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Wendy Bracewell

MAN PROPOSES, GOD DISPOSES: HANIBAL LUCIĆ'S POETIC EPISTLE OF 1522

*Wendy Bracewell, Professor Emeritus of Southeast European History, School of Slavonic
and East European Studies, University College London*
w.bracewell@ucl.ac.uk  orcid.org/0000-0003-3254-9666

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This article considers Hanibal Lucić's 1522 poetic epistle to Jeronim Martinčić (Knjižica od tvoje pameti sabrana) with the aim of identifying its thematic unity and some of its sources. Although this epistle has often been treated as a typical example of a 'familiar letter' dealing with a great variety of topics in different registers, the discussion advances the argument that it is in fact held together by a series of reflections on divine intervention, fate, and human will. It speculates about the influence of Pico della Mirandola's work on Lucić's treatment of astrology (particularly in relation to the Great Conjunction of 1524) and identifies the source of his remarkably accurate description of the tactics employed at Rhodes as the eyewitness accounts sent to Venice by way of Hvar during the course of the siege (interesting not only in their parallels with the epistle's text but even more so in the way Lucić differs from them in his presentation). An appendix includes an English translation of Lucić's epistle in the hope of making the work of this accomplished and versatile poet more easily accessible to Anglophone readers.¹

¹ This article had its genesis in conversations with Prof. Ivan Lupić under the aegis of the University of Rijeka's Visiting Professor scheme; I am very grateful to the University for this opportunity. Prof. Lupić's comments on the importance of the religious context

Keywords: *Hanibal Lucić; Renaissance verse epistle; the Great Conjunction of 1524; siege of Rhodes*

Sometime late in 1522, Hanibal Lucić composed a long letter in verse to a friend in Split, beginning “*Knjižica od tvoje pameti sabrana*”.² Lucić, then in his mid-thirties, was a patrician of Hvar, a landholder with properties on his native island and on Vis, who would go on to serve Hvar in various official capacities. But, at the same time, his background had fitted him for more than the management of an estate and the routine administrative career of a Dalmatian patrician: he was a well-read humanist with a long-term habit of writing poetry. He traded poetic epistles with a wide circle of acquaintances in Dalmatia, among them Jeronim Martinčić of Split, the recipient of the letter considered here.

Lucić’s missive was a long one (280 dodecasyllabic lines), evidently written in response to a complaint from Martinčić that he hadn’t heard from Lucić in a while and asking for news. Lucić obliged his friend in full, with a poetic epistle that followed all the rhetorical requirements of the literary letter: greetings and recapitulation of the correspondence; assurances as to the state of their friendship; a response to issues raised in his friend’s letter; various pieces of news, ranging from personal matters to those of wider import, including a detailed account of the Ottoman siege of Rhodes that was then underway; his plans to visit Split; an exchange of greetings with others; and a final valediction.

This composition has been taken as typical example of the ‘familiar epistle’, especially in the way that it treats a variety of topics in a range of

for Lucić’s treatment of the Hvar rebellion and his mention of the 1524 Great Flood prognostications provided the starting point for this analysis. I cannot but see his encouragement to write this essay as generous, as was his unsparing scrutiny of my translation, which spared me many errors: “*Na tom ti zahvaljam i ako t’ ni dosti / izvit ki zgar pravljam, molim te oprosti.*”

² In the edition of Lucić’s works published in Venice in 1556 this epistle is placed first in the collection of letters to various friends (Lucić 1556: 49–54); the references in this article refer to the poem’s line numbers in the edition in the *Stari pisci hrvatski* series (Lucić 1874). The translations of all the quotations that follow are my own; in the case of Lucić’s poem they are taken from my translation printed here in the appendix. Readers may wish to scan the text of the poem before reading this exegesis.

registers.³ It does this with an air of spontaneity and a studied negligence that hides the poetic virtuosity necessary to carry this off with aplomb. But it has not previously been noticed that, for all the poem's apparent jumble of topics, it demonstrates thematic unity: each separate section considers the relationship between human will and divine influence in dealing with the afflictions suffered by the poet, his friend, and the wider world they inhabit.

After the usual preliminaries, the letter begins with a pair of personal ills, treated through the themes of poetic inspiration and love's travails, conventionally governed by a pair of relatively minor deities. The first misfortune is that of Lucić's poetic inadequacy, expressed in a characteristic show of self-deprecation.⁴ He responds to Martinčić's complaint that he hasn't sent him any verse with his own lament: Phoebus Apollo and his muses have turned against him, denying him access to the Hippocrene spring, the source of poetic inspiration. Thus the verses that he is writing won't win him a reputation, but his love and respect for his friend cause him to toil on, ant-like, with his task (27–34, 39–40). However, by the end of the epistle the reader will have seen that this struggle to write has achieved its aim: the poem is much more than merely workmanlike, so perhaps Apollo's divine inspiration is less important than effort and determination. Here, as in other poems, Lucić draws on familiar rhetorical and mythological materials, but reworks them as vehicles for his argument.

³ Beginning with Ivan Milčetić: "This is simply a letter – in verse form. Here Lucić writes about anything and everything" (Milčetić 1882: 39). Later scholars have read this epistle for its formal qualities or have addressed its separate topics individually, primarily the Hvar uprising or the siege of Rhodes (e.g., Brezak-Stamać 2016: 116–18; Švelec 1998: 31–3; Dukić 2004: 53).

⁴ This is usually interpreted as aesthetically-based self-criticism, e.g. Franičević 1983: 374–76. In contrast, Ivan Lupić argues that this is a merely rhetorical "act of self-effacement" behind which one can nevertheless see "a poet fully conscious of his own superior skill" (Lupić 2018: 22). To elaborate on his point, so important for grasping the workings of Lucić's verse, such self-deprecation is the sixteenth-century equivalent of the humble-brag, an only ostensibly diffident statement that is intended to draw attention to something of which one is proud. In other epistles, Lucić deprecates his correspondent's praise of his verse, thus allowing him to repeat it for all to hear (the pretence of a private letter means he can do this with decorum), e.g., Lucić 1874: 276, *Tve pisni, s kih će moć*, 35–39; 282–83, *Nigdar jelin tako ne priniče k rici*, 3–4, 19–22. Here it is the completed work that gives the lie to his false modesty.

Lucić then turns to other travails, congratulating his friend on having overcome the influence that love – in the form of the boy-god Eros or Love – has had over his heart, and having done so by his own effort of will, rending Love's reins and plucking out his arrow (61–64). In consequence, the poet thinks, Love – presented in personified form, with the conventional attributes of wings, bow and arrows – will have lost all his power over hapless lovers (67–72). Lucić nevertheless suggests that in matters of love human action has its own power: when he sings in the dark, Martinčić will still beguile the girls who hear him with the 'amorous ribbon' of his voice ("*sve trakom obužiš ljuvenim*"), and they in turn are such that they could entice even the great god Jove into folly (75–80). According to Lucić, his friend's determination to escape the influence of Eros is the more commendable because of his previous successes in this field, so that the greater the temptation posed by love's pleasures, the more glory he accrues by resisting: "The wider leads the path to sin, / the greater praise your efforts win" ("*A toko veću trud slavu tvoj izvodi, / koko je put na blud širi ki te vodi,*" 91–92). But the mention of '*blud*', meaning both sensual pleasure and sexual sin, is a reminder that love's games carry with them a spiritual danger. The observation paves the way for Lucić's supplication to God to keep his friend safe from the god of Love: "May God confirm your heartfelt plans / and keep you ever from Love's hands" ("*Bog ti tej odluke potvrdi tako da / Ljubavi u ruke ne dojdeš nikada,*" 93–94). Eros apparently has greater powers than does Apollo, since it requires God's assistance to ensure his friend's chaste resolutions, while Lucić does not need to call on God's aid in composing his verse.

God's providence – his intervention into human affairs – gives meaning to the next section describing Lucić's day-to-day life, framed in terms of coping with the consequences for his estate of the popular uprising that had caused destruction across Hvar in 1510–14: he describes himself as fully occupied with mending buildings and replanting his ruined vineyards (106–10). Scholarly attention has focused on the line "*od mnoštva koje dil razbora ne ima*" – the destruction he was striving to repair had been caused by a 'multitude' or 'mob' "altogether without reason" (108) – usually seeing in it an expression of Lucić's patrician lack of sympathy for the commoners who had taken up arms in their pursuit of rights.⁵ Whether an explicitly

⁵ See, with slightly varying emphases, Rački 1874: xli–xlii; Matić 1970: 175; Kolumbić 1977: 442; Gabelić 1988: 534.

class-based interpretation of the phrase can be sustained is open to question, particularly if the phrase is taken as referring more generally to the political chaos caused by the rebellion.⁶ More to the point for my argument is Lucić's emphasis on his hard work in repairing and maintaining his estates and his concern in this regard lest God's acts of retribution be repeated: "These pains, I trust, won't go astray / save God send some new judgment day" ("I ufam, ne će trud zaludu bit ovi, / višnji bog ako sud ne pošlje ki novi", 117–18). The reference to a *new* act of judgement implies that the uprising and the destruction associated with it could not be solely attributed to the irrational acts of the mob but were the consequence of a punishment that God had inflicted on Hvar and, further, that the fruits of Lucić's labour would depend on God's future mercy, without which any effort would be in vain. In this connection, the phrase "I suffer in order not to suffer" ("mučim za ne mučit", 116) implies that Lucić's toils, as well as his rejection of luxury and idleness, are intended to forestall God's disapproval. God thus intervenes in human affairs to pass judgment, in this case presumably as the result of their sins – though precisely what those might have been in Hvar's case is left open in his poem. The religious rituals that bookended the uprising implied that Hvar's fundamental sin was the breaking of the feudal contract between commoners and patricians, from the collective public acts of repentance following the discovery of blood running from the cross on which the plebeian conspirators had vowed to kill all the nobles in 1510 to the mass of reconciliation in 1515, in which both social groups forgave each other's trespasses, thus encompassing both patrician and plebeian breaches of their mutual obligations.⁷ Under such a contract, commoners were bound to service and obedience, but nobles had the reciprocal responsibility of ensuring the protection of commoner lives and livelihoods and justice under the law. In Lucić's encomium to Dubrovnik, *U pohvalu grada Dubrovnika* (Lucić 1874: 261–65), it is the noble rulers' attention to this social contract that allows the city to flourish. We can infer that Lucić saw the need for patricians like himself to help maintain God's grace on Hvar by adhering to the same obligations.

⁶ I owe this point to Ivan Lupić. The fact that Venetian commanders brought in to quell the rebellion and their troops also engaged in indiscriminate violence further undercuts a solely class-based interpretation of the phrase.

⁷ Zaninović-Rumora & Bracanović 2014: 38–42, 201–02.

From God's influence on Hvar, Lucić moves to the influence of the heavens, discussing a great flood being prepared by the stars and, more generally, the power of the heavens to affect affairs on earth. This passage apparently refers to the prophecy of a universal deluge to be caused by a Great Conjunction of all the planets in the watery constellation of Pisces in February 1524. The prediction was widely disseminated and caused considerable trepidation across Europe.⁸ Lucić might well have seen one of the catastrophic prognostications by Luca Guarico – perhaps that published in Venice in 1522.⁹ In general, however, the Venetians seem to have been sceptical about this prophecy, and Lucić's own attitude seems to mirror this pattern.¹⁰ But Lucić's subsequent discussion of astrology and astrologers suggests that another prompt to his thoughts may have come from Pico della Mirandola's attack on the theory and methods of astrological prediction, his posthumously published *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (1496), and the controversies that it provoked, given a further impetus as the Great Conjunction of 1524 approached. Pico's polemic against astrology had several aspects: while recognising the achievements of astronomers, he refuted the foundational principle of astrology on the basis that celestial influences were too general and too weak to serve as the basis for accurate predictions (and in any case, the predictions of astrologers were rarely accurate); decried astrological techniques as based on arbitrary conceits and not drawn from observable nature (and pointed out that the astrologers disagreed among themselves about basic tenets); and argued that, worst of all, astrology was contrary to Christian belief because it hindered people from exercising their divine gift of free will.¹¹ In the same way, Lucić seems sceptical about the competence of the stargazers whose accomplishments he lists (it's noticeable that they are not characterised anywhere as wise or learned). He sums up the achievements of astronomy in predicting eclipses and understanding the seasons (125–35), which give grounds for believing the astrologers' catastrophic predictions. "Our fears are therefore genuine, / when they [the astrologers] announce some evil sign" ("*Ter nije brezredno da nas strah obide / kada nam ko zledno*

⁸ Zambelli 1986a.

⁹ Zambelli 1986b: 239–63.

¹⁰ Niccoli 1990: 152–53, 156–57.

¹¹ On Pico's polemic and on the subsequent controversies see, most recently, Akopyan 2020.

zlamen'je povide," 135–36) – or, to follow Lucić's words more closely, such fears are not without foundation. He then considers the implications of the astrologers' arguments that natural disasters are not just foretold but predetermined by the stars. Man's exertions – and Lucić's hard work on his estate – would therefore be meaningless: "what use is property, why drudge?" (*iman'je što prudi, trudimo se čemu?*" 138). The implication is that a complete knowledge of the stars' influence on men's fates would forestall any act of human will. But here Lucić reassures himself and his readers in a way that is close to the arguments made by Giovanni Pico: it might be possible to know something of astral qualities, but the human mind can neither identify nor comprehend them all in their complexity, and thus we need not take the astrologers' prognostications as inevitable. Here it sounds very much as though Lucić is responding to Book Seven, Chapter VIII of the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, in which Pico argues that "knowledge of all the stars would be necessary to understand perfectly the fatal constellation" but the astrologers, by their own admission, know neither the number nor the natures of all the stars. Even the smallest stars have their own power, thus "ignorance of a single star can prevent the truth of a prediction, not to mention the almost innumerable number that astrologers overlook without realizing it".¹² Lucić concludes that human sight cannot perceive the qualities of all the stars, including the smallest, and so perhaps they will not bring about the wonders the astrologers foretell – but also suggests that the mysteries of fate and the cosmos are beyond the reach of human comprehension (143–46):

Brez broja jest inih od kojih nije moć	But human sight can't fix degrees
vidin'jem ljudi svih najmanju vidit moć,	to stars in their infinities –
koje će protivit onim da ne stvore	those will, perhaps, help to dispel
taj čuda, možebit, koja se govore.	all those mishaps which some foretell.

In his reflections on poetry's divine inspiration and the power of love, Lucić adapted conventional poetic materials to fit his own purposes. Here too we can see Lucić transforming the raw material of his reading about cosmology to suit the themes of his poem. However, while Lucić gives reason to doubt the astrologers' claims to identify the effects of the stars on

¹² Pico 1952, 206–15, *apud* 208, 210.

nature's equilibrium and on human lives, he leaves open the question to what degree human agency and God's providential intervention have any purchase on world events. The next section of the epistle serves as a further elaboration of this question, considering all three problems – of human effort, fate, and divine providence – with reference to the Ottoman siege of the fortified city of Rhodes, just then underway.

Lucić's description of the course of the siege and particularly the tactics employed by each side is remarkably detailed and accurate. It compares closely to the eyewitness reports published shortly after the fall of the island by Jacobus Fontanus and Jacques de Bourbon, but it seems unlikely that these were his sources, since his poem concludes with the fate of Rhodes still undecided, while their works were not published until 1524 and 1525 respectively.¹³ This also suggests that Lucić completed the poem before the news of Rhodes' surrender in December 1522 reached Hvar.

Lucić tells us that he had all the latest news – unlike his friends in the out-of-the-way corner that was Split – because he lived in a busy port frequented by sailors (152). Scholars have assumed from this remark that he simply reported the information that he received about Rhodes in conversations with the passengers or crews of the ships that arrived in Hvar.¹⁴ Some information about the siege did indeed circulate in oral form, though the rumours that were passed from hand to hand were much vaguer and less accurate than Lucić's account.¹⁵ A much more detailed source for news from Rhodes were the letters and dispatches sent to Venice by way of the galleys coming from the Mediterranean theatre of war. Hvar was the main

¹³ Fontanus 1524; de Bourbon 1525. As early as 1874 Franjo Rački remarked on the close correspondence between Lucić's epistle and the printed sources, relying on the details from Fontanus and Bourbon given in von Hammer-Purgstall's *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches* (Rački 1874: xlv), but this hint doesn't seem to have been followed up by subsequent scholars. Edelgard Albrecht also expressed surprise at "how accurately he describes all events" and went so far as to cite, among other sources, a fragment from Marin Sanudo from a secondary source, though apparently without examining the original evidence (Albrecht 1965: 9).

¹⁴ Albrecht (1965: 13) and, following him, Dukić (2004: 53) assume that Lucić received his information orally.

¹⁵ Marin Sanudo collated a good deal of oral information about the siege from non-eyewitness sources (often designated as '*a bocha*' or qualified in similar ways), but these reports are much less detailed and accurate than Lucić's poem (see e.g., Sanuto 1892: 413, 492, 500–01, 534).

staging post for the Venetian fleet in the Adriatic, and important news was often specifically directed there, to be posted on to Venice by fast brigantine.¹⁶ Throughout the summer and fall of 1522 there was a constant flow of information about the siege, usually summary reports of news and rumours, but also letters from eyewitness correspondents on Rhodes.

Three collections of letters of this sort are of interest here. The first is a packet of letters dated 26 June 1522, arriving in Venice on 30 July by way of Corfu, with letters from the Grand Master on Rhodes addressed to the Venetian Signoria, as well as to the rulers of Spain and France, announcing the Ottoman declaration of war and arrival of the Ottoman fleet before Rhodes, but also including a copy of a letter from a Venetian shipowner, Zuan Antonio Bonaldi, about the preparations for the siege, and a summary of news about the Ottoman movements from Marco Minio, Duke of Crete (Sanuto 1892: 385–90). A second packet of letters dated 26 and 27 August 1522, written by Gabriele Tadini da Martinengo to Geronimo Corner, *procuratore* on Crete, and another from Bonaldi addressed to his uncle in Venice, with a cover letter by the *Capitano Generale* in Crete, arrived in Venice on 21 October, brought by the Venetian *Bailo* in Constantinople by way of Hvar (Sanuto 1892: 487–91). The third packet brought three eyewitness accounts, all written on 10 October 1522, again by Tadini and Bonaldi, plus a third by Marco Bagnolo; these had been brought to Crete by a brother knight of St John, and then sent on to Venice with covering letters from the *Capitano Generale* in Crete, arriving in Venice by way of Hvar on 17 November (Sanuto 1892: 511–18, 520). Immediately after these last reports arrived the whole city was reported to have been full of the news that they contained, and the Venetian *Collegio* was said to be anxious about the outcome of the siege, particularly if no help were to arrive.¹⁷ We know that the last two bundles of dispatches passed through Hvar. Although this is not specifically noted, it is very likely that the first did too. In each case, even before the letters had reached Venice, they also seem to have passed through Hanibal Lucić's hands, judging by the way his poetic epistle reflects their contents. Precisely how he had sight of them is not certain, and probably doesn't much matter. These were not secret dispatches, since the

¹⁶ News from Rhodes passing through Hvar (Sanuto 1892: 389, 487, 508, 612); the different routes by which news travelled to Venice in the early sixteenth century (de Zanche 2000).

¹⁷ Sanuto 1892: 519.

information they contained spread quickly once in Venice. It is most likely that such important news was shared with the Hvar Rector and Great Council, of which Lucić was a member; it is also possible that he had access to the letters through his acquaintance with the Venetian officials and galley commanders anchoring in Hvar.

We can check the way his poem corresponds to these dispatches thanks to that indefatigable Venetian newshound Marin Sanudo, whose diaries contain – along with much else – his copies of the letters about Rhodes that arrived in Venice in 1522 and early 1523. Even though during these years Sanudo was ill and downhearted by his failure to win political office, to the point of considering abandoning his enormous project of compilation, he nonetheless amassed a considerable amount of material on the siege.¹⁸ In the letters transcribed by Sanudo we can find details of the tactics of Rhodes' attackers and defenders that closely match the account given in Lucić's poem. We read of the enormous ditch and embankment dug by the Ottomans that allowed them shelter from the defenders' fire; the cannonades that shook the earth, as well as the tremendous number of arms, from pistols to artillery, being used; the flags planted on the walls by the attackers; the subterranean mines packed with explosives and the defenders' countermines; the use of Ottoman captives for dangerous labour, as well as the active participation of women and children in the defence of the fortress.¹⁹

We can see the sort of material that Lucić must have had to hand in extracts from the letters by Gabriele Tadini da Martinengo, the noted engineer and subject of Venice who had defied orders to go to the defence of Rhodes, where he took the cross of the Knights Hospitaller:

At present from every side we are tried by a great fury of artillery, and by very great mines and trenches, and are menaced by their wish to fill the fosses with earth and wood, nonetheless we meet all their provisions most robustly, whether in response to the batteries, or the mines, or the trenches, and with the aid of our lord God I hope we will prevail robustly. [...] The enemies batter the fosse with their

¹⁸ On Marin Sanudo (often Italianised as Marino Sanuto), his diaries, and his career, see Finlay (1980: 585–98).

¹⁹ Sanuto 1892: 469, 517, 518, 569, earthworks and fosse; 514, 515, flags planted on walls; 489, 490, 513, 515, subterranean mines; 385–86, 514, 569, 570, labour of captives, and of women and children.

small artillery and cross it ever more often; they have done me much damage, but that which they batter by day we remake and repair by night. [...] There is no hour at which they sleep or take rest, since they never cease work by day or night, with such a number of people that they cannot be counted. [...] For four days I have been tracing a mine dug in the name of the Lord Turk against us, and today at 20 hours I discovered it, and I have burnt and drowned the sappers and their company (Sanuto 1892: 488–489; my translation).²⁰

The letters from Zuan Antonio Bonaldi, who had volunteered his ship and services for the defence of Rhodes, have further details of the fighting, once again mirrored in Lucić's account:

Item, they mounted some banners [on the walls], which with God's favour over two hours were repelled with shame and slaughter. We repair with barrels, tables and earth the place where the traverse is not yet finished, standing exposed to small artillery fire, from which 20 of our men died. [...] They come from the encampment, taking it in turns and never ceasing their work, so that they have carried [...] a mountain of earth, which overlooks all of the [Christian] territory, an incredible thing. From that mountain they have constantly been bombarding the fosse [with rocks] which they carry from at least 4 miles away (Sanuto 1892: 515–17; my translation).²¹

Having read through these dispatches, it's impossible to read Lucić's account without hearing them echo through his verses. In similar terms to Tadini and Bonaldi, he describes the ditch and mound of earth that overlooked the town, and which sheltered the Ottoman artillery (185–94, 199–202); the enemy's flags planted on the wall (218); the unceasing work of the sappers digging mines and attempting to fill in Rhodes' defensive fosse (219–22); the constant effort to rebuild breaches with whatever comes to hand (239–42); the countermines that vented the explosives laid by the enemy, and the underground fires set by the defenders (243–48), among many other details.

The speculation that Lucić had these letters to hand while writing his epistle is supported by one phrase of Bonaldi's in particular, apparently the

²⁰ On the siege tactics used at Rhodes, see DeVries (2022).

²¹ Bonaldi had diverted his shipload of wine to Rhodes just before the start of the siege; subsequently he was granted admission to the Order as a brother knight and a pension (O'Malley 2022: 201).

direct inspiration for a pair of Lucić's couplets. He describes the effort that the Ottomans put into clearing the ground and digging their earthworks: "there is not a handful of earth from that side of the mountain that they have not turned under and over, never ceasing for an hour."²² Or, as Lucić has it (187–90):

odonde ter počan, zemlju ku kopaju,	From there they dug away the dirt,
prida se meću van, a za trud ne haju,	they swept it up, and spared no hurt,
tako da zemlje prah nije tuj ostao	till not a crumb remained at last
ki jim ni po rukah tisućkrat propao.	that through their hands had not been passed.

It's tempting to trace other phrases of Lucić's directly to these letters as well and to connect, for instance, a line from Bonaldi's letter of June 1522, hoping for divine aid against "this dragon that thinks to devour the people of Christendom", with Lucić's description of Suleiman as a dragon determined to swallow up Rhodes (260).²³ But in any case, the many other parallels are so close that Lucić's exposure to these letters, particularly those from Bonaldi and Tadini, seems certain.

It has already been noticed that Lucić's account of the siege is unusually even-handed in his treatment of the Ottoman attack on Rhodes.²⁴ What he presents is a balance of very similar forces. Trade to and from Istanbul is hindered by the raiding of the 'corsair of Rhodes' (scarcely the holy war against the enemies of the faith that the Knights of the Order tried to project), which Lucić's verses equate with Ottoman control of the straits and their similar raids by land. "No cargo comes to Tsargrad's port, / corsairs from Rhodes cut all trade short; / while pagan hands hold tightly

²² "... non è palmo di terra di qua del monte che i ne habi voltato soto sopra, non cessando una hora" (Sanuto 1892: 517).

²³ Sanuto 1892: 387. It's also tempting to link Lucić's remark "Don't poke your face around the wall / you'll lose your teeth to a shrewd ball" ("*Tako da ne kloni glavu iza miri / Tko ne će čas oni da zube ociri*," 213–14) to the description of Tadini da Martinengo losing an eye to a pistol shot while looking out through a wall (Sanuto 1892: 569); and to Bonaldi's report of the defenders' vow to fight their besiegers down to their very teeth ("*combater fino con li denti ad honor de la fede del nostro Signor missier Jesu Christo*") (Sanuto 1892: 517). The phrase '*mostrare i denti*' (to show one's teeth) was a synonym for 'to die' in Italian, so this may have set up the association in Lucić's mind (*Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* 1724: I, 361).

²⁴ Dukić 2004: 53.

closed / those narrow straits [...] / Nor do they cease to raid by land / for slaves and goods that come to hand” (“*Jer trge ke brodi k Carigradu vode, / čestokrat nahodi gusarin iz Rode / ter niktör ne more od poganske ruke / ono tiskno more broditi brez muke [...] k tomu brez pristan'ja u kopno zahode, / robja ter iman'ja razlika izvode,*” 169–72, 175–76). While the Ottoman volunteers are depicted as motivated by hopes of paradise, ultimately the reasons Lucić gives for the Ottoman attack on Rhodes are a mix of pragmatism and honour: “The Rhodiots all flaunt their fame / the angry Turks must bear the shame” (“*Tim ti se oholit budu Rodiöti, / a Turci odolit ne mogu sramoti,*” 177–78). Nor are the Christian defenders of Rhodes presented as motivated by their faith or as placing their hope in the miracles that allegedly preserved Rhodes in the previous siege. Instead they battle with all the means that come to hand to counter their attackers, meeting each stratagem with their own counteraction. In contrast to the way the earlier siege of 1480 was treated by the Order of St. John’s propaganda, Lucić does not present the events on Rhodes as part of a wider clash between good and evil figured in terms of Christianity versus Islam.²⁵ Instead it is a strategic conflict between well-matched forces.

Although Lucić reworks much of the material in the Rhodes letters, one thing that is missing from his account compared to those sent by the eyewitnesses is the frequent profession of faith in God’s providence and the invocations of divine aid. It’s a striking difference. For instance Bonaldi at every opportunity expresses his faith in God’s help and support (*spiero in Dio, con lo aiuto de Dio, mediante el nostro Signor Dio, che volesse Dio*, etc.), with occasional longer statements, such as this passage, written just as the Ottoman ships arrived before Rhodes on 26 June 1522:

Nothing else is lacking except the grace of our Lord God, who wants to help us, from whom we hope for his aid against this dragon who intends to devour the Christian people. I can’t say anything else, except be cheerful and don’t doubt us in any way. *Unum est*, we will have to do with renegade dogs against our faith, and we fight for the faith of Christ, where if it will please His Lordship to take our souls, let them be saved (Sanuto 1892: 387; my translation).

²⁵ For instance, Caoursin (1480); the agenda of the Order in such literature is discussed in Vann & Kagay (2015).

As the siege progressed, such professions of faith became more desperate, with Bonaldi voicing the defenders' defiance and their hope of God's aid, vowing to fight to the last "for the honour of the faith of our lord Jesus Christ".²⁶ The effect is powerful, even when we realize that these letters were written to add emotional weight to the pleas from Rhodes for assistance from Europe's Christian princes. But there is nothing of these expressions of fear or faith in Lucić's account, where instead the poet shows the protagonists as evenly matched, and Rhodes' fate as hanging in a balance between the two sides. But this doesn't mean that, for Lucić, the outcome would necessarily be decided by human striving.

Lucić concludes his description of the siege and his assessment of the Sultan's state of mind with a rather odd image: "But if that thread he [the Sultan] pulls runs out / the heart of Christendom's wrenched out" (*"Ako se izmota taj konac ki vuče, / srce iz života krstjanstvu izvuče,"* 261–62). How can a thread that unreels at the same time wrench out Christendom's heart? But if that thread is understood as the one spun by the Fates, then the image resolves into an elegant paradox: if Rhodes' fate runs out, then at the same time that loose thread tears out Christendom's core. That outcome, however, is not yet decided – whether by predetermined fate or by the efforts of the opposing sides. Lucić leaves the final resolution of the siege and all that depends on it in God's hands: if God doesn't allow this thread to come undone but instead withholds this morsel from the Ottomans, then that would bestow greater glory on Rhodes than did its Colossus, one of the ancient world's marvels (263–66).

<p>Ako l' Bog ne pusti, neg mu taj iskinie zalogaj iz usti pri neg ga pozine, veću slavu sto krat Rodi će dati toj neg kološ ki porat prikočil biše njoj.</p>	<p>If God should halt this and withdraw this morsel from the dragon's maw, then would this exploit's lasting fame put Rhodes' Colossus quite to shame.</p>
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The Lord's intervention on behalf of Christendom would thus be a greater cause for wonder than any work of man's hands.

Lucić makes Rhodes, in this way, into a test case for the problem of fate, man's will, and God's providence. The historical irony, of course, is that in the end Rhodes' destiny depended as much on human inaction as human

²⁶ Sanuto 1892: 517.

effort. Ultimately it was the failure of the Christian princes to send relief to Rhodes that led to the surrender of the city by the Grand Master in December of 1522. As Gabriele Tadini subsequently wrote in a bitter dispatch to Venice: “if only a relief of 1000 men had come throughout September or October, Rhodes would never have been lost. But may it be with God. The poor Religion [the Order of the Knights of St John] was abandoned not only by all the Christian princes but by its own”.²⁷ However, by writing just before this point was reached, Lucić could conclude his poem with his own expression of faith and hope in the power of the Almighty to intervene in the affairs of men, on Rhodes as elsewhere.

His reflection on Rhodes' fate comes as the culmination of a series of reflections on human agency in relation to the influence on man's affairs of supernatural forces, whether poetic inspiration, the rule of love, astrological determinism, or divine providence. He moves from the lesser deities of Apollo and Eros to God himself, and from relatively minor afflictions of the spirit to matters that affect his community and the wider world. In the end we are left to wonder whether the Lord will indeed intervene in a matter that affects all of Christendom. But Lucić leaves us in no doubt that God *can* do so, both in an affair of such import and in much more personal and individual affairs. He tells us so, in a characteristically indirect way, in a promise at the end of his letter, one that at first sight appears completely banal: he will come to Split to visit his friends if, God willing, his health doesn't fail him. Or, more precisely: “You may soon expect me there, if God, who is able to, does not curtail my health” (“*Da me češ uskore na ta kraj dočkati, / Ako Bog, ki more, zdravje mi ne skrati,*” 269–70). If this epistle had an epigraph, it would surely be the phrase from Thomas à Kempis's *De imitatione Christi*: “Man proposes, but God disposes.”

It is all too easy, from the vantage of this secular age, to skim over references to God's judgement or professions of faith in God's providence in early modern literature. For the most part we no longer expect divine intervention in the affairs of the world, though the continuing popularity of astrology seems to indicate some residual faith in the power of the stars over our lives. But for sixteenth-century Europeans, the precise relationship between theology, cosmology and human agency was a burning issue, reaching a crisis in the debates of the Reformation. For Lucić, faced with violent social conflict

²⁷ Sanuto 1892: 602.

and destruction on his native Hvar, the potential threat of a universal deluge caused by the stars, and the very real and palpable peril of Ottoman conquest on the frontiers of Dalmatia as well as in the waters of the Mediterranean, questions of fate, divine providence and human struggle had immediate relevance. It would be a mistake to assume that Hanibal Lucić's letter to his friend in Split was a mere random assortment of topics, linked by free association. Like his other poetic epistles, it was less a private communication than a public performance, here laying out his thoughts on the degree to which human destinies lie in human hands, and how far they are subject to external forces, including divine intervention. As long as we do not take seriously the principles that framed his view of the world, including his religious beliefs and philosophical postulates, we will never be able to comprehend adequately his writings – nor those of other early modern authors.

Appendix

There have been a few attempts to translate Lucić's poetry into English, but these have concentrated on his love poems. His epistolary verse is no less accomplished in literary terms, while – as I hope I have indicated – Lucić's response to the questions thrown up by his own time and place also repays the attention of historians and literary critics, and merits wider circulation. The translation below is an attempt to render Lucić's epistle as a poetic whole, though some caveats are in order. It's not possible to match in English Lucić's dodecasyllabic line or his internal rhymes without doing injury to the wit and economy of his verse. I have chosen to use tetrameter to reflect the 'low' style recommended for familiar letters by both classical authors and contemporary epistolary stylists such as Erasmus. The exigencies of rhyme and metre have led to some loose formulations, but I have tried to convey register and sense as accurately as possible. (For an example of translator's licence see the last pair of couplets, which keep both Lucić's playfulness and the message that he cannot continue his letter because he is so out of condition as a poet, but at the expense of straying from a literal rendition of his words.) For this translation I worked from the edition in the series *Stari pisci hrvatski* (Lucić 1874: 265–73), checked against the copy of the 1556 edition in the British Library (Lucić 1556: 49–54). The punctuation has been modified somewhat according to contemporary usage. There are no stanza breaks in the original text, but I have also taken liberties here to reflect my sense of the poem's parts.

- Knjižica od tvoje pameti sabrana,
U ruke ka moje ovih dan bi dana,
Čini me svu žalost od srca da tiram
Primednu nje slatkost čteći kad razbiram.
Viruj mi, poničtor slast od nje govora 5
Ne krije da je stvor tvojega razbora.
A toj ti jest u njoj prem meni najdraže
Čto tebe, Jere moj, virno mi prikaže,
Jer mi se uzamni kad s njom uzbesidih,
Ti da si pri meni i da te prem vidih. 10
Tim poznah pravedno knjiga da se reče
Drazih bit zajedno čini sa daleče.
- Svršeno jest zato sada pamet moja
Stavila se na to da sebi pokoja
Ne da dokle knjigu ovujzi do tebe 15
Ne pošlje da brigu odvržeš od sebe,
Ka pišeš da daje srcu ti skončanje,
A uzrok sve da je moje nepisanje,
Bi reč da cić mnoge oholasti moje
Vrgal sam pod noge prijazni sve tvoje. 20
Na ku stvar ja t' velju da se močno hiniš,
Dragi prijatelju, u tomu što sciniš
Lipost ni imanje da bi me ponilo
Od tebe ni znanje još da bi ko bilo.
- Nu ako nikadar pisni ti ne šalju, 25
Ne primi za nehar, i sam bo toj žalju.
Jer kom te zadosti Febo je uzvišil
Spivanja milosti mene je ulišil,
A sestre njegove od gore ka ima
Dva vrha lugove zapriše sasive, 30
Tako da mi ne bi uzmožno dopasti
K vodi ku konj izbi kopitom perasti,
Ter se ja ne nadam imena uviku
S ovoga što skladam ni slavu steć niku.
- Zatim, dila mnoga ostala na stran oć, 35
A samo vrh toga misliti mi nije moć.
A ti znaš (u knjige čtio si) tko će pet,
Tribuje da brige nisu mu na pamet.
Da evo čini me velika tva ljubav
Uz teško da brime žilim se kako mrav, 40
Jer za tvoju mnogu dobrotu u svemu
Protiviti ne mogu prošnju tvojemu.
Htiše se (sumnja ni) da on trud ki prija
Pišući ti meni, ja primem najprija,
Ne samo cić liti da svakih cić dika 45
Za koje počtiti pravo je človika.
Tva bo čud kripisna, dostojna sve časti,
Svakoga ko ju zna sili da te časti,
- I had your letter days ago
with all your wisdom there on show.
The sweetness that its words impart
draws all the sorrow from my heart.
Its dulcet diction clearly shows
the mind that did those thoughts compose.
Still, what I find most dear to see
is that it shows you plain to me:
while reading it, I feel you near,
and see you by me, Jero dear.
And thus I learn the letter's art
is to bring close a distant heart.
- Your letter read, I've had no rest
till I could get this off my chest.
Why do I write in such a hurry?
I cannot bear that you should worry,
or write to me your heart will fail
because I never send you mail.
'Twould seem my pride (or fruits thereof)
have made me trample on your love,
but you deceive yourself a lot
by thinking that a garden plot,
a pretty girl or writings new
would turn my mind away from you.
- And if I never send you verse,
don't take it hard, since I feel worse:
when cruel Apollo raised you up,
he snatched away my muse's cup.
No drinking from that sylvan rill
that crowns Parnassus' twin-peaked hill,
struck from the rock by horse's hoof:
his sisters' threats keep me aloof.
So writing this won't bring me fame,
nor hope of an eternal name.
- Then work piled up at such a rate
I simply couldn't concentrate,
and as you know (and as you've read)
a poet needs a care-free head.
But look! Your love works like a goad:
I struggle ant-like with this load.
Since of all friends you are the best,
I can't refuse your least request.
I'll gladly do as I've been tasked,
without demur, as your note asked;
your years, but more, your excellence
demand at least my deference.
Your noble character and true
compels all friends to honour you.

- A mene nada svih u koga ljubavi
 Dar kada tamo bih obilan postavim, 50
 Ki da ja zabudem, kakono neharan
 Pravo bi da budem pedipsan i karan.
 Da kako inom svom kripostju si veći
 Tako umiljenstvom htíl me si priteći.
 Na tom ti zahvaljam i ako t' ni dosti 55
 Izvit ki zgar pravljám, molim te oprosti.
 K tomu ti još primam u obezu velu
 Čto si rad da imam svu sriću veselu,
 Ne manje želim ja da ti Bog sva dobra 60
 Spuni ter želinja tve srce ka obra.
- Zatim mi bi čuti drago da s' rastrgal
 Uzu i stril ljuti iz srca izvrgal
 Djetića ki narod od ljudi vas sjaha,
 Ter mirno u slobod počivaš bez straha.
 Ako je to isto čto pisan tva pravi, 65
 Tvom srcu da misto ne daješ ljubavi,
 Scinim ja odsada velika njeje moć
 Toga cić nazada dobar dil da će poč.
 Past joj će nizoko krila i raspan luk
 Neće moć jur toko obladat ženski puk, 70
 Pokle joj ustinu zlatan stril najvruci
 Kim gvozdje i stinu mogaše da svrući.
 Kriposti jer nike u tebi su vele
 Cić kih o kolike tvu ljubav pozele,
 Najliše kad mrakom tim grlom medenim 75
 Uspoješ, sve trakom obužiš ljuvenim,
 Ter s jutra k prozorom na pospih usteku
 Neka te pozorom veselim zateku.
 A nisu takove da ne bi mnogokrat
 Čića njih sam Jove stvoril se u daž zlat. 80
 Zato dim bezbrže da ljubav oni čas
 Ki se ti odvrže zgubi moć i oblas.
 Toj trudno virujem, nu isto ako je,
 Da svakom darujem hvalom te pravo je.
 Jer ti neć bit oni (mogu reć slobodno) 85
 Od boja ki odni krunu nedostojno,
 Da on ki imijuć protivščine mnoge
 Hrabreno se bijuć stavi jih pod noge,
 Na polju ki ostat ne more brez muke,
 U ljubavi jer stat ide ti od ruke, 90
 A toko veću trud slavu tvoju izvodi
 Koko je put na blud širi ki te vodi.
 Bog ti tej odluke potvrdi tako da
 Ljubavi u ruke ne dojdeš nikada.
 I ja t' se ovdí steć slobodan nahodim, 95
 Ljuvenim tere već za stiđom ne hodim.
 A ne mnij da bi toj cić nike hrabrosti
 Kom bih se njegovoj odrval jakosti,
- Compels me most; for being there,
 of your love's gift I had full share,
 and should I be an ingrate vile
 I ought to be whipped and reviled.
 I can't outdo your virtues fine,
 your modesty far outstrips mine.
 So take my thanks. But let me off
 if my excuses make you scoff.
 I'm also much obliged to you
 since my good fortune gladdens you.
 No less I wish you from my part:
 God grant the wishes of your heart.
- It's good to hear you've rent Love's reins
 that you sleep sound without Love's pains,
 that from your heart you've torn the dart
 that Cupid aims to make men smart.
 If what your letter says is true,
 that Love's claims have no hold on you,
 I think that now the larger part
 of his great power will depart.
 His wings will droop and hang down low,
 no women fall beneath his bow;
 his arrow made of burning gold,
 that melted stone, is quenched and cold.
 When you sing in the dusky dark,
 what girls sit there and, yearning, hark?
 That amorous ribbon round them twines –
 who then would not for your love pine?
 They from their windows lean by day,
 and smile to see you come their way;
 those girls are such that Jove again
 would turn himself to golden rain.
 When you rejected Love, I say,
 he lost all power and all sway.
 Hard to believe, but if it's true,
 I must give all due praise to you.
 You were not one (I speak my mind)
 whose battle style was unrefined,
 but boldly strove to gain the crown.
 and trod your troubles bravely down,
 nor from the field were put to rout;
 your skill at love was ne'er in doubt.
 The wider leads the path to sin,
 the greater praise your efforts win.
 May God confirm your heartfelt plans
 and keep you ever from Love's hands.
 I too stand free, like you I say
 Love's flag no longer guides my way.
 But don't think courage helps me fight
 and struggle hard against its might;

Al ine cić stvari suprotiv s kom bih stal, Da jere ne mari za mene ki sam mal. Zdravjem se još tebi hvalim ja zadosti Ko imam u sebi po Božjoj milosti.	100	for me he does not give two cents, because I'm of no consequence. Still, I can boast about my health – God's mercy gives me this for wealth.
Čto želiš pak zatim razumit dni moje I vrime u č' tratim, život moj ovo je: Vrgal sam sve na stran raskoše, ne stojim U linost nego stan podvignut nastojim Razrušen ki je bil malo ne sasvima Od mnoštva koje dil razbora ne ima, Ter po sva godišća o drugom ne radim Neg zgibla vinišća ponavljam i sadim. Sila m' je cić toga vrtit se, opticat, A jedva jednoga more me doticat. Sad me Vis, sad Stari, sad ima Novi Hvar, Cić takih ter stvari počivam nikadar. Ino ti poručit ne imam čta na toj, Mučim za ne mučit, taj ti je život moj. I ufam neće trud zaludu bit ovi, Višnji Bog ako sud ne pošlje ki novi.	105 110	Now, as for what you want to know, I spend my hours and days like so: I turn aside when comfort calls, and idle not but mend my halls, all but destroyed a small time hence by rabble lacking any sense. And when it rains, and when it shines I plant and prune my ruined vines. I spin from one thing to the next: I can't catch up, I'm sorely vexed. The Old Town first, then Hvar, then Vis: I hardly ever rest in peace. I've nothing else to tell to you – I toil that no more toil accrues. These pains, I trust, won't go astray, save God send some new judgement day.
Vrime je sad niko, niki su dni sada Da ne vim je li tko koga strah ne vlada. Čul si ča nahode po zvizdah ki znaju, Ki potop od vode uskori pravljaju, A znaš po kriposti zvizda ter nebesa Ovde na svit dosti zgaja se čudesa. Jošće znaš taj niki njih način ima moć Kom razum čovički do neba može doć. Tim vide do sto lit dan, čas i hip u koj Sunce će potamniti i misec tolikoj, Misec kad pokrati sunčenu svitlost nam, A zemlja kad vrati isti mu taj zajam. Njim je stvar očita ki je uzrok zime, Premalitja, lita, jeseni zatime. Mnoge stvari ine čudne tim naukom Poznati nas čine i ticati rukom, Ter nije brezredno da nas strah obide Kada nam ko zledno zlamenje povide. Jaoh, ako njih sudi ne griše u temu, Imanje čto prudi, trudimo se čemu? K tomu je stvar druga cić koje strah veći I veća još tuga ima nas opteći, Jer po toj mudrosti hoću još da znaju Od nikih kriposti zvizda ke poznaju: Brez broja jest inih od kojih nije moć Vidinjem ljudi svih najmanju vidit moć, Koje će protivit onim da ne stvore Taj čuda, može bit, koja se govore.	120 125 130 135 140 145	Such are the times, such now our days – the rule of fear haunts all our ways. What some have found, you'll be aware: a deluge that the stars prepare. The stars and skies, as well you know, produce great wonders here below. And some men now the power find to make the skies bend to man's mind. They see, a hundred years ahead, that instant when the sun goes dead, the moon blots out the sun's bright throne, and earth returns its sunlit loan. They know what causes winter's pall, then spring and summer, and the fall. Their science now makes manifest more wondrous things than can be guessed. Our fears are therefore genuine when they announce some evil sign. Alas, if these men rightly judge, what use is property, why drudge? And here's another thing, to heap more fear on fear and make us weep. For certain stars, they want to find their qualities, and know their kind. But human sight can't fix degrees to stars in their infinities – those will, perhaps, help to dispel all those mishaps which some foretell.

<p>Da drugo ovoj zlo od koga hoću reć Blizu je dolizlo, bliže se neće već, Jer trudno može sam čitovat uteć, Susidu jure hram tko vidi goreći.</p>	150	<p>I'll tell you now a second ill nearby; I hope not nearer still. A neighbour's house ablaze you see – can you unscathed yet hope to flee?</p>
<p>Zatvoren tamo tja ne čuješ u kutu Mornarom kako ja koji sam na putu Kako je prikrla Rodiotski otok Čudna moć i sila ku poda vas istok. Zato ću da t' povi ma pisan niki dil Od toga što novi glas nam je povidil. Petkrat je tisuć sto ljudi car sakupil Nevoljno toj misto s kimi je podstupil. Tolik broj brez mire virovat tko more? Dali su od vire ljudi ki govore. Od onih diliše ke timar blagovat I kih odlučise vojnikom poslovat, Ostali nezvani kupom se svi palju Razlika pogani mista kihno šalju, Ter prave raja dil svaki će dobiti, Zemlje samo badil u obrov da hiti.</p>	155 160 165	<p>Shut up in Split, you lack the news that I get from the galley crews, who tell how Rhodes confronts the might that conquers all the East outright. So now my letter will relate one part of that which tidings state. Full half a million men were raised; the number makes us stare amazed. And if that sum we take as true, woe to that place he leads them to. He sorted out the timar-holders and those whom he employed as soldiers. And all the rest, unbidden, rally, more pagans filling out the tally: in paradise each hopes to sleep for digging trenches 'neath Rhodes' keep.</p>
<p>Poganstvu zaisto svemu i istoku Prislavno toj misto selo jest u oku. Jer trge ke brodi k Carigradu vode Čestokrat nahodi gusarin iz Rode, Ter niktov ne more od poganske ruke Ono tiskno more broditu brez muke Komu ime ona divica satvori S zlatoga ka ovna pustiv se obori. K tomu brez pristanja u kopno zahode, Robja ter imanja razlika izvode. Tim ti se oholit budu Rodiotti, A Turci odolit ne mogu sramoti. Zato se ne čudi takova cić posla Da je množ od ljudi brez broja tuj došla. Četrsta i veći broj galij ter navi Jest u kih brodeći vojska se priplavi. Čudna je stvar listo slišati načine I sprave zaisto koje se tuj čine. Najpri su s vojskami podaleče stali Gdino jih puškami ne bi dohitali, Odonde ter počan, zemlju ku kopaju Prida se meću van, a za trud ne haju, Tako da zemlje prah nije tuj ostao Ki jim ni po rukah tisućkrat propao. U koj stvari takov način su držali Da goru na obrov zemlje su dognali, Goru, dim, s ke odzgar mogu sa višine Viditi svaku stvar u gradu ku čine. Virovat sad onoj moreš da činjahu Žiganti kada boj s bozi bit htijahu,</p>	170 175 180 185 190 195	<p>To infidels both low and high, Rhodes is a poke right in the eye. No cargo comes to Tsargrad's port, corsairs from Rhodes cut all trade short; while pagan hands hold tightly closed those narrow straits whose name arose from that maid Hella, on the lam, who fell there from the golden ram. Nor do they cease to raid by land for slaves and goods that come to hand. The Rhodiots all flaunt their fame; the angry Turks must bear the shame. No wonder that in consequence the number mustered was immense: four hundred ships and even more in which the troops set out for war. You'd be amazed if you could spy all the devices that they try. At first they let their troops retire, beyond the reach of cannon fire. From there they dug away the dirt, they swept it up, and spared no hurt, till not a crumb remained at last that through their hands had not been passed. And thus they dug a trench or ditch, and raised a hill, on top of which a man could stand, and gazing down see everything done in the town. You'd think it was that very tor where Giants, with the Gods at war,</p>

Ki goru srditi vrh gore kladihu Po kojih uziti na nebo hotihu.		piled Pelion on Ossa high, to reach Olympus in the sky.
Tom ti se od grada gorom zastupaju Ki svak čas od tada martari lupaju,	200	They hide themselves behind this mound whence mortars thunder all day round,
Tako da ni nova kuća jest ni stara Koj nisu pokrova rastukli odzgara. Mnoge su još vele tuj puške ke zjaju, Prostrano ke, vele, da svitom stresaju,		so every building in the town is struck by missiles raining down. The heavy ordnance barked and brayed; the earth shook from the cannonade.
Ter stinu najveću sa desna i liva Iz sebe van meću ka zid razoriva.	205	From left and right huge missiles fall demolishing the highest wall,
Manjih je tolika množ da ni ostalo Kuće ni zvonika ki mila nimalo. Zatime jest paka trideset hiljada Ostalih pušaka kih svaku dopada	210	while smaller shot descends like rain: no home or tower safe remains. Other guns arm all the corps, some thirty thousand, maybe more.
Nje puškar, opravno vazda ki ju nosi I hita upravno kamo se kad prosi, Tako da ne kloni glavu iza miri Tko neće čas oni da zube ociri.		Each marksman had been carefully trained and hit the target where he aimed. Don't poke your face around the wall: you'll lose your teeth to a shrewd ball.
Janjičari sila i spahij još diju Kojih gvozdja čila do potplat odiju, Kino se naprida većeokrat makoše Tako da vrh zida stige utakoše.	215	And janissaries, spahis too, all clad in mail down to their shoes, repeatedly break through the brawl to plant their flags upon the wall.
Nemoj mnit ki rijju, opraviv listo toj Čto ti zgor besiju, da stoje u pokoj. Mnozi su ki nasut obrov bi hotili Neka bi ravan put ka gradu imili, Kojim je dilati nevolja toj dilo,	220	Don't think the sappers lounge about once they have fixed what was bombed out. They stoutly strive to fill the fosse – straight to the keep they'd cut across; and those who thought that they could shirk, are clubbed and whipped to make them work.
Kopji bo ter bati gone jih nemilo, Mnozi su pak od njih tja doli duboke Ki dubu na pospih jame ter potoke, Pod mire da došad oganj tuj zaduše Kakono Biograd jedu jih razruše.	225	And others still, by no means slow, dig pits and trenches down below, beneath the walls to lay grenades, to blow them up, just like Belgrade:
Zatvoren jer oganj (tako se govori) Da goru staviš na nj gvozdenu, obori. S drugu stran grajani ne misli da leže I stojeć zamani da ničtor ne teže, Kanune, šćopite, spingarde svej meću, Turske mantelite kojimi razmeću,	230	a fire well-stopped, set 'neath its base, will blast a mountain into space. Rhodes' citizens don't lie about or stand there doing less than nowt. They cannon, muskets, bombards place the Turkish mantlets to efface,
I kimi još tuku onih ki naliplju Da zemljom ku vuku obrove nasiplju, Ter ono što s potom i krvju navrgu U grad oni potom po rapah uvrgu.	235	and pummel those who strive and toil to fill the ditches up with soil. With what they gain by blood and sweat, the gaping breaches they offset.
Zatim što razore puške i raziju Opet malo gore slože i saziju Drivjem, zemljom, kalom, stinjem ko svak nosi I stvarju ostalom kako se gdi prosi. Časa ne praznuju s večera ni s jutra Neg se zadubljuju i oni iznutra,	240	Thus what the guns smash and un-build they mend still better and rebuild with wood, or earth, or mud, or sand or anything that comes to hand. They don't waste time from dusk to dawn but from within the walls dig on,
Gdino se pak staju sa Turci, kino rih Da jame kopaju protiv njim na pospih: Tuj jih unebliušiv ognjem ki priprave I prahom zadušiv pod zemljom ostave.	245	to meet the Turks who, as I said, are digging mines to blast them dead; they set off blazes that astound, with choking charges 'neath the ground.

Veliku, di, pomoć sužnji ke imaju Rabeći dan i noć u tom jim podaju. Ni dica zaludu ne side ni žene, Da u svakom trudu mužem su takmene.	250	Their captives slave both night and day To do all that their masters say; nor do the kids and women sit, but vie with men to do their bit.
Čudesa sva koja silan car tuj tvori Ne more rič moja da jih izgovori. Pomisli ki svudi dobivat jest učan, Trateć prah i ljudi zamani, je l' mučan? Zato, di, da ima svršenu odluku, Pri stanje sasvima izgubit iz ruku Negoli ne podrit taj grad i rasuti Ki želi prem požrit kako zmaj priljuti. Ako se izmota taj konac ki vuče, Srce iz života krstjanstvu izvuče, Ako l' Bog ne pusti, neg mu taj iskine Zalogaj iz ussti pri neg ga pozine, Veću slavu stokrat Rodi će dati toj Neg kološ ki porat prikočil biše njoj.	255 260 265	Who could set down each wondrous sight now summoned by the sultan's might? Does it annoy him, used to gain, to waste resources all in vain? But rather than to see Rhodes lost, he's quite prepared to bear the cost. He knows he wants this city razed, to gulp it like a dragon crazed. But if that thread he pulls runs out the heart of Christendom's wrenched out. If God should halt this and withdraw this morsel from the dragon's maw, then would this exploit's lasting fame put Rhodes' Colossus quite to shame.
Čto bih mogal znati ino ti ja novo Ne umim kazati ni pisat neg ovo: Da me češ uskore na ta kraj dočkati Ako Bog, ki more, zdravje mi ne skрати. Mejutoj ja prošu sve tamo ki stoje Pozdravi (znaš tko su) prijatelje moje, Jer i ja zapovid tvoju sam opravil: Komu bi Ektor did Petra sam pozdravil, U svemu ki veli vaskolik da je tvoj, Ter da si zdrav želi i vesel tolikoj. Trudan je konj ovi na kom sam dobahtal Jer zgubiv potkovi nohte je očahtal, Zato ga odsedoh ovde i rasedlav U štalu uvedoh. Moj Jere, budi zdrav.	270 275 280	And as for me, I've naught else new, except for this, to write to you: I'll very soon to Split set sail, God willing that my health not fail. Until that time, I beg of you, greet all my friends there – you know who. I've done what you to me assigned, I've greeted Petar (Hektor's line), who sends his love to you likewise, to wish you sound and gay and wise. I'm out of wind, my mare the same. She's lost her shoes: my verse is lame. Let's limp this letter to its end – hang up our tack. Keep well, my friend!

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SAŽETAK

Wendy Bracewell

ČOVJEK PREDLAŽE, A BOG RASPOLAŽE:

STIHOVANA POSLANICA HANIBALA LUCIĆA IZ 1522. GODINE

Ovaj rad razmatra stihovanu poslanicu Hanibala Lucića iz 1522. godine kako bi se ukazalo na njezino tematsko jedinstvo i njezine pojedine izvore. Iako se ova pjesma često smatrala tipičnim primjerom 'razgovora u stihu' koji obrađuje veliki izbor tema u različitim registrima, poslanica zapravo okuplja niz usko povezanih razmišljanja o božjoj providnosti, sudbini, i ljudskoj volji. Članak sugerira veze između knjige *Pica della Mirandole* i Lucićeve obrade astrologije, posebno u odnosu na takozvani Veliki potop iz 1524. godine. Također identificira iskaze očevidaca poslane u Veneciju kao izvor njegovog iznimno točnog opisa taktike pri opsadi otoka Roda. Ovi iskazi su zanimljivi ne samo po svojim paralelama s tekstem poslanice nego još više po tome kako se Lucićeva poslanica od njih razlikuje. Dodatak donosi engleski prijevod Lucićeve poslanice u namjeri da se rad ovog darovitog i svestranog pjesnika učiniti dostupnim anglofonij publici.

Ključne riječi: *Hanibal Lucić; renesansna stihovana poslanica; Veliki potop 1524. godine; opsada otoka Roda*