolomini and Pomponio Leto; see MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 95rv (115, *Corellio*). *Fani cum essem Marco, Episcopi Modrusiensis propinquo qui istic proficiscebatur, litteras ad te dedi. Is facturum se recepit, ut propediem ad me scriberet et de te et de quodam negotio meo quod istic per eum agi oportune poterat. Nihil interim litterarum missum. Quare te rogo, ut convenire Marcum non pigeat. Ubi in Urbe habitet, exploratum mihi non est. Tantum ab eo accepi cuidam Petreio humanitatis studioso contubernalem esse. Pergratum mihi erit si tua opera aliquid ad me scripserit et quo pacto negotium meum peregerit certiore me*

a short period of rest and without any sure prospect of employment, Maturanzio left Fano for his hometown of Perugia.

Maturanzio's luck began to turn immediately on his arrival in Perugia, when he found out that Niccolò Perotti archbishop of Siponto was on 18 August 1474 appointed by the pope to serve as the new governor of the city. Perotti was a well-known humanist and patron of the *studia humanitatis* and was, to boot, a friend of Nicholas of Modruš, who had served as castellan of Viterbo when Perotti was the local governor.<sup>24</sup> Maturanzio now put all his efforts into presenting his credentials to Perotti and convincing him to provide him with a job. Since he also found out that, before coming to Perugia to assume his office, Perotti travelled first to Fano, Maturanzio immediately sent word to his friends, Antonio Acerbo da Perugia and Ulisse da Fano, to have them present his case before the prospective patron. Both were tasked with delivering to Perotti Maturanzio's letters that would showcase his humanist credentials.<sup>25</sup> An important role in the plan was also reserved for Nicholas of Modruš, to whom Maturanzio immediately sent two letters pleading for his recommendations (*Epist.* 12 and 13).<sup>26</sup> Finally, to showcase his competence in poetry as well, Maturanzio prepared for Perotti another copy of the book of poems on the feast days of the Virgin, which he had just dedicated to Nicholas of Modruš, and to which he added two epigrams celebrating Perotti and welcoming him to Perugia.<sup>27</sup> And the strategy worked. In the fall of 1474 Maturanzio entered Perotti's household, taking on the role of his secretary and teacher to his two

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*reddiderit. Vale.* This Gurello (*Corellius / Corelius*) is addressed as *Cornelius Raptensis Neapolitanus* in another letter; see MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 62r–63r (72).

<sup>24</sup> See Paolo D' Alessandro, "Perotti, Niccolò," *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 82, 2015, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-perotti\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-perotti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/).

<sup>25</sup> MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 95r (114, *Ulyssi Fanestri*): *Frater carissime, bene iuvante Deo Fanum proficisceris, Archiepiscopum Sipontinum illic invenies, cui litteras meas reddes. Praesidem Modrusiensem ut Sipontino non vulgariter me commendaret, rogabis. Quod si Fani Sipontinus non fuerit, da operam ut illuc ubicunque acceperis litterae ad eum perferantur.* MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 94r (112, *Nicolaus Perottus Pontifex Sipontinus splendidissimo equiti Antonio Acerbo suo salutem*): *Tertio Nonas Octobris, dum e Fano Fortunae ad Sentinates meas rediissem, redditae mihi fuerunt litterae tuae una cum Francisci nostri epistola, quobus nihil offerri dulcius potuisset.*

<sup>26</sup> Perotti arrived in Fano around 20 September; see Archivio di Stato di Pesaro, Sezione di Fano, Antico archivio comunale di Fano, Cancelleria, Consigli e riformanze, vol. 16, fol. 279r. He moved from Fano to Sassoferrato on 5 October; see the second letter quoted in the previous note. From there he finally moved to Perugia.

<sup>27</sup> This copy of the book of poems, unlike the one Maturanzio presented to Nicholas of Modruš, is preserved today, as MS 438 (G27) of the Biblioteca comunale Augusta in Perugia. This copy does not include the numerous encomiastic epigrams composed in Nicholas's honor in 1474, which had likely been included alongside the Marian poems in the dedication manuscript presented to Nicholas of Modruš. Moreover, there are minor

nephews, Pirro and Gaspare. In 1476, thanks to Perotti's support, he also became the teacher of poetry in the Perugian *studium* – a position which he would continue to hold more-or-less permanently for the next ten years.

Francesco Maturanzio did not lose contact with Nicholas of Modruš in September of 1474. A few months later, in February of 1475, Nicholas was transferred by the pope from Fano to assume the office of the governor of Spoleto, near Perugia. Several months or even a year or two into Nicholas of Modruš's tenure, which lasted until the end of 1477, Maturanzio, acting on the request of some Perugian friends, sent a letter to Nicholas urging him to intervene on behalf of a Perugian widow who was involved in a longstanding lawsuit in Cascia, a city within Nicholas's jurisdiction (*Epist.* 14). How this episode played out, we do not know. The letter stands as the last recorded testament to their contact. To be sure, the two must have met later, in 1478, when Nicholas assumed the office of the vicelegate of Umbria and moved to Perugia where Maturanzio was serving as the local teacher. Yet we so far do not have any traces that would offer us an insight into the nature of their relationship at the time.<sup>28</sup>

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textual differences in the poems on the feast days. For the edition of the book based on the copy presented to Perotti, see Zappacosta, *Francesco Maturanzio*, 259–284.

<sup>28</sup> Towards the end of his life Maturanzio dedicated one of his poems to another Croato-Dalmatian humanist, Ivan Polikarp Severitan, a Dominican friar who briefly taught in Perugia. Apparently, in 1510 Severitan discussed the poorly attested life of the ancient Roman grammarian, Donatus, with Maturanzio, who then wrote an epigram in response. Severitan included this epigram in his biography of Donatus appended to his commentary of Donatus's grammar, and in the process described the occasion which led to its composition. See *Dionisii Appollonii Donati de octo orationis partibus ad novam et optimam limam deducti et Senece Iunioris Catonis Cordubensis Ethycorum libri quattuor cum commentariis magistri Iohannis Policarpi Severitani Sibenicensis Dalmate Predicatorum Ordinis*, Apud Leonem per Cosmum cognomine Blanchinum Veronensem, Perugia, 1517, fol. 2v: *Haec de vita tanti viri (sc. Donati) habeo, quamvis clarissimus Franciscus Maturantius, cum de more Christiano Perusiae divinum populo nuntiare verbum pro illorum in Deum Maximum Optimum calcandis admissis et commeritis, coram Gabriele Phanensi reverendissimo Cardinale Urbinatense tunc Umbriae legato de hoc ad me dubitantem unde Donatus oriundus fuerit tale dederit carmen post Christi Dei nostri diviparae virgunculae nati annum millenum quingentum decimum:*

*Editus in Lybica Donatus dicitur urbe,  
qui iam grammatica tantus in arte fuit.  
Inculto potui tantum haec tibi scribere versu  
olim, Donato quae fuerit patria.  
Avocat a doctis nam me vindemia musis,  
cogit et in versus multa referre breves.  
Libera cum fuerint positae mea pectora curis,  
plura soluta leges vel pede clausa suo.*

In sum, Francesco Maturanzio's correspondence with Nicholas of Modruš, especially *Epist.* 1–11, represents a distinct corpus within Maturanzio's letter-book. For Maturanzio Nicholas of Modruš was the one who accepted him into his retinue and took him on his ship to Greece, and, even if for almost two years he remained more than a thousand miles away from him, Maturanzio continued to look at the bishop as his patron, chronicling his sojourn on Rhodes, in which he took great pride, in the letters he sent to him. This corpus of letters is equally important when it comes to Nicholas of Modruš, since it constitutes almost the entirety of his private correspondence preserved today.<sup>29</sup> Even if all but one of the letters in the preserved correspondence are Maturanzio's, it still provides us with unique insights into the perspectives and power brokering of one of the most influential Croato-Dalmatian prelates at the papal curia and the hopes of patronage he inspired in the humanists around him.

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For more on Severitan's biography of Donatus, with further bibliographical references, see Luka Špoljarić, "O rimskom gramatičaru Donatu i njegovu najslavnijem učeniku" [On the Roman Grammarian Donatus and his Most Famous Pupil], *Kruna harvackoga jezika: renesansni pisci o svetom Jeronimu* [The Crown of the Croatian Tongue: The Renaissance Writers on Saint Jerome], ed. Bratislav Lučin and Luka Špoljarić, Književni krug, Split, 2020, 173–180.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas of Modruš's private correspondence includes two other letters: one he received from Maffeo Vallaresso archbishop of Zadar in 1462, and the other from Federico da Montefeltro probably in 1478. For their editions, see, respectively, Maffeo Vallaresso, *Epistolario (1450–1471) e gli altri documenti trasmessi da Codice Vaticano Barberiniano latino 1809*, Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, Ljubljana, 2021, 595–596 (*Epist.* 448); and Mercati, *op. cit.* (2), 239–240.

## Appendix

### FRANCESCO MATURANZIO'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH NICHOLAS OF MODRUŠ

Edition

Francesco Maturanzio's correspondence with Nicholas of Modruš is preserved as part of Maturanzio's letter-book, the MS Vat. lat. 5890 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. The letter-book contains some 200 letters authored by Maturanzio, with an odd letter or two written by other people, one of them Nicholas of Modruš (*Epist.* 3). Most of the manuscript, fols. 1r–149v to be precise, was copied at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by one hand, possibly, though not positively, that of Francesco Maturanzio (see d'Anghera, *op. cit.* (4), 247–248). Fols. 149v–174r contain other letters by Maturanzio copied by various hands. There is one more manuscript of the letter-book, MS 366 (E5) of the Biblioteca comunale Augusta di Perugia, a copy of the Vatican manuscript made at the request of the eminent Perugian scholar Giovanni Battista Vermiglioli in 1806. This edition of the letters is exclusively based on the Vatican manuscript.

Only one letter in the Francesco Maturanzio-Nicholas of Modruš correspondence is expressly dated, the letter in which Maturanzio details his journey home (*Epist.* 11). This is in line with the practice in the rest of the letter-book which almost as a rule does not provide the dates of the letters. In the manuscript the correspondence with Nicholas of Modruš can be found divided into three groups. The chronologically latest letter, *Epist.* 14, appears first in the manuscript, as part of a group of letters written while Maturanzio served as Niccolò Perotti's secretary in Perugia, from ca. 1474 to ca. 1477. Then, four folios on, begins the group of letters from Rhodes, written between the spring of 1473 and the spring of 1474 (*Epist.* 1–10), which are immediately followed by the letter from Vicenza in which Maturanzio describes his journey home (*Epist.* 11). As for the dating of Maturanzio's letters from Rhodes, the internal evidence suggests that they more or less appear in the order in which they were composed. The exceptions to this are *Epist.* 5, which was written in response to the letter of Nicholas of Modruš (*Epist.* 3) but in the manuscript comes immediately before it, and *Epist.* 4, which was written in parallel with *Epist.* 5, but appears a bit further in the manuscript. The only letter that is difficult to date solely on internal evidence is *Epist.* 10, the last in the group of letters from Rhodes, but, as argued below, its place in the manuscript probably suggests that it was also chronologically the last of the Rhodes letters. Finally, located a bit further in the manuscript from this group of letters, but following it chronologically, are the two letters in which Maturanzio asked for Nicholas's recommendation to Niccolò Perotti in September of 1474 (*Epist.* 12 and 13).

Two of the letters from the correspondence have been published earlier. The only letter of Nicholas of Modruš in the correspondence (*Epist.* 3) was published by Giovanni Mercati in his study of the bishop's life and works (*op. cit.* (2), 227–228). The other is the Vicenza letter in which Maturanzio describes his journey from Greece (*Epist.* 10), which was published by Guglielmo Zappacosta (*op. cit.* (1), 231–235), who classicized the orthography in the process.

The following edition of the Francesco Maturanzio-Nicholas of Modruš correspondence introduces each letter with the place and date of its composition (indicated in square brackets if they are only inferred and not expressly dated, as most of them are), a summary of the contents, and a reference to the folios in the manuscript and its position in the letter-book. The edition of the letters preserves the orthography, which is, save for a few exceptions (etc. *proemium* instead of *praemium*; *stratagemate* instead of *strategemate*; *honusta* instead of *onusta*), consistent with classical orthography. I have corrected, however, several scribal errors – which are but few in number, mostly in *Epist.* 5, the longest letter in the correspondence – and I have altered the punctuation for sense. I have also divided the letters into paragraphs and numbered the lines to facilitate reading and referencing. Finally, I have identified the explicit references and allusions to classical authors.

## 1

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**  
 [Rhodes], [March or April of 1473]

Francesco Maturanzio recalls how a year before he travelled with Nicholas of Modruš to the East and he informs his patron of his current state. He reveals that he is still on Rhodes, and has not left for Crete, according to his original plan, due to poor weather and the advice of some learned locals whom he had befriended. He is learning Greek and has bought many books. Finally, he asks Nicholas how he is, and recommends his brother to him, should the latter visit him.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 68rv (82)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Ea extitit tua in me humanitas cum superiore anno tecum in Asiam ex Italia navigavi, ut nisi te colam observemque omnium ingrattissimus merito sim. Quare id in primis officii mei esse ratus sum, quod etiam cum hinc abisti me facturum  
 5 recepi, quotiens occasio esset, de statu meo omni certiozem te reddere.

Rhodi sum. Quo minus in Cretam navigaverim in causa id fuit, quod mari ingens cum ad profectiozem parata mihi essent omnia tempestas incubuit, ut ne in portu quidem satis tutae naves essent. Ea triduum totum tenuit, quo tempore in aliquorum civium non imperitorum amicitiam incidi, qui me ut hic consisterem  
 10 persuaserunt. Quantum Graecis litteris iam profecerim, certe non me poenitet. Communem linguam ita iam loquor, ut in Graecia natus educatusque videar. Multum librorum iam conguessi, quod si pecuniae mihi suppeterent, pulchram eorum mecum suppellectilem reportarem.

Hic quoad voles ero. In te spes omnis mea inclinata recumbit. Tecum vivere,  
 15 tibi quicquid in me est ingenii, industriae dedicare et condonare cupio. Quare te rogo ad me scribere non dedigneris, ut et quid agendum mihi statuas et quo pacto res tuae sese habeant cognoscam. Fratrem meum si te adierit tibi commendo, ut si qua in re usui illi esse poteris (poteris autem plurimis) studium tuum homini non neges. Quem cum intus et in cute (ut aiunt) cognoveris, complecti non poenitebit.

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19 intus ... cute] Pers. 3.30

14 quoad voles] quo advoles MS



## 2

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**

[Rhodes], [March or April of 1473]

Although he had already written to Nicholas of Modruš about everything he needed in the previous letter (*Epist.* 1) – which, we find out, he had sent through their common acquaintance Marso – Francesco Maturanzio now writes that he decided to send one more letter after finding another trustworthy messenger. After first praising Nicholas as his patron, Maturanzio proceeds to inform him of the news that Uzun Hasan has crossed the Euphrates with his army. Maturanzio reveals that he is studying Greek with Metrophanes, the Greek metropolitan of Rhodes, but since Metrophanes is not putting much effort into it, Maturanzio pleads with Nicholas to either write a recommendation letter on his behalf or to secure one such letter from a cardinal. Finally, he once again asks his patron to write to him as well.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 68v–69v (83)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Etsi Marso nostro ad te litteras dedi quae de statu meo omni, ut par fuerat, te erudirent, amicum tamen et fidelem nactus tabellarium, iterum ad te scribere non praetermisi, id, quotiens erit occasio, imposterum factururus, etiam si meum hac in re studium aspernari te manifeste intellexerim. Quamquam tale aliquid de te suspicari tua in me superiori anno beneficia minime patiuntur, quibus humanitatem tuam incredibilem et mores probatissimos cognovi, non fictum quod de te acceperam prius plene in me ipso expertus, veterem te Atheniensium morem semper imitari, quos auctor gravissimus Thucydides inquit εὖ ποιοῦντας οὐ πάσχοντας κτᾶσθαι τοῦς φίλους, hoc est dando non accipiendo amicos possidere. Sed non datur nunc laudandi locus. Tempus fortasse erit si vita supererit, cum illam incredibilem humanitatem tuam, inauditam continentiam, eloquentiam admirabilem, caeterasque non humanas sed divinas potius virtutes etiam cum ingenii mei periculo minime tacebo. Nam si pro dignitate minus dixero, pronum tamen grati animi studium laudem merebitur.

De Persarum imperatore foeliciores in dies nuntii afferuntur: ii proclivem in Christianos animum, prudentiam illi admirabilem, magnitudinem alii exercitus, robur et innatam militi virtutem praedicant. Euphratem traieicisse satis constans fama est. Situm in ripa fluminis Amorreorum oppidum operibus et natura loci munitissimum expugnasse, impium Turcharum regem in metu esse non mediocri nuntiatur, et ingenti exercitu venienti hosti iamiam occurrurum. Caetera quae non satis certa explorataque sunt ad te scribere omisi.

De me autem sic habeto in Graecas litteras vehementer incumbere. Praeceptore utor in primis erudito Metrophane Rhodio Archiepiscopo. Hoc ei oneris Magnus Magister meis adductus precibus adiecit. Nihil in me erudiendo studii, nihil diligentiae relinquit, quod si ei me per litteras vel tu vel cardinalis quispiam tua causa

commendaverit, multo est libentius facturus. In multis et magnis difficultatibus, quas dies noctesque substineo, maxime Aeschylus me consolatur: ἐκ τῶν πόνων τίπτεσθαι ἀρετάς. Sed quae nunc pati durum est, meminisse aliquando dulce erit.

30 Illud te iterum atque iterum rogo, ut ad me de statu tuo omni scribere digneris, et si quid est quod efficere pro te parvitas mea hic possit.  
Bene vale.

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9–10 εὖ ... φίλους] Thuc. 2.40.4; cf. Lib. *Epist.* 327.3 28–29 ἐκ ... ἀρετάς] Aesch. *Frag.* 340; cf. Lib. *Epist.* 175.4 29 Sed ... erit] cf. Verg. *A.* 1.202–203  
10 οὐ] οὐ MS 10 κτᾶσθαι] κτᾶθαι MS

### 3

#### Nicholas of Modruš to Francesco Maturanzio

Rome, [May of 1473]

Nicholas of Modruš hurriedly responds to Francesco Maturanzio's letters (*Epist.* 1 and 2) informing him that he has immediately requested a recommendation letter for him, though he doubts whether he will find a messenger to send it to the East once he receives it. He describes the pitiful state of affairs in Rome, the luxury and depravity, and complains of his own status. He further mentions that *Gaius Calligula* (referring here probably to the young Cardinal Pietro Riario, at the time the key figure in papal politics) is in control of everything, but that some people hope that things will soon turn around. In the end, Nicholas praises Maturanzio for his undertaking. Though located in the letter-book after *Epist.* 5, this letter was written before, since *Epist.* 5 references the complaints made by Nicholas in this letter. It was probably composed in May of 1473, and, as revealed in *Epist.* 5, it reached Rhodes on June 13.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 74v–75v (85)*

Nicolaus Episcopus Modrusiensis Francisco suo salutem.

Hac ipsa hora et redditae mihi sunt litterae tuae et meae ad te postulae. Quo factum est ut temporis angustia nec mihi nec tibi potuerim facere satis. Litterae commendatitiae ad Metropolitam facile habebuntur, si erit cui deferendas dem.

5 Mearum rerum talis conditio est qualis esse proborum potest ubi probitati nullus est locus. Avaritia ac luxus omnia possidet, pudendis libidinique dicantur cuncta. Gaius Calligula imperium obtinet. Pudor Urbe eiectus et ultra Sauromatas fugatus. Religio versa in luxum, virtuti proemium nullum. In unius manu posita sunt omnia. Te beatum qui non vides quae nos deficientibus oculis quotidie cernere cogimur.

10 Divinum aliquod numen in consilio habuisti quando tam praeclarum inceptum amplexus es, quo simul et ex erudito doctissimus evaderes et tonsorum lenonumque insolentem fortunam non cerneret. Proinde da operam ut tanto libentius coepto operi incumbas quanto nihil tibi nunc diligentius cavendum est quam

ne his tristissimis fascibus Hesperiam adeas. Res violenta diurnitatem praestare  
 non potest. Quo fit ut sperent non nulli, et non quidem iniuria, prope diem statum 15  
 rerum mutatum iri. Qui si mutabitur, ex tristissimo laetissimus sperandus est.  
 Quamobrem te interea talem compara, qui dignus eo esse possis.

Vale.

Romae.

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7–8 Pudor ... fugatus] cf. Iuv. 2.1

#### 4

### Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš [Rhodes], [July or August of 1473]

Although he is planning to write a detailed letter on developments on the Otto-  
 man-Persian front, which he intends to send to Nicholas of Modruš through  
 the messenger of the Grand Master of the Hospitallers (*Epist.* 5), Francesco  
 Maturanzio has decided to send another letter via *Iacobus*, a person close to  
 Nicholas and Cardinal Carafa. He informs Nicholas that he intends to sail to  
 Crete after the winter has passed, and, once he has bought the books he needs,  
 return to Italy. He asks the bishop to support him and to send him the letter he  
 had previously asked for (in *Epist.* 2).

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 76v–77r (87)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Iacobus, vir optimus et suavissimus, qui dies aliquot hic est commoratus  
 et mecum familiarissime versatus, de statu omni et valetudine mea diligenter te  
 erudiet. Hic est Cardinalis Neapolitani et tuae praedicator et quidam quasi buc- 5  
 cinator virtutis. Cuius tantum et tam pronum in Christianam rempublicam et vos  
 studium non mediocriter probandum est. Dat quod habet, maiora daturus si posset.  
 Hunc meis litteris vacuum discedere non sivi, quamquam per Magni Magistri  
 tabellarium, qui istuc profecturus propediem erat, et de me et de rebus omnibus  
 inter Otomanum et Asambeum gestis prolixè ad te scripturus fueram, quando, ut  
 opinor, omnia, quae varie nunc et non uno ore narrantur, certiora fortasse erunt. 10

Ego transacta hyeme, si Deo placuerit, quem ut mihi adsit et gressus meos  
 dirigat semper rogo, navigare in Cretam statui, mansurus illic quoad libros aliquot,  
 quibus mihi praecipue opus est, comparavero. Illinc, simulatque negotium confecer-  
 o, Venetias profecturus. Itaque futura aestate me expecta. Ad te, nisi oneri futurus  
 sum, veniam. Tu pro tua humanitate tui studiosissimo non deeris, nec dedignaberis 15  
 hominem complecti cuius in te spem omnem positam collocatamque tuo pristino  
 beneficio tu esse voluisti. Mirum me desyderium tenet Italiae, incredibile meo-  
 rum, sed in primis tui. Adde quod tantum iam videor profecisse, ut remansisse in

20 Graecia poenitere me imposterum nunquam possit. Interea litteras illas, de quibus  
ad te ante scripsi, ad me mittas vehementer rogo.  
Bene vale.

---

4–5 buccinator virtutis] cf. Cic. *Fam.* 16.21.2

## 5

### Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš [Rhodes], [26 August 1473]

In this letter, the longest in the entire correspondence, Francesco Maturanzio sends his patron Nicholas of Modruš a commentary on the political events that transpired in the East in the summer of 1473, the *aestatis huius commentaria* as he twice calls it. He describes first in detail how the Christian fleet besieged and conquered the town of Corycus in Cilicia, and how this forced the neighboring towns of Seleucia and *Sancile* (probably Sighun) to surrender, whereafter all three cities were given over to the Karamanids, Uzun Hasan's allies who used to rule them before the Ottomans conquered their lands. What follows is an account of the Christian siege of *Macium*, a pirate haven in the province of Caria, and the slaughter of its defenders perpetrated by the Christian army. Treating then briefly the political developments on Cyprus in the aftermath of the death of King James II, Maturanzio proceeds to describe Uzun Hasan's push into Asia Minor, celebrating his cunning and his victories against the Ottomans, drawing here parallels with the invasions of Xerxes and Timur, as well as with the Persian army faced by the Roman Emperor Julian. Maturanzio finally offers his own thoughts on the state of the Ottomans and other possible targets of the Christian fleet. He concludes the letter by responding to the issues raised by Nicholas in his letter (see *Epist.* 3), consoling him and reaffirming his loyalty, but also making several requests: he asks Nicholas to send the recommendation letter for Metrophanes as soon as possible (see *Epist.* 2 and 4), to procure for him another blanket recommendation letter from one of the leading cardinals, and to recommend him in particular to Cardinal Iacopo Ammannati Piccolomini. As we find out from the opening lines of *Epist.* 7, which references Uzun Hasan's cunning victory described here, this letter was written by Maturanzio on 26 August.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 69v–74v (84)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

5 Quamquam longe antea quam nostrae tibi litterae redderentur multi nuntii  
fama res in Oriente gestas auditurum te minime dubitabam, ne tamen aliqua in  
re negligens in te cui omnia debeo fuisse deprehenderer, breviter veluti quaedam  
aestatis huius commentaria ad te volui perscribere, certa atque explorata colligens  
quae varie fortasse istuc et non una omnium voce perlata sunt.

Christiana classis, et numero et apparatu longe admirabilis, circiter Kalendas Iunias huc applicuit. Post vero tertium quam venerat diem in Ciliciam discessit, Corycum obsedit urbem vetustissimam, quo nomine et portus quondam fuit et celebratum historiis et poetarum carminibus antrum. Iuxta mare est, non procul abest a Tarso, olim maxima et florentissima nunc pene diruta, etsi magis arci quam oppido similis est, arduo colle sita, loci natura et operibus non mediocriter munita. Eius e regione est insula quam Eleusam ego ab antiquis apud probatos auctores appellatam comperio, et ab Archelao habitatam ac regiam factam. Hinc Corycum tormentis demoliri imperator coepit, quae cum minus proficerent (longius enim insula distat), propius inde non sine magno periculo ad arcem est accessum, et non procul a muris collocata tormenta. Quare oppidani territi, cum nulla subsidii aut commeatum spes ostenderetur, quod a Carmanii militibus, qui erant pedites decem milia, equites supra mille, itinera omnia obsidebantur, hac sese duci conditione dederunt, ut in sinum Issicum cum uxoribus, liberis et vasis omnibus tuto discedere fas esset. Accepta a duce conditio, servata fides, receptum oppidum, Carmanio duci cui olim Otomanus interceperat redditum. Exemplum Sancile et Seleucia urbes secutae, non expectarunt obsidionem, sed sponte sua in deditio-nem venerunt. Est Sancile a mari distans oppidum stadiis prope viginti, situ ipso quidem munitissimum (est enim in colle positum); Seleucia maritima et ipsa est flumine magno et navigabili, cui Calicadno quondam nomen fuit, a Cleopatra olim et Amynta habitata. Et haec Carmanio, cuius ante fuerat oppida, sunt reddita. His rebus ita gestis tantus Thurchis iniectus est terror, ut ubi Christianum nomen audierint omnes in altissimos montes et in specus abditissimos sese recipiant. Nostris vero incruenta hac victoria, sed clara et memorabili, tantum animorum est additum, ut nihil sit quod non ausuros et se facile consecuturos confidant, et Deum optimum maximum, quem iratum prius experiebantur, respicere tandem Christianam rempublicam persuasum certumque habeant.

Macium deinde Cariae oppidum, pyrratarum receptaculum, vicinis Christianorum insulis sed Rhodo praesertim infestissimum, omnium natura loci et ingenio validissimum, rediens in Aegeum classis de improvise adorta est. Situm est in monte molliter arduo, in exciso lapide, murorum pars dimidia naturalis, quae nulla tormentorum vi frangi debilitarive unquam posset. Portum habet ingentem et commodum, agro est fertili et plano, fontibus et fluminibus irriguo, qui ad alendum continue exercitum comparatus a natura facile videatur. Expositi in terram pedites, simul et equites militari arte supra fidem praestantes – hos Graeci stratiotas nuncupant; sunt autem circiter quingenti quos secum classis nostra vehit – intentos in agris operi et nihil tale opinantes sternunt. Capiunt omnia, ferro ignique populantur. Irruunt in continentem equites ad stadia centum et quinquaginta, villas vicosque incendunt. Onerati ingenti et corporum et aliarum rerum praeda ad classem redeunt. Oppidani interim undique vexantur, sed fortiter stant pro moenibus, missilibus nostros deturbant. Nec ullum telorum cessat genus. Nostri conniti admovere oppido tormenta, cum vix unus, et is quidem arduus et

perdifficilis, esset aditus. Quod murorum erat manu factum, tormentis disiectum.  
 50 Turres quoque prostratae, quarum ruina magnus oppidanorum numerus obtritus.  
 Venire interim subsidium a speculatoribus nuntiatur.

Hic stratiotae, robur Macedonicum, nihil a maioribus suis degenerantes,  
 quos bellicosos semper fuisse legimus, rem memoratu dignam omnium linguis  
 monumentisque celebrandam aggrediuntur, iureiurando sese astringunt aut viriliter  
 55 morituros aut gloriosam de hostibus victoriam reportaturos; qui terga daret, eum  
 pro hoste futurum. Audaces fortuna iuvat. Facto cuneo in equites supra ducentos et  
 pedites CCCC impetum faciunt: fugant, sternunt circiter CLX ex hostibus. Equites  
 caesi, pedites saluti consuluerunt, quibus evadere periculum haud difficile fuit,  
 quod regionis minime ignari in vicinos specus confugerunt, quos insequi nec pediti  
 60 integrum fuit, nec equiti. Is enim oppidi oppugnationi, ille vel caedendo hostium  
 equitatu vel aliis custodiendis itineribus, ne quavis de improvviso adoriretur, erat  
 intentus. Alacres nostri uno tantum amisso in castra redeunt, occisorum capita,  
 ut mos est, contis affixa prae se ferentes. Novem quidam eorum, quos solus ipse  
 leto dederat, capita imperatori obtulit. Gratum Christianis omnibus spectaculum.  
 65 Omnes pro contione imperator laudavit. Suum cuiusque proemium pro capitum  
 numero tributum. Destituti spe oppidani, vel timore quod propius vero est compulsi  
 quod retro suam fortunam fluere cernerent, praeter omnium spem et opinionem  
 – quis enim non infecta re hos discessuros credebat? – imperatori se dediderunt,  
 cum et tolerare diutius obsidionem possent et minime deessent qui pro moenibus  
 70 pugnarent. Viri circiter trecenti, quorum pars maior ex duabus biremibus, quae  
 praedas haud multo ante ab insula Rhodo abegerant, timore nostrae classis illuc  
 confugerant. Sed illud est quod antea dixi: respicere in populum suum benignissi-  
 mus Deus tandem incipit. Concessum est, ut postulaverant ab imperatore, ut cum  
 uxoribus, liberis et se moventibus, quantum quisque auferre posset, discederent.  
 75 Ne quis violaretur, ne quis laedaretur, per praeconem imperator edixit. Missi ex  
 principibus classis qui multitudinem tutam educerent. Sed defendi a periculo non  
 potuit. Tantus nostrorum ardor, tantus furor fuit in pyratas praesertim, ut exeuntes  
 oppido pene omnes virilis sexus fuerint trucidati. De nostris, quod minus audientes  
 dicto fuerint, nullum sumptum est supplitium, quia quod a multis peccatur, inultum  
 80 est. Spes est, crede mihi, magnarum rerum imposterum. Quod nisi ii penes quos  
 rei summa est cupidiores paulo essent, nisi asperius quam conveniret militem  
 haberent, [non] dicerentur Dalmatae tui imbelles qui semper habiti sunt bellicosi.

Cum post captum Macium nostrae classis pars maior curandis sauciis, refi-  
 ciendis corporibus Rhodi conquiesceret, allatae sunt Assambei Persarum impe-  
 85 ratoris litterae, quibus classem nostram Corycum accersit, multa illuc equitum et  
 peditum milia missurus, quae nostros oratores qui in Cypro adhuc sunt excipiant  
 et tutos ad se perducant, de communi etiam bello cum nostris per nuntios suos  
 consultaturus. Sunt qui totum fingi a Venetis negotium opinentur, ut hoc praetextu  
 Cyprum insulam occupent, quos libuerit praeficiant, quos minus fideles suspican-  
 90 tur eiiciant. Rex enim nuper e vita discessit. Mihi verisimile non sit. Iam enim

insulam Veneta regina ita tenet, ut ne minimum quidem aut periculi aut proditionis vereatur. Rex ipse, paucis antequam moreretur diebus, condito testamento uxorem, si foetus in utero relictus non viveret, heredem esse voluit, summae rerum sex principes fecit, non secus atque sibi fuerant fideles uxori futuros. Graeci omnes mansuros se in fide in reginae manus iurarunt, ut misera et infoelix Carola, olim a fratre eiecta, quae hic est, omni mihi spe destituta videatur. 95

Sed redeo iam ad Asambeum. Is negotiatorum et litteris et nuntiis in Pyssidiam et Bithyniam impetum fecisse nuntiatur, traiectis cum uxoribus et liberis fluminibus, incensis deinde pontibus ut spes redditus suis eripiatur, ut in animi robore spem sibi omnem positam collocatamque intelligant. Exercitus tantus esse numerus affertur, ut imperiti rerum, quibus nulla est antiquitatis cognitio, commentum esse opinentur rideantque si tale aliquid quispiam dicat. Quod profecto haud facerent, si quae de Xerxe scribuntur non ignorarent, si Iuliano exspectato imperatore longe maiorem Persarum multitudinem venisse in Graeciam vel legisset vel audissent. Sed non longe exempla petantur – nonne Tarbellianus pene aetate nostra innumerabili exercitu infoelicem Graeciam invasit? – ut non fuisse mendaces Graecos oratores deprehensum sit, a quibus scribitur altos olim defecisse amnes epotaque flumina Medo prandente. Asambeus igitur simulatque in hostilem agrum irrupit, omni imbelli multitudine in monte collocata, relictisque praesidiis, ipse magnis itineribus in Otomanum contendit. Filius cum exercitu suo alia via Alebium Otomani ducem invadit, fundit fugatque, ad quadraginta Thurchorum milia occisione occisa. Persarum haud magnus numerus cecidit. Alebius ipse graviter vulneratus vix evasit. Laetus ad patrem revertitur minaturque, si ab incepto desistat, pro hoste sibi futurum. Ante annos animumque gerit curamque virilem, Cyro illi Xenophontis similis est, qui adolescens, vel potius puer, nunquam prius arma indutus et primus in bellum atque confertos hostes sese coniecit, et ultimus aegre cum ab Astyage avo revocaretur inde pedem retulit. Asambeo, cum dierum septem itinere a Prusiade abesset, Otomanus occurrit cum veteranis legionibus et omni regni sui robore. Hic Perses callido utitur stratagemate: fingit terga hosti dare, conversis velut in fugam suis, quicquid est in agris fructuum iubet incendere, robur equitatus et peditatus in insidiis relinquit. Fugientem sublatus inani spe Otomanus insequitur, cumque tres quattuorve dies progressus esset, in eum locum delatus, deceptum se esse et circumventum animadvertit nec referre pedem tuto potest, et penuria rerum omnium laborare incipit, a suis deseritur qui ad Persem transfugiunt. Ex insequente igitur fit fugiens, et qui terrere credebat, is terretur. Multis amissis vix Prusiadem se recipit, propediem cum hoste structa acie manum conserturus. 100 105 110 115 120 125

Quid sit futurum, scit Deus. Persem victoriae comptem fere omnes sperant. Quod si eveniret, actum de Otomano omnino esset. Aliquando tantae immanitatis poenas dabit. Mihi si coetera omnia deessent, haec, ut credam, magno argumento est, quod munitissimis Ciliciae oppidis, quae non sine sanguine ipse paravit, et inexpugnabili, ut prius opinio erat, Lyciae arci Macio in tanto discrimine ne minimum quidem subsidii misit. Quod enim ante dixi, non a rege missum est, sed 130

subitarius exercitus proximis locis collectus fuit. Sunt qui afferant nihil pene in  
 135 Lesbo esse praesidii facileque, si illuc classis nostra accedat, Mythilenem recipi  
 posse. Castella vero illa munita, quae in angustiis Hellesponti sunt, nullo pene  
 negotio prehendi, quod qui ferre arma poterant omnes imperatorem in Bithyniam  
 secuti sunt. Habes aestatis huius commentaria. Quae deinceps gerentur, nisi stu-  
 dium a te meum hac in re contemni sensero, omnia, ut spero, ad te perscribere  
 conabor. Alii plura fortasse vel scripserunt vel nuntiarunt. Quae explorata ego  
 140 habui, brevius quam negotium exigebat perstrinxi.

Litteras tuas Idibus Iuniis accepi, quibus amorem in me tuum facile perspexi,  
 cum talis tantusque vir meae rescribere parvitati dedignatus non es. Quod nullus  
 istic probitati locus sit, vicem tuam vehementer doleo. Qui omnium doctissimus et  
 optimus, dignam virtute tua mercedem non recipis. Quamquam spero propediem  
 145 fore ut id te consecutum audiam, quod non optas quidem, negari tamen tibi non  
 potest. Quod ubi continget, te rogo ut memineris mei. Cui etsi coetera desunt,  
 fides tamen et amor non deest. Quicquid tamen fueris, me tui studiosissimum et  
 semper tibi deditissimum cognosces. Iste Gaius Calligula, in cuius manu sunt  
 omnia, ne hic quidem bene audit. Gaudeo abs te propositum laudari meum, quod  
 150 tam praeclarum inceptum (sic enim scribis) amplexus sum, quia tantisper inso-  
 lentem impudicorum fortunam non video, quamquam nihil me ipsum fallo. Nam  
 si is status rerum esset quem boni omnes optandum ducerent, quid mihi istic spei  
 proponere possem, plane non video: homo pauper, parvo natus ingenio, mediocri  
 rerum experientia, industria perexigua, et qui ab omni assentatione alienus penitus  
 155 sum, victurus istic velut mancus et extinctae corpus non utile dextrae. Satis mihi  
 erit, si quando istuc accessero, Philomenam imitari, meo me cantu oblectare, in  
 parvo tigurio, nisi et illud deerit, pauperem vitam degere. Quod si uni tibi placere  
 contigerit, sublimi feriam sidera vertice.

Da operam quanto citius fieri potest litterae illae ad Metropolitam perferantur.  
 160 Cardinali Papiensi, si non molestum est, me commenda. Revoca illi in memoriam  
 me illum esse, qui tria ei, nunc secundus annus agitur, epigrammata Perusiae  
 obtuli, cum stranguria laboraret.

Bene vale.

Da operam praeterea, nisi molestus videor, alicuius primarii cardinalis fami-  
 165 liares pro me litteras impetres, quae, si quid peregrino mihi accideret, adiumento  
 esse possent.

Iterum vale.

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**56** Audaces ... iuvat] cf. Verg. *A.* 10.284 **79–80** quod a multis ... inultum est]  
 cf. Luc. 5.260 **82** Dalmatae ... bellicosi] cf. Cic. *Fam.* 5.11.3 **107–108** altos  
 ... prandente] cf. Iuv. 10.176–178 **114** Ante ... virilem] cf. Verg. *A.* 9.310–311  
**115–117** Cyro ... retulit] cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.18–24 **155** mancus ... dextrae] Iuv.  
 3.48 **156–157** in parvo ... degere] cf. Vell. 2.19.4 **158** sublimi ... vertice]  
 Hor. *Carm.* 1.36



58 consuluerunt] consoluerunt MS 66 propius] proprius MS 90 sit] fit MS  
103 exspectato] et spectato MS 108 amnes] annos MS

## 6

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**

[Rhodes], [Early September of 1473]

In a follow-up to the previous letter, written after 26 August but before the news of the Persian defeat reached Rhodes (cf. *Epist.* 5 and 7), Francesco Maturanzio shares with Nicholas of Modruš the joyous news of Christian and Persian victories over the Ottomans. Though he admits that the details are lacking, he insists that the Ottoman army is on the retreat, devastated by defeats, desertion, hunger and disease. On a personal note, Maturanzio informs Nicholas that he is making progress in Greek and has sold all of his Latin books. Finally, he mentions that the papal fleet arrived in Rhodes only on 15 August, the delay being met with widespread criticism, and that the Venetian fleet will winter in Corycus, waiting there to meet with Uzun Hasan and his army.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 75v–76v (86)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Nosti superioris temporis res gestas et qui de Perse afferrentur nuntii. Accipe quae deinceps sunt consecuta et haec non minus certa et explorata, quae te et omnem Christianam rempublicam efferre gaudio merito debent.

Classis nostra Asambeï, ut ante scripsi, litteris accersita Corycum discessit, 5  
Phoenicem, vicum opulentissimum qui in medio ferme itineris inter Chelidonia  
insulas et Atteliam, occurrit (est autem in agro Lycio), incolis nihil tale expectan-  
tibus inuasit, dirripuit, incendit, magna corporum et aliarum rerum abacta praeda,  
dum ociosa Coryci Asambeï nuntios praestolat. Aliae ab illo afferuntur litterae, 10  
quae a duce classis per expeditam triremem Corcyram missae sunt, ut illinc ad  
Senatum Venetum huic destinata officio biremis perferat. Multa ex diversis locis  
in Oppidum sancti Petri, quod est Rhodiorum in Caria ubi incluta urbs Halicarnasus  
quondam fuit, mancipia confugerunt, quae huc advecta captam omnem ab  
Asambeo Trapezuntem uno ore praedicant. Anchoram vero, Phrygiae oppidum 15  
ubi Cappadociam attingit, ab illius filio combustam et litteris et nuntiis multorum  
cognovimus. Maomethes, primus Otomani dux, cuius ductu et auspicio gesta  
quondam ab Otomano praeclare sunt omnia, pestilentia decessit. Alebius, alter  
dux, cum magna veteranorum manu ad Persem transfugit. Recepta a Perse sunt  
omnia Carmanii oppida quae in Pisidia, Lycaonia et vicinis locis sunt. Ingens 20  
fames et pestilentia semper ferme comites in Otomani exercitu incubuerunt, et  
ita crassantur ut in dies decrescat exercitus. Quo factum, ut manum conferre et  
congregari cum hoste nunquam Asambeus post illa tempora, quibus dolo Otomanum  
circumvenit, animum induxerit, veritus ne suus quoque inficiatur exercitus.  
Otomanus desperatis pene rebus retro pedem tulit. Quicquid deinceps afferetur

25 novi, ad te perscribam. Priores illas litteras ad te mitto. Tabellarii importunitas ut negligentior in locorum descriptione fuerim effecit.

Adde quod ita me Graecis litteris dedidi, ut ne unum quidem Latinum librum mihi reliquerim. Nam et Strabonem illum quem mecum attuleram (simulatque emptor inventus est) vendidi; scripsi quod memoria suggestit, quae plerunque in  
30 temporis praesertim angustia minus fidelis esse consuevit. Ptolomaeum, deinde Strabonem, Plinium inspexi, quos huc venales nuper attulerunt. Quod vitiose posueram correxi. Nihil a me nunc perperam aut temere scriptum reor, de quo etiam rationem reddere non possim.

XVIII Kalendas Septembris Summi Pontificis classis huc appulit. Tantam  
35 tarditatem nullus est qui non accuset. Cum com meatibus careret, Chium illic acceptura, relicto hic cum duabus triremibus legato, profecta est. Classem Venetam Coryci hyematuram dicunt, descensurum illuc Asambeii exercitum.

Bene vale.

## 7

### Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš [Rhodes], [Late September or October of 1473]

Francesco Maturanzio informs Nicholas of Modruš of the major defeat suffered by Uzun Hasan's Persian army at the hands of the Ottomans (referring here to the Battle of Otlukbeli, which took place on 11 August 1473). Maturanzio describes the battle in detail and highlights the tactical errors made by the Persians. The Persians have retreated to Armenia Minor (Cilicia), and there is talk of peace negotiations between the two emperors, which, if realized, Maturanzio fears, would lead to destruction of Italy. Finally, Maturanzio reiterates his intention to return to Italy after the winter has passed. If the beginning of *Epist.* 8 alludes to this letter (see below), then this letter, written and sealed either in late September or in October of 1473, was eventually sent only in late November, together with *Epist.* 8.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 77r–79r (88)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Accepisti superioribus litteris, quas VII Kalendas Septembris ad te dedi, quo stratagemate Perses Otomanum in insidias coniecerat quantaque rerum omnium penuria Otomani iam premebatur exercitus. Cognosce nunc posteriora quoque  
5 pacto hostis callidus, qui a Deo, ut opinor, in Christiani nominis perniciem servatur, dolo dolum repulerit. Simul exploratum certissimumque esse intelliges non qui plures numero fuerint victoriae compotes fieri, sed ingentem multitudinem etiam a paucis consilio et sapientia ferme semper superari, praesertim si ab imperatoris providentia perturbatio omnis abfuerit, qua cogitatio ipsa distrahi et quibusdam  
10 quasi involucris tegi atque obumbrari consuevit.

Simulatque circumventum se fraude Otomanus ab hoste animadvertit, in editum et suapte natura munitissimum collem cum omni peditatu et equitatu sese recipit, selectos ex omni exercitatus robore circa latera sua collocat, fore sperans, ut aut nullo pene negotio quod postmodum ex sententia successit insignem de hostibus victoriam reportaret, aut quando patientissimus algoris et inediae miles, nihil a prisca Romanae militiae disciplina qualem apud Livium cognoscimus discrepans, semper ferme in bellis educatus, famem diutius tolerare non posset, ultro ipse Asambeum invaderet. Collem quem dixi novo valli genere, connexis in vicem mulis et camelis, circumdat, et ita undique interius omnis generis tormenta disponit et collocat, ut muri speciem prae se ferrent. Infirmiorem tantisper militem emittit, qui cum hoste cupido pugnae congregiatur semper in levibus certaminibus, quae ἀκροβολισμούς Graeci appellant.

Superior Perses evadit. Crescit illi audacia fitque ex adumbrata hac, ut sic loquar, victoria insolentior et, quod plerunque consuevit accidere, ad cavendum negligentior. Otomanus formidinem haud mediocriter simulans, ter de pace legatos misit, ter erumpere velle et in fugam converti simulavit, donec tantam consequendae victoriae Asambeo spem obiiecit, ut divisus ille parum mature et pene tumultuarie copiis propius ad montem accesserit, non cum quam callido sibi hoste futura res esset satis animo reputans, non in manibus fere victoriam sibi esse cognoscens, si in eo tantum esset occupatus ut quem velut obsessum tenebat erumpere non sineret, cui deficientibus commeatibus aut turpiter exercitu amisso necesse erat, aut miseris conditionibus, quales solent a victore imponi victo, in deditionem venire; parum etiam explorato castrorum apparatu in quae vis nulla armorum aut corporum aditum habere aut irrumpere unquam potuisset, cum omni tormentorum genere apprime munita undique essent.

Error tantae haud mediocris accessit audaciae, vel dicam temeritati potius, quod primos Asambeus praemisit camelos, animal timidum et imbelles ferendis tantum oneribus idoneum. Quod simulatque excussa sunt tormenta, strepitu exterritum consternatumque effusa fuga retro in suos versum perturbavit ordines. Consecuti tormenta Otomani milites integri viribus et recentes Persem et loco motum et mente alacres aggrediuntur, una pene hora tantam multitudinem, cui nec flumina ad bibendum nec quod terra parit quodque educat aer ad vescendum satis erat, fugant caeduntque. Montes et nemora saluti fugientibus fuerunt, ingens numerus tormentis obtritus, multi capti, multi trucidati. Qui cladi superstites fuerunt, haud itinerum ignari, clam noctu ad ducem suum redierunt. Qui amissis territoriis fugiens in Minorem Armeniam se receperat, ubi uxores et liberos reliquerat, cum parte impedimentorum et thesauri quem Persico more secum attulerat. Nuntios ad maiorem natu filium, qui in Superiori est Armenia, misisse dicitur, ut comparato exercitu et collecta undique multitudine ad sese veniat, primo vere resarcitis viribus cum hoste, cuius calliditatem et robur non sine damno et dedecore perdidicit, iterum manum conserturus. Otomanus equitare ad urbem haud magnis itineribus nuntiat, illic relicto filio bellicarum artium peritissimo, ubi Persem

fudit fugavitque, ut profligato hosti, si quid coactis reliquiis forte moliri tentaret, terrori sit et velut moles quaedam sese obiiciat.

55 Sunt tamen qui afferant de pace et affinitate, quae pacis vinculum sit, per caduceatores ultro citroque missos inter utrunque imperatorem agi. Quod si contigerit propediem aspera bella et Tiberim multo spumantem sanguine cerno. Sed ut falsus sim vates et miseris atque afflictis Christianorum rebus benignissimus Deus subveniat, quamquam eiusmodi sunt ii penes quos rerum summa est, ut succensere nobis merito Deus possit. Crudelis et impius Otomanus graviora certe in dies moliri in nos meditabitur. Susceptas superiori anno per classem Christianam iniurias, quamquam mediocres fuerunt, abire inultas non sinet. Barbarus est. Χαλεπὸν χοροῖω κῦνα γεῦσαι, Syracusanus ait poeta. Ego, nisi aliquid impedimento fuerit, peracta hyeme in Italiam navigare statui. Pergratum mihi feceris, si litteras illas de quibus ad te ante scripsi ad me miseris.

Bene vale, spes mea.

15 patientissimus ... miles] cf. Sal. *Cat.* 5.3 42 quod ... aer] cf. Ov. *Met.* 8.815–816, 15.91–92 57 aspera ... sanguine] cf. Verg. *A.* 6.86–87 62–63 Χαλεπὸν ... γεῦσαι] Theoc. *Id.* 10.11.

5 a Deo] adeo MS 10 involucris] involveris MS 11 in editum] ineditum MS

## 8

### Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš

[Rhodes], [Late November or Early December of 1473]

Francesco Maturanzio reveals that the previous letter, which he had written long ago, did not leave the port because the ship was detained by creditors. He writes that in the meantime news has arrived of an anti-Venetian coup on Cyprus, supported, some say, by Ferrante King of Naples. He states his fears that this will lead to wars in Italy and, consequently, result in a disaster for Christendom.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 79rv (89)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensi.

Priores litteras diu antequam navis solveret et scripseram et plicaveram, quae pene egressa portum, cum sese ad profectionem accingeret, retenta a creditoribus distulit discessum. Haec tantisper per regiam triremem quae e Cypro huc appulit nuntiata sunt: quattuor a Cyprio Rege institutos insulae gubernatores extrema voluntate, cum e vita ille discederet; Idibus Novembris Andream Cornelium Venetae Reginae patrum insidiis circumventum, Gentilem moedicum Cypro oriundum, Marcum Bembum Reginae consobrinum ex ipsius Reginae, ad quam confugerat, ereptum gremio, aliosque nonnullos crudeliter trucidatos esse. Causas caedis non satis certas exploratasque adhuc accepimus. Sunt qui affirmant omnia Regis

Ferdinandi consilio gesta esse, ut insulam ipse occupet, in qua et maior et potior pars Hispanorum est. Illud non nihil suspicionis afferre potest, quod simulatque regiae illuc triremes accesserunt quod supra scripsi patratum est facinus. Quid de ipsa Regina actum sit et de infante filio quem postumum peperit, sane dubitatur. Vides initia discordiarum et bellorum in Italia, quae, nisi Deus avertet, miseris Christianorum rebus exitium prope adest. 15

Bene vale.

9

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**  
[Rhodes], [April of 1474]

Having met a fellow Perugian travelling to Italy, Francesco Maturanzio writes a letter informing Nicholas of Modruš that he is soon leaving for Crete and will be in Italy come summer. He is short of money, which he needs to buy more books, so he is asking the bishop to send him some. He also writes of the rumors of an alliance between the Ottomans and Uzun Hasan, adding that the messenger will pass on the news from Cyprus in person. Given the reference to his upcoming departure from Rhodes (which we know took place on 6 May), and taking into consideration the composition of *Epist.* 10, which seems to have accompanied this one, this letter should be dated to April of 1474.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 79v–80v (90)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Quanquam nihil ferme argumenti ut ad te scriberem mihi in praesentia suppeditabatur (quid enim totiens vel meam in te observantiam et fidem commemorarem vel verbis me tibi absens dederem dedicaremque, qui prius me amare incepisti quam nosceres), fidelem tamen et amicum in primis nactus tabellarium litteras ad te dare non praetermisi, qui tamen etiam sine meis litteris diligenter de me erudire te potuisset. Est enim ex agro Perusino et quem communis patria amorem peperit ipse, ex quo hic sum, non consuetudine solum sed crebris quoque auxit officiis. 5

Ego, quemadmodum ad te ante scripsi, propediem in Cretam navigaturus fueram, et fortasse cum haec leges illic ero, proxima aestate in Italiam ad te venturus, nisi quid me pecuniarum inopia remorabitur. Dum enim Graecis libellis colligendis nimium intentus studeo, quicquid ex laboribus meis consequor luci omne illic effundo. Quare te iterum atque iterum rogo, ut meae si fieri potest necessitati subvenias tantumque ad me pecuniarum mittas quantum sufficere ad reditum existimabis. Quod si impudens fortasse et molestus flagitator tibi videbor, cum praesertim nullum in te meum extet officium quo tale aliquid a te petere vel possim vel debeam, non quid ipse merear sed quid innata tibi liberalitate in omnes tu facere consueveris animadvertas quaeso. Nec te illud Euripidis sapienter dictum fugiat: ὄνομα γάρ, ἔργον δ' οὐκ ἐχούσιν οἱ φίλοι οἱ μὴ 'πὶ συμφοραῖς ὄντες 10 15

- 20 φίλοι. Ego tantum tibi habeo polliceri fore ut immemori aut ingrato beneficium non colloces. Quod si quando istuc incolumis rediero, quicquid doctrinae, quicquid Graecae litteraturae assecutus fuero, id omne tibi et inauditae benignitati tuae acceptum referam. Quo pacto, si quid missurus es, transigi negotium possit, ex tabellario perdisces.
- 25 Nuper ex diversis locis, sed ex Chio praecipue, negotiatorum allatae sunt litterae quas et ipse legi. Hae ictum inter Otomanum et Asambeum foedus et initam benivolentiam affirmant, ingentem vero classem ab Otomano apparari, ut Mesiae sibi infestam gentem terra marique aggrediatur. De Cypri rebus idem tabellarius diligenter te erudiet.
- 30 Bene vale.

15 molestus flagitator] Auson. *Biss.* 1.4 19–20 ὄνομα ... φίλοι] cf. Eur. *Or.* 454–455.

19 'πὶ] ποὶ MS

## 10

### Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš

[Rhodes], [April of 1474]

Francesco Maturanzio writes a letter on behalf of his friend, *frater Ripanus Ordinis heremitanorum*, who can be identified as the well known Augustinian friar, Giovanni Paci di Ripatransone. Paci had been sent to the East to reform the monasteries of the Order's Province of the Holy Land, and has as a result on Rhodes earned several enemies among the local Augustinians. Their leader is Fra *Memmus*, who, as Maturanzio writes, accused Paci of several heinous crimes in a letter to the Prior General of the Order. Maturanzio pleads with Nicholas to take Paci into his protection and to talk to the Prior General to have Fra *Memmus* recalled to Italy. The letter is difficult to date. Contrary to his habit, Maturanzio does not provide any update on his own personal situation or the political developments in the East, which suggests that it was sent along with one of the other letters in which he does so. The only datable reference is to Paci's preaching during "this past Lent" (*proxima quadragesima*), yet this could refer both to the Lent of 1473 or the Lent of 1474. However, Maturanzio's letters from Rhodes seem to have been copied in the letter-book in more or less chronological order. Since this letter appears last, it was most likely written after the Lent of 1474, i.e. in April of 1474, to accompany *Epist.* 9 in which Maturanzio informs Nicholas that he is very soon (*propediem*) leaving for Crete. As *Epist.* 11 reveals, Maturanzio left Rhodes on May 6.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 80v–82r (91)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensi.

Vide quantum de te mihi audeam polliceri, qui non mea solum sed amicorum quoque negotia tibi soleam commendare, eorum praecipue qui id virtutis specimen prae se ferunt, ut magnorum virorum, qualis tu es, auxiliis commendandi merito videantur. Quod non temere profecto facio, quippe qui naturam tuam optimam et mores probatissimos apertissime cognosco. Tu enim, si quispiam alius, eos, in quibus virtutis vestigium aliquod apparet, et complecti et fovere omni opere consuevisti.

Frater sanctus Ripanus Ordinis heremitanorum, praestans ingenio et doctrina, populum hic proxima quadragesima ex more docuit, et ita docuit ut admirationi multis, omnibus pene exemplo et saluti fuerit. Hic dulcedine linguae, dexteritate morum et naturae, vitae sanctimonia, praeceptis monitisque saluberrimus omnium in se animos convertit, omnes in sui amorem traxit. Ego, quanquam parum doctus et prope rudis, bonarum tamen artium et virtutis studiosus ac cultor, simulatque eum vehementer disputantem, apte colligentem, auditorum animos quocunque voluit impellentem, unde autem voluit deducentem vidi et contemplatus sum, non expectavi in hominis consuetudinem et benivolentiam incidere, sed functus, ut videor, officio ultro veni, non mediocris inter nos, etiam primo congressu, ortus est amor, qui mutuis deinde auctus officiis eo usque crevit ut simul vixisse semper videamur. Huius negotia omnia non secus atque mea curae mihi sunt, et esse debent ὅτι τῶν φίλων κοινὰ πάντα.

Hic provinciae huius, quae Terrae Sanctae vocatur, minister cum Generalis potestate missus, ut est optimus et severissimus pro officio suo, pro ordinis et sacerdotii honore omnia quae pene concussa et labefactata offendit reformare et in debitum statum reducere contendit, et ita contendit ut monasteriis non mediocri utilitati extiterit, populos vero ad religionem a contemptu revocaverit, sacerdotes perperam et luxuriose viventes puniens, et ita puniens ut et debitus iustitiae tenor servaretur et volentibus redire in viam ratio bene vivendi ostenderetur imposterum. Nam malefacta impunita augentur in peius, et oderunt peccare mali formidine poenae, ut oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore. Tantum autem conflavit nominis, ut non humanus sed divinus, non ex Italia sed ex coelo missus a populis Orientis existimetur.

Quo factum est, ut ii in quos iuste ab eo animadversum est locum vindictae quaerentes Generalem adierint, et in primis frater Memmus, nescio quis factionum auctor et discordiarum caput, sanctum hunc meum, virum optimum atque integerrimum, eorum insimulantes criminum quibus ipsi a capite, ut aiunt, ad pedes foedati sunt. Quibus a Generali ideo absque dubio est habita fides, quod eorum vitia ignorat. Cum enim pessima sint, id agunt ut boni viri esse videantur. Adde quod ille maioribus impeditus curis quae in Oriente aguntur haud facile cognoscere potest. Quod si affuisset sanctus et praesens causam suam dixisset, viros impudentissimos, qui haec tam temere et audacter comminisci ausi sunt, facile mendacii arguisset.

Accepisti argumentum et velut apices causae. Caetera quae oportuna vide-  
 buntur, ut patronus optimus ipse comparabis et dispones. Nunc illud a te maiorem  
 45 in modum peto, ut patrocinium suscipere velis: Generalem horteris et moneas,  
 ut impurissimum et pessimum fratrem Memmum e provincia avocet, ne si in ea  
 diutius manserit et ipsi et religioni maiori quam fuit hucusque sit dedecori. Hanc  
 rem pro suo in me amore meaque item in te fide tibi commendo et trado, teque  
 unum sancto meo patronum invoco atque adopto. Sunt alii qui tanti viri favent  
 50 virtutibus. Τὸ δ' ἀξιωμα, κὰν κακῶς λέγηι, τὸ σὸν πείσει; λόγος γὰρ ἔκ τ'  
 ἀδοξούντων ἰὼν καὶ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς οὐκ αὐτὸ σθένει. Fac intelligat  
 sanctus me non falso tuam in me benivolentiam praedicare, et hoc velut cumulum  
 tuis in me meritis adiicito.

Bene vale, spes mea.

21 ὅτι ... πάντα] cf. Eur. *Or.* 735 29–30 oderunt ... amore] cf. Hor. *Epist.*  
 1.16.52–53 50–51 Τὸ ... σθένει] Eur. *Hec.* 293–295; cf. Aul. Gell. 11.4.2

21 ὅτι] ὅτι MS

## 11

### Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš

Vicenza, 19 July 1474

Francesco Maturanzio informs Nicholas of Modruš that he has recently returned to Italy and proceeds to write a long and detailed account of the time he spent on Rhodes and of his trip home. In sum, the two-year-long sojourn on Rhodes has greatly improved his Greek. Thanks to the pleas of Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, Metrophanes, the Greek metropolitan of Rhodes, agreed to teach Greek to Maturanzio, who as a result gave up on his idea to leave for Crete to study with Michael Apostolios. He left Rhodes because of fear of Turks after the defeat of Uzun Hasan and because of his growing desire to see his family and his patron in particular. Maturanzio boarded a Venetian ship on 6 May, and, after a brief unplanned stop at the small island of Dia just off the coast of Crete, he reached Heraklion (Candia), where he bought several manuscripts of Greek authors, in particular Aeschylus, Aristophanes and the *Suda*. His journey from Crete to Italy proved to be turbulent, as the ship was exposed to the threat of Turkish pirates and the constantly changing winds, which Maturanzio describes in detail. Having passed by Cape Maleas, Modon, and the Strofades, the ship stationed at Zakynthos, and then in turn at Kefalonia, Ereikousa near Kerkyra (Corfu) and the Bay of Kvarner, before finally reaching Venice. Maturanzio mentions that immediately upon disembarking in Venice he received news that his mother had passed away and he regrets not having a copy of Nicholas of Modruš's *De consolatione* to soothe his pain. He concludes by informing Nicholas that, feeling unwell, he left to see his friends in Vicenza, and so now calls on him to write him a letter and tell him what to do.

*MS Vat. lat.* 5890, fols. 82r–85v (92)



Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensi.

Cum ex tam longa peregrinatione Dei Optimi Maximi benignitate incolumis nuper Italiae redditus restitutusque sim, non fore ab re opinatus sum consiliorum atque actionum mearum altius paulo rationem repetere, ut non sine causa remansisse me iam in Graecia intelligas, nec frustra citius quam fortasse necesse videbatur discedere inde voluisse. Tu igitur, qui optimus omnium patientissimusque et habitus es semper et fuisti, pro tuo in me amore meaque item in te observantia et fide paulum temporis publicis curis et negotiis modestissimae ac sanctissimae gubernationis tuae subripere et velut subtrahere, donec epistolam perlegas, moleste non feres. Quod, nisi vereberis ne te obtundam, haud profecto difficile tibi erit, cum sic publica obire soleas munera ut clausas sibi mitissimas aures tuas fuisse nullus iure unquam conquestus sit, sic in studia omnium pene rerum sedulo incumbas ut omnia ex tuo pectore velut ex thesauro quodam percontantibus depromas, manifestes, declares. Quantum enim diurni temporis publicae interceptiunt occupationes, tantum somno nocturnis lucubrationibus subducis.

Sed nunc quod instat agamus. Ego cum Graecas litteras, quarum studiosus et cupidus ab ineunte aetate semper fui, ita in Italia didicissem, ut melius et conducibilis non didicisse iudicarem – nam in teneris consuescere multum est, cum nec recte enuntiare nec congrue a minus eruditis, hoc est nostris, praeceptoribus mihi offensum esset – nactus illam quam mihi omnium humanissimus fecisti commoditatem tecum in Asiam navigandi remanere statui. Quod nec tu prohibuisti, cum posses – tibi enim me totum dedideram dedicaramque – et litteris postmodum consilium probasti meum. Rhodi cum constitissem in aliquorum haud imperitorum, ut ad te illo ipso tempore scripsi, amicitiam incidi, qui, cum ad Michaellem Apostolium clarum docendi magistrum proficisci in Cretam vellem, me commoditate discendi apud se et proficiendi ostensa ut mutarem consilium persuaserunt. Horum studiis et voluntatibus, quod incumbente Thurcharum metu minus periculosum Rhodi quam in Creta deprehendi opinabar, haud invitus morem gessi. Metrophanem Graecum Archiepiscopum virum sanctum et haud mediocriter doctum audiui. Hunc ab initio ut mei erudiendi cura susciperet nullis precibus, nulla proposita mercede adducere potui, quod se undique laboribus quasi inclusum et circumventum diceret, ut respirare interdum vix liceret. Sed cum desyderium meum Magistro aperuissem, qui semper humaniter et gratiose se adeuntem et salutantem me exceperit, vocatum ad se Archiepiscopum et hortatus est et oravit, ut hunc sui causa sumeret laborem, et sibi quicquid mihi conferret utilitatis ascriberet se pro me debiturum. Principis sui precibus Metrophanes refragari nec debuit nec potuit, itaque docere me benigne et diligenter coepit. Tantus autem inter nos brevi conflatus est amor, ut simul vixisse semper videamur, ut indigne ferret si quando diem intermitterem quo eum non adirem. Quantum duobus annis profecerim, certe me non poenitet. Multum librorum congessi, cunque mihi ex laboribus meis plenos reportare loculos liceret, pleno potius librorum scrinio redire volui.

Accipe nunc brevibus quae me rationes citius quam fortasse debuissent venire compulerunt. Ingens Thurcharum in primis metus qui magis magisque in dies augebatur, mortuo praesertim Asambeo vel certe icto inter utrunque imperatorem foedere. Nam de Persarum adventu in Graeciam nihil plane afferebatur, ita  
 45 illorum extincta fama ut coepisse nunquam descendere videretur. Meorum deinde desyderium, sed tui praecipue: tanti enim te facio, quanti facio neminem; quanti autem facere debeam, omnes qui meum ex Italia tecum discessum audierunt minime ignorant. Esse autem me tui studiosissimum certissimis signis argumentisque  
 50 tu cognoscere potuisti. Adde quod verebar, ne si diutius in Graecia morarer iure mei mihi succenserent, cum tempus iam videretur appetere, ut quicquid in me est ingenii, industriae, exercitationis vel tibi vel cui tu statueres condonarem dedicaremque, dum patiens laborum corpus, dumque integer aevi sanguis solidaeque suo stant robore vires. Sed illud omnium potentissimum, quod hoc meum remanendi  
 55 in Graecia consilium, si in tanta rerum perturbatione tantisque periculis incolumem redire me contingeret, probaturos omnes non dubitabam. Si contra accideret, omnes improbatus, quod unus ex omnibus studiosis tam infoelici tempore, tam miseris et afflictis Graecorum rebus pro captando ingenii cultu navigare in Graeciam ausus essem.

60 Reditus nunc seriem cognosce. Pridie nonas Maias Venetam navim haud parvam conscendi, e Rhodio portu eodem die solvimus foelici navigatione et prosperis ventis Diam usque (quae ante Cretam parva insula est) pervenimus. Illinc vis venti et tempestatis non sine periculo retro cursum tenere nos compulit. Noctem totam erravimus, sole oriente vix stationem tenuimus, quae Sancti  
 65 Ioannis in Petra appellatur. Abest autem ab oppido Creta stadiis prope ducentis et quinquaginta. Fuimus illic dies quattuor, non sine magno timore. Nam septem Thurcharum biremes paulo citra stationem vicum insulae invaserant direptumque incenderant, magna corporum aliarumque rerum abacta praeda. Ego cum nulli flarent venti, veritus ne in tranquillo opprimeremur, iminens periculum effugere  
 70 volui, cymbam ingressus, quae illinc honusta lignis Cretam properabat, in oppidum perveni. Sequenti die navis quoque subsecuta est. Cretae totos decem dies fuimus ubi Aeschili ego tragoedias tris, Aristophanis comoedias duas, quae non adeo sunt in manibus, Suidae Aethymologias emi.

Pridie Idus Maias Cretam discessimus. Ad Maleam celeriter pervenimus,  
 75 ubi tanta maris tranquillitas nos deprehendit, ut non Thurcharum biremes quae consistere illic et insidiari praetereuntibus consueverunt timuerimus, sed ne etiam cybaria deessent, quae Methone accipere decreveramus. Dum consilii inopes inter spem metumque positi solliciti sumus, ecce propitius a puppi flare ventus coepit. Quare mutato consilio navarchus duraturum diutius ventum sperans Methonem  
 80 attingere voluit. Ventus Strophadas usque, quae in mari Ionio ante Peloponesum verius scopuli quam insulae sunt, nos tulit. Hic aetesiae flare vehementer coeperunt, adversus navigantibus in Italiam ventus. Vix in stationem Zacynthi venimus, ubi dies octo morati sumus. Hic navarchus et navicularii more suo et Deo et ventis

maledicere coeperunt. Solent autem nautae, quod et Cicero ait, properare quaestus  
sui causa; e statione adversis et merito indignantibus abeunt ventis, qui nos in al- 85  
tum perferunt, unde agitati et pene naufragi vix contra fluctuum et venti impetum  
Cephaleniam adepti sumus. Rursus secundae arrident aerae, quae, cum Saxonem  
usque insulam (initium ea Adriatici maris est, haud procul ab Aulone distans)  
nos pertulissent, repente mutatae sunt. Et ecce aetisiae subeunt, quae retro nos  
fugere etiam invitos coegerunt. Ericusae insulae, quae parva ante Corcyram est, 90  
stationem ingressi sumus. Et hic octo integros consumpsimus dies. Tandem secun-  
do usi vento et prosperam nacti tempestatem sinum Adriaticum ingressi bellissime  
dies quattuor navigavimus. Sed suae consuetudinis sinus Phlanonicus oblivisci  
non potuit, ad quem cum proxime accessissemus, tantam vim venti emisit, ut  
quinquies uno die vela complicare nobis necesse fuerit, et iactis duabus anchoris 95  
in medio pelago consistere, nisi vellemus cum periculo Picentum littori applicare.

Venetias tandem pervenimus. Naviculariorum cum navarcho rixas et con-  
tentiones omitto, quibus nihil infantius, nihil magis navigantibus timendum. Illud  
affirmare possum, mortem manifestam oculis meis saepe observatam, non minus  
me ipso trepidis et formidantibus nautis, qui pene in mari nati, educati certe sunt. 100  
In terram cum descendissem, omnium primum ratus sum Summo et Omnipotenti  
Deo quod me Italiae incolumem reddidisset gratias agere. Quod feci simulatque  
in celebrem civitatis locum veni. Perusinus quidam occurrit notus mihi nomine  
tantum. Is optimam et carissimam matrem vitam cum morte commutasse mihi  
renuntiavit. Quo nuntio ita sum confusus, ut hoc ipso infoelicem mihi reditum e 105  
Graecia putarim, quod tanti me doloris et calamitatis certiore fieri necesse fuerit.  
Amisi vitae meae solatium, et quanquam maturam senectutem bonis moribus et  
pudicitiae gloria florens impleverit, ego tamen, tanquam juvenis et robustissi-  
ma decesserit, doleo. Quod si *Consolationem* tuam in manibus haberem, quae  
ita graviter et sapienter a te est scripta, ut Crantorem vel Ciceronem legere se 110  
existiment quicumque in manus sumpserint, aliqua fortasse ex parte intestinus hic  
minueretur dolor. Longa vero et difficili navigatione fractus debilitatusque ne in  
gravem aliquam aegritudinem inciderem, veritus sum. Vicentiam igitur secessi,  
multorum illic in me amore et necessitudine fretus. Iam validior factus sum. Illud  
a te maiorem in modum peto ut quid mihi agendum statuas ad me scribere non 115  
graveris. Expectabo tuas litteras.

Bene vale.

Vicentiae. IIIIX Kalendas Augusti MCCCCLXXIII.

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53 dumque ... vires] cf. Verg. *A.* 2.638–639 84–85 Solent ... causa] cf. Cic.  
*Fam.* 16.9.4 103–104 quidam ... tantum] Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.3

17 conducibilius] conducibilis MS

## 12

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**

[Perugia], [September of 1474]

Francesco Maturanzio informs Nicholas that he has reached Perugia safely, only to find his home in a terrible state after the deaths of his mother and brother. He mentions that Niccolò Perotti archbishop of Siponto has left for Fano and pleads with Nicholas to recommend him to Perotti once the latter arrives there. Since we know that Perotti left Fano in the first days of October of 1474, this and the following letter (*Epist.* 13) should both be dated to September.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 94r (111)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Perusiam incolumis veni. Domum meam et matris et fratris funere concussam et pene labefactatam offendi. Itaque diutius quam voluissem morari hic compellar. Archiepiscopus Sipontinus istuc profectus est; ei ut me non vulgariter commendes  
5 vehementer te rogo. Fac intelligat et virtutis studiosum me esse et non mediocriter a te amari. Proderit mihi plurimum commendatio tua, si eiusmodi extiterit qualis ex ore tuo, qui omnium optimus es et doctissimus, pro amicis proficisci consuevit.  
Vale.

## 13

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**

[Perugia], [September of 1474]

Mere days after asking Nicholas of Modruš to recommend him to Niccolò Perotti once Perotti arrives in Fano, Francesco Maturanzio sends a new letter in which he asks of the bishop to write another recommendation to Perotti after the latter leaves Fano. He once again describes the pitiful state of his family affairs and reaffirms his attachment to Nicholas.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fol. 95v (116)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensis.

Superioribus diebus breves litteras ad te dedi, quibus rogavi ut Sipontino Archiepiscopo, urbis meae praesidi, quam diligentissime negotia mea commendares. Quod tamen te facturum tua sponte pro tua in me benivolentia non dubitabam, nihil  
5 te praetermissurum quod ad mei conducat commendationem, Ulysses Fanestrus, tui studiosus et in primis eruditus, mihi rettulit. Scio te meae satisfacisse voluntati. Quod si idem postquam istinc Sipontinus discesserit per litteras egeris, nihil erit quod amplius hac in re desyderare possim.  
Ego domesticis negotiis ita districtus sum. Omnia enim perturbata offendi, ut  
10 interdum respirare vix possim. Pietas, ut res mihi carissimas sic abire non sinam,

me monet. Quod si Angelus frater adesset, qui et aetate superior est et dignitate praestat, non tantum mihi oneris sustinendum esset. Spero tamen propediem fore, ut omni molestia liberatus in Musarum sinum me recipiam. Tu tantisper cogita quid agere me velis. Tuus sum, tuus moriar, in te solo spes mea posita et collocata.  
Bene vale.

15

14

**Francesco Maturanzio to Nicholas of Modruš**  
[Perugia], [1475~1477]

Francesco Maturanzio, acting on request of his fellow citizens in Perugia, pleads with Nicholas of Modruš, now the governor of Spoleto and the surrounding territories, to intervene in a judicial case that is being tried in Cascia, a city under Nicholas's jurisdiction, on behalf of Rosata, a widow from Perugia. The letter is undated, but the reference to Nicholas's office as governor of Spoleto allows us to date it to the period between February of 1475, when he assumed office, and the end of 1477, when he left it to take up in January of 1478 the duties of the vicelegate of Umbria. The tone of the letter suggests that some time has passed since Nicholas assumed the governorship, though seemingly not so long as to prompt Maturanzio to offer a more detailed update on the state of his affairs.

*MS Vat. lat. 5890, fols. 63v–64v (75)*

Nicolao Episcopo Modrusiensi, praesidi Spoletino.

Tua in me, praeses integerrime, beneficia, quae praedicare ego nunquam desino, Perusinis omnibus nota iam sunt. Iidem Franciscum tuum esse mancipium, me tam utilem, tanquam praeclaram servitutem minime aut dissimulante aut detractante probe norunt. Quo fit, ut me pene quottidie adeant plurimi et ex me quaerant, tantane rerum omnium in pontifice Modrusiensi cognitio sit, prudentia, aequitas, continentia. Vicinitas autem provinciae, quicquid istic a te geritur rerum, nobis obscurum esse non patitur. Nec dies est, quo honorifici de te ab illis, qui istinc ad nos veniunt, non habeantur sermones. Quid sciscitantibus respondere ipse soleam, malo te ex aliis intelligere. Illud certe efficio, ut quam de incredibili virtute et bonitate tua acceperunt opinionem, hanc constanter retineant et tueantur. Unum est in quo errare me vehementissime non infitias eo, quod te, quantum res postulat et ego opto, laudare nequeo. Te tamen pro humanitate tua et mansuetudine quicquid ab animo tibi deditissimo fit in bonam partem decet accipere.

Sed si miraris fortasse cur nullas ad te litteras do, illud in causa esse scito quod vereor ne tibi, praesidi occupatissimo et assidue tot provincialibus ius dicenti, molestus sim. Et ne nunc quidem scripsissem, nisi ii quibus omnia debeo, amici scilicet, facere compulissent. Qui ducti mea in te observantia – tibi enim me dedicatum condonatumque iam pridem norunt esse – spem conceperunt non dubiam fore, ut meis apud te precibus locus sit et foeminam et viduam, inopem,

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solam – quod pro tua aequitate sponte facturus fueras, si te adiisset – a me rogatus, quantum licet, adiuves et ab his molestiis in quibus est tandem liberus. Ea est Rosata Perusina, Baldi olim uxor, cui Cassiae, quod castellum provinciae tuae est, cum Iacobutia quadam lis est. Neminem omnino habet a quo sua peragantur negotia.

- 25 Quam vero probae foeminae in iudiciali foro versari honestum sit, latere te non debet, quare eam tuis litteris Cassiano praetori velim commendes diligentissime hortorisque, ut cognita summarie, ut dicunt, causa quod ius atque aequitas postulat pronuntiet et decernat, ne forensibus misera dilationibus amplius crucietur. Quod si, ut spero et opto, per te fiet, mihi in primis gratum erit. Amici enim tantum in te  
30 spei me non frustra collocasse dicent, cum mea commendatione incitatum inopi foeminae favere voluisse intelligent.

Bene vale et foelix, unicum pontificum decus, addo et eruditorum.

Luka Špoljarić

KORESPONDENCIJA FRANCESCA MATURANZIJA  
S NIKOLOM MODRUŠKIM

Ovaj rad se bavi korespondencijom hrvatsko-dalmatinskog biskupa Nikole Modruškog (oko 1425–1480) s uglednim perugianskim humanistom Francescom Maturanzio (1443–1518), koji je u mladosti nešto više od dvije godine, od proljeća 1472. do ljeta 1474, uživao biskupov patronat. Korespondenciju čini četrnaest pisama, od čega trinaest Maturanziovih i jedno Modruškog. Najveći dio pisama, njih deset, pisan je u razdoblju između proljeća 1473. i proljeća 1474, u vrijeme kad je Maturanzio boravio na Rodu, a Modruški u Rimu. Pisma su sačuvana u prijepisu, kao dio Maturanziova epistolara, koji je većinom prepisao ili sam Maturanzio ili njemu bliska osoba, a koji se danas čuva u Vatikanskoj knjižnici pod signaturom MS Vat. lat. 5890. Rad analizira korespondenciju Maturanzija i Modruškog rekonstruirajući njihov klijentsko-patronatski odnos.

Francesco Maturanzio postao je dijelom pratnje Nikole Modruškog u proljeće 1472. u Veneciji, u vrijeme kad je Modruški u gradu nadgledao izgradnju papinskih galija koje je trebao voditi do Brindisija kako bi se ondje našao s vrhovnim zapovjednikom papinskog brodovlja, kardinalom Olivierom Carafom. Papinsko je brodovlje zajedno s mletačkim i napuljskim trebalo sudjelovati u pomorskoj ekspediciji protiv Osmanlija, koordinirajući pritom svoje akcije s Uzun Hasanom, vladarom Turkmena Bijele ovce i glavnim rivalom Osmanlija na Istoku. Maturanzio je Modruškog pratio u Grčku kako bi ondje ostao učiti starogrčki jezik. Tijekom njihove plovidbe sastavio je prvu zbirku pohvalnih pjesama u čast svojega patrona, koju je po svemu sudeći predao Modruškom pri njegovu povratku u Italiju nakon završetka ekspedicije u jesen 1472. godine. Posvetni primjerak nije sačuvan, no prijepis pjesama te zbirke iz 1472. godine nalazi se u rukopisu koji sadrži Maturanziovo pjesništvo iz različitih razdoblja života, MS Ottob. lat. 2011 u Vatikanskoj knjižnici.

Maturanzio, koji je na Rodu učio grčki s metropolitom Metrofanom, Modruškom je počeo pisati pisma u proljeće 1473. U tim pismima, u kojima svoj odnos s Modruškim redovito formulira kao odnos klijenta i patrona, posebno se ističu dvije teme: vijesti i molbe privatne prirode; izvještaji o političkoj situaciji na Istoku. Od pisama opsegom i ambicijom posebno se ističe *Epist.* 5, pisana 26. kolovoza 1473, koje je Maturanzio uobličio kao historiografski komentar uz politička događanja iz ljeta 1473, *huius aetatis commentaria*, kako ga dvaput naziva. U svojim ciceronovski stiliziranim pismima Maturanzio se pokazuje kao vrsni latinist koji se vješto oslanja na citate i aluzije na djela antičkih autora, kako latinskih tako i grčkih. Na taj niz od devet pisama pisanih s Roda (*Epist.* 1–2 i 4–10) Modruški je odgovorio samo jednom, no, čini se, više zbog otežane komunikacije, nego možebitne nezainteresiranosti za Maturanziovo stanje. To jedino pismo Modruš-

kog (*Epist.* 3) otkriva, naime, kako se Modruški i u Rimu osjećao odgovornim za mladoga humanista te prikazuje biskupa kao relativno utjecajnog posrednika u papinskoj kuriji koji se po povratku s ekspedicije osjećao frustriranim zbog neispunjenih ambicija.

Maturanzio se u Italiju vratio u ljeto 1474. Svoje putovanje je detaljno opisao u pismu kojim je iz Vicenze obavijestio Modruškog o svom povratku (*Epist.* 11). Na poziv Modruškog Maturanzio ga je posjetio u Fanu, gdje je biskup u to vrijeme služio kao upravitelj grada. Nadajući se da će konačno postati punopravnim članom njegova kućanstva, Maturanzio je Modruškom tom prilikom posvetio novu zbirku pjesama, koja je pored drugog ciklusa pohvalnih pjesama uključivala i ciklus pjesama posvećenih blagdanima Djevice Marije. Te se pjesme iz 1474. godine danas nalaze u istom rukopisu Maturanziove poezije kao i one iz 1472. godine, a zajedno s korespondencijom jasno svjedoče o velikim nadama koje je perugianski humanist polagao u Modruškog. Iako Modruški u to vrijeme nije u svojem kućanstvu imao mjesta za još jednog humanista pored svojeg tajnika Bernardina Bennatija, ipak je Maturanziju pomogao da dobije mjesto u kućanstvu sipontskog nadbiskupa i novoimenovanog upravitelja njegove rodne Perugie Niccolòda Perottija (*Epist.* 12–13), kojem je Maturanzio sljedeće tri godine služio kao tajnik i učitelj njegovih nećaka. Ljeto 1474. tako je označilo kraj labavog klijentsko-patronatskog odnosa Maturanzija i Modruškog, no humanist se biskupu javio i kasnije, u vrijeme kad je Modruški bio upravitelj Perugii susjednog Spoleta (između 1475. i 1477), moleći ga da intervenira u jednom sudskom slučaju koji se vodio na području njegove jurisdikcije (*Epist.* 14). O prirodi njihovih kasnijih kontakata, do kojih je moralo doći za vrijeme kad je Modruški živio u Perugii kao vicelegat cijele provincije Umbrije (1478), zasad nemamo izvora.

U radu se donosi još nekoliko nepoznatih ili manje poznatih podataka o samom Nikoli Modruškom, ali i o drugim humanistički obrazovanim hrvatsko-dalmatinskim klericima i redovnicima koji su boravili u Italiji. Svrća se pozornost na dosad nepoznato pismo iz siječnja 1474. godine rapskog biskupa Leonella Chiericatija koji je prisustvovao pogrebu kardinala Pietra Riarija te se zatim pohvalno izrazio o pogrebnom govoru Nikole Modruškog za kardinala. Upozorava se na pismo Giovannija Lorenzija iz 1485. godine, sačuvano u istom rukopisu kao Chiericatijevo, u kojem se govori o bijesnoj reakciji Alviza Cipika, hrvatsko-dalmatinskog klerika i humanista na papinskoj kuriji, na činjenicu da po smrti kardinala Pietra Foscarija nije naveden u njegovoj oporuci: Cipiko navodno nije samo klevetao pokojnog kardinala po Rimu nego je čak htio i poništiti njegovu oporuku. Naposljetku, ističe se i veza Francesca Maturanzija s Ivanom Polikarpom Severitanom kojem je Maturanzio 1510. u Perugi napisao epigram o podrijetlu rimskog gramatičara Donata.

U prilogu rada donosi se izdanje korespondencije Maturanzija i Modruškog. Uzimajući u obzir kvalitetu prijepisa i mogućnost da je posrijedi Maturanziova ruka, u izdanju je zadržana ortografija predložka, pri čemu se ispravljaju tek malo-



brojne greške u prijepisu. Uz svako pismo naznačeni su mjesto i vrijeme nastanka (ako nisu izričito datirana, taj je podatak u uglatim zagradama), pridodan je kratak opis sadržaja pisma i naposljetku referencija na raspon folija u rukopisu i poredak među pismima epistolara. Pisma su podijeljena na paragrafe, redovi su obrojčani, a uz kritički aparat pisma prati i aparat izvora.

**Ključne riječi:** renesansni humanizam, epistolografija, patronat, Rod, Rim, Francesco Maturanzio, Nikola Modruški

