
Marital and Ethical Problems at Court: *Pontus und Sidonia* by Eleonore of Austria: A Late Medieval Contribution to Austrian Literature

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In the middle of the fifteenth century, Scottish Princess Eleonore, married to Tyrolean Duke Sigmund in 1448, translated into German the French novel *Pontbus et la belle Sidoyne* under the title of *Pontus und Sidonia*. The original text was probably composed by Geoffrey de la Tour Landry at the end of the fourteenth century. Geoffrey lived from approximately 1330 until either 1402 or 1406; he was an influential and learned author, particularly famous for a didactic treatise, *Livre pour l'enseignement de ses filles* (1371-72), addressed to his daughters. The treatise provided them with fundamental instructions about proper behavior for women.¹ *Pontbus et la belle Sidoyne*, in turn, had been a loose French rendition of the anonymous Anglo-Norman *Horn et Rimenbild* or *King Horn* (c. 1180; for editions, see *King Horn* and Herzman, ed.).

As it has often happened with fifteenth-century literature, Eleonore's novel has failed to attract much interest within scholarly circles. It has slumbered between Middle High German courtly literature and sixteenth-century Reformation literature, followed by seventeenth-century Baroque literature (for an edition, see Müller, ed., 1990). However, there are important reasons for turning our attention to *Pontus und Sidonia* as an example of late medieval prose novels. First, the disregard of this text has much to do with an ongoing general ignorance of fifteenth-century literature at large, one that is unjustified. Second, Eleonore has not enjoyed the same status among literary historians as her male contemporaries as, for example, Thüring von Ringoltingen's famous *Melusine* (1456), although it is also a translation of a French work by Couldrette (c. 1400). Third, her *Pontus* represents a translation work. As such, it seems to be lacking in authenticity and originality that is, however, a very common feature of medieval literature. Plagiarism was unknown to the literary world of the period. Authors often prided themselves more for having copied and translated a work than for having created an original literary work—this is also the case with Thüring's *Melusine*. Fourth, it has proven difficult to situate this writer precisely in the cultural context of her time because she hailed from Scotland, was raised for some years at the French royal court in Tours under King Charles VII, and eventually married the Tyrolean Duke Sigmund (1427-96), a member of the Habsburg dynasty (for a historical overview, see Köfler and Caramelle). In light of this mix of cultural traditions, Eleonore's translation of the French novel into German was her crowning literary achievement, a tribute to her new home country.

It is not insignificant that Eleonore's father, King James I of Scotland (1397-1437) composed a major work of Middle English literature, the *Kingis Quair* (c. 1424). James's creation is an allegorizing imprisonment poem with strong autobiographical features. Moreover, he promoted literary creativity in different ways, which must have influenced his daughter (see Herzman, ed.; for a manuscript study, see Boffey)

Incredibly, some scholarship on Eleonore has questioned her authorship and has argued that her name was attached to the work long after her death in 1480, when her financially strapped husband sold her name in 1483 to Johann Schönsperger, an Augsburg printer. Reinhard Hahn argues that affixing Eleonore's name promoted the sale of the novel and saved Sigmund's solvency.

Indeed, the first manuscript where the text appears (Gotha, Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Chart. A 590) copied by Nikolaus Huber, a priest in the Brixen diocese, does not include Eleonore's name. The 1483 prologue to the earliest printed version of the novel, published three years after Eleonore's death, identifies her as the author, and is dedicated to Duke Sigmund, "jrem eelichen gemahel czuo lieb vnd zuo geuallen" ("to her husband out of love and with the goal to please him," 42). All subsequent printed versions contained this dedication. Hahn's arguments against Eleonore's authorship have been mostly dismissed and, in his own edition of the text (1997), he no longer makes this claim. The current scholarly consensus agrees that Eleonore was mostly responsible for the German translation of *Pontus und Sidonia* (for critical overviews, see Steinhoff; Liebertz-Grün).

While Eleonore's novel has been examined from a gender perspective (Classen 1993), here we wish to raise three crucial questions that have not been addressed satisfactorily. First, to what extent does Eleonore's work constitute Austrian literature, without falling into the trap of anachronism? Second, what is the position of *Pontus und Sidonia* within the context of fifteenth-century literature? And third, what might make this novel interesting for today's readers, apart from generic cultural-historical reasons, whether they read it in the context of Austrian literary history or as a literary contribution to fifteenth-century world literature?

The dearth of critical studies regarding this late-medieval novel is surprising. Xenja von Ertzdorff gives a possible motivation for the work's composition: an attempt to give her unfaithful husband a lesson on how to govern as well as how to behave as a spouse. As the critic sees it, the narrative remains unclear as to who or what truly determines the protagonists' lives—God or fortune—once Pontus and his friends escape from Galicia and reach the Kingdom of Brittany (51). Yet, the novel does include the protagonists' strong Christian faith, especially in their struggle against the Muslim. Von Ertzdorff's reading (74) is unsupported by the text.

Nonetheless, she correctly stresses the model role that young nobles play as they emerge in the novel, and also decidedly specifies that *Pontus und Sidonia* was not influenced by humanistic thinking. No attempt is made in it to inject specific philosophical ideas and values derived from classical antiquity. Von Ertzdorff places this text in the category of "*Ritterrenaissance*" ("the Renaissance of knighthood"), one that was common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (75). She, however, neither addresses the overall structure of the novel, nor does she consider specific motives or thematic issues. For the most part, subsequent research has declined to address this desideratum as well (for exceptions, see Hahn 1991; Classen 1995). This article hopes to motivate scholars to revisit this work and to accept the claim that is a noteworthy and important medieval text. After its publication, it became a "bestseller" and remained so well into the late eighteenth century (Hahn, ed., 19-33). Sadly, the anonymous entry on Eleonore of Austria in the German version of *Wikipedia* features today among the best biographical sketches available.²

Returning to the question of to what extent Eleonore's *Pontus und Sidonia* should be considered Austrian literature, we must clarify that by "Austrian," we are contrasting it to other regional literatures, i.e., German, Bavarian, Alsatian or Saxon, although such geo-political distinctions were in-existent during the Middle Ages. Let us, however, examine some standard literary histories to shed light on why this novel is generally included in the canon of late medieval German literature, irrespective of its geographic origin.

Peter Nusser briefly alludes to Eleonore and to her contemporary, Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken, in his study. For him, *Pontus und Sidonia* treats "weniger den politischen Aspekt als vielmehr den sozialen des höfischen Zusammenlebens" ("the political aspect less than the social dimension of courtly cohabitation, 274). However, Nusser may be unfamiliar with

fifteenth-century prose novels, since he merely lists the titles of some works and offers a few undetailed remarks about them.

Volker Meid's literary history offers succinct summaries of various works in systematic fashion. He emphasizes that the French novel *Ponthus et le belle Sidoyne* was translated into German by an anonymous scribe as well as by Eleonore, whom he identifies as the daughter of the Scottish King James I and as the wife of Duke Sigmund of Tyrol. He characterizes Eleonore's version (A) as simpler and less artistically developed than the anonymous translation of a male contemporary version (B).³ Beyond this assertion, we only learn from his study that the idealization of chivalry and knighthood probably contributed to the novel's long-lived success (89).

A history of German literature in English, edited by David E. Wellbery and Judith Ryan (2004) ignores these novels and skips from Johannes von Tepl's *Plonman* (c. 1401) to the works of Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77-1445) and Hans Rosenplüt (c. 1400-c. 1460), as if German literature were unaware of prose novels before the seventeenth century. This is not an uncharacteristic treatment of the genre; it is commonly placed between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance/Reformation. It continues to suffer from extensive disregard, perhaps because many of those novels were deemed "only" translations from Latin, French, Italian, or Middle High German texts (for a bibliographical overview, see Gotzkowsky).

By contrast, Max Wehrli offers more reliable and succinctly detailed information, identifying the author of version A as the "*Stuartprinzessin*" ("stuart princess") who was able, after her few years at the Innsbruck court, "einen französischen Roman in gutem Deutsch zu präsentieren (1453?), unbeschadet ihrer vielfältigen anderen literarischen Interessen" ('to present a French novel in a good German (1453?), irrespective of her many other literary interests,' 857). He does not, however, further engage the issues of Eleonore's Scottish background, her French upbringing, or her quick adaptation to German-language culture.

Only Fritz Peter Knapp (1995) has systematically and consequentially approached the history of Austrian literature as such, embracing the concept of regional literature as being more appropriate for the Middle Ages than for the global concept of German literature produced within the Holy Roman Empire. As he emphasizes, although many people traveled and had countless business dealings throughout the continent and beyond, most Europeans still identified with their regions, and mostly interacted within their villages, their parishes, convents, estates, cities or, at a higher level, within their dioceses, territories, or prince-ruled countries.

When we focus on the literature of a region or territory with a fairly harmonious cultural unity, an opportunity arises, among others, to research the possible relationship between vernacular and Latin texts, between those of Christians and Jews, and even between humanistic and scientific works. Moreover, literary texts are created in specific cultural and geographic spaces that influence them. Only the invention of the printing press and its rapid dissemination throughout Europe brought on a considerable expansion of the contexts within written works were produced and received (Knapp 1995, 13. See also Ebenbauer; Thum).

How then would *Pontus und Sidonia* fare in this context? Knapp does not seem to have completed his global project, ending the second part of his second volume with the literature written under the rule of Rudolf IV up until that of Albrecht V (1358-1439). Most modern scholars, however, exclude the Middle Ages when they address the phenomenon of Austrian literature, which they instead associate with the emergence of the early modern Austrian empire that arose in the eighteenth century (Arit, 16).

Nevertheless, a good example underscoring characteristically "Austrian" cultural conditions within the literary context would be Emperor Maximilian I's *Theuerdank* (printed in 1517)

and *Weisskunig*, written sometime after 1520 and not printed until the twentieth century. Both works contain specific geographic references to the Austrian Alps, where the protagonist hunts game. Fundamentally, however, Maximilian only cared about himself and tried hard to establish a large body of texts and images through which he could immortalize his image, writing primarily as an imperial author with a universal perspective (see Müller and Ziegeler, eds).

We may also consider the poetic *œuvre* of Oswald von Wolkenstein. His life somewhat overlapped Eleonore's; she arrived in his native Tyrol sometime between 1348 and 1349. Noteworthy are numerous autobiographical poems about his castle, Hauenstein in Seis am Schlern, and about conflicts with neighboring peasants and with his territorial duke, Frederick IV, who once imprisoned him in Innsbruck and had him tortured (for biographical and interpretative data, see Müller and Springeth, eds). If we include the scope of Latin and theological writing, as Knapp has done for the previous periods, we can identify a fairly large corpus of "Austrian" literature from the middle of the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries and beyond, such as Ulrich Putsch's German translation of the *Lumen anime* as *Das liecht der sel* from 1426. (Harris, ed.; see Hofmeister-Winter, ed., for a parallel text). Globally speaking, since Eleonore wrote *Pontus und Sidonia* in German while living in Innsbruck, it must be included in the corpus of "Austrian" literature of the time, although there are almost no references to Austria, that is, to the Habsburg territories. Other scholars have proceeded similarly, relying on geographical and political criteria to identify specific works that pertain to the history of Austrian literature, though theoretical reflections about this decision are mostly missing (as to literature in Tyrol, see Gebhardt and Siller, eds.).

The publication history of *Pontus und Sidonia* likewise does not provide clear evidence of the author's residence in Austria or of her readership. First printed in Augsburg in 1483, the novel subsequently appeared in print in Strasbourg in 1509, and in Frankfurt am Main in 1548. In fact, no early modern printing can be identified with any city in the Austrian or Habsburg area, probably because the printing business was controlled by printers from north of the Alps.

At present, the manuscript is kept in the Forschungs-und Landesbibliothek Gotha. The Brixen (Bressanone) priest Nikolaus Huber, who wrote it in 1465, employed a South Bavarian dialect. Thus, Eleonore must have produced her translation sometime before that date (see Hahn, ed.).

We do not precisely know who commissioned the manuscript, nor whether Duke Sigmund ordered its creation. Hahn confirms in his edition of the work that Duke Johann Friedrich der Großmütige von Sachsen (1503-54) acquired that manuscript for his private library during his imprisonment in Augsburg (Eleonore, 12-13). No further insights can be gleaned about its original composition and its subsequent extensive dissemination. However, to re-emphasize a crucial point, we can be certain that *Pontus und Sidonia* became a "bestseller" and held an appeal for countless audiences throughout the following centuries.

In concrete terms, the novel has nothing to do with the Austrian or Habsburg regions or territories; it depicts a very different world to that presented in medieval heroic epics and courtly romances (*Dietrichepik*). The male protagonist hails from Galicia in northwestern Spain, and his future beloved is the daughter of the King of Brittany, in western France. As a child, Pontus was scarcely able to escape hostile Muslim forces, after his father was killed and the country was occupied by the invaders. He was secretly placed on a ship by a former Christian knight who pretends to have converted to Islam to save his own life and to secure a post at the royal court. In Brittany, Pontus falls in love with Sidonia, but both are still too young to express their emotions openly or to obtain official approval. Extensive sections of the novel trace their efforts, while growing up, to become integrated into their social group, gain social standing, achieve a

reputation, and hence to live according to the highest aristocratic ideals and values. While Pontus strives to reach fame through his active life as a knight, fighting vigorously and effectively against Muslim armies that first attack Brittany and then England, Sidonia is bound to her family and to the court. Even so, she too faces challenges and must steadfastly preserve her honor and status as the king's daughter. (We will not address here the particular conflicts that determined their lives). Yet, the course of Pontus's career is more significant. His path takes him to England where, after being falsely accused of pursuing the princess's love with selfish and prurient intentions, he tries to prove his innocence by living in a self-imposed exile for seven years.

In England, under the pseudonym Sordit, Pontus manages to settle the military conflict with Ireland by defeating the Irish king and convincing him that to loosen tensions between the two kingdoms, he should marry one of the English king's daughters. Afterwards, when another Muslim army arrives, Pontus tirelessly defeats it. Later, the English try to convince him to marry Geneve, one of the king's daughters, in recognition that he is the country's best defender. However, because he loves Sidonia, he refuses the suggestion and remains loyal to her (117). Significantly adding to the global spatial concept of the novel, the English king not only aligns himself with the King of Ireland, but also with that of Scotland, who had married his sister. Consequently, the three royal houses become closely associated, thus forming a single political unit.

Nonetheless, the critical problem for the two lovers is that they cannot control their own lives and are subject to political manipulations. Their worst opponent is Gendelet, one of Pontus's earlier companions from Galicia, who tries all in his power to please the King of Brittany and to assume control of the country by means of his rhetorical skills and cleverness (75). During Pontus's absence in England, he plots to arrange a marriage between Sidonia and the Duke of Burgundy, who has paid him for that purpose (118). The Duke, though, is old and unattractive. He is disliked by everyone outside of his party (121) and, having returned and joined a tournament in which he jousts with the Duke, Pontus kills him. This turn of events allows for the two lovers to marry (129).

Before Pontus is ready to take that step, however, he must first liberate his father's Galician kingdom. Although he does so, it takes him away from Brittany for an extended period of time and exposes his fiancée to grave political dangers. Gendelet furthers his nefarious plans by composing a letter supposedly written by Pontus, in which Pontus urges the king to marry Sidonia to Gendelet. The fake letter also reasons that, having been defeated by the Muslims, Pontus is unable to protect her (147).

This narrative motif of falsified letters can be traced to antiquity, the most significant example being the anonymous *Mai und Beaflo* from the late thirteenth century. (It is unclear whether Eleonore was familiar with it or with similar versions). Gendelet underestimates Sidonia's resoluteness. She flees into a tower and defends herself for many months, until her father, having joined her, nearly dies of hunger. Just when Sidonia, in desperation, finally agrees to submit to Gendelet, Pontus arrives from Galicia and kills him (154-55).

After their marriage, the two spend their remaining days together, moving around Western Europe, spending time in Galicia, Brittany, and England. This phase of their lives together was probably more appealing to Eleonore, since she came from Scotland and lived in France. Because her father had spent many years in English prisons, this French novel provided her with an attractive narrative repository for her literary interests. Obviously, her audience responded to this quasi-exotic framework with great enthusiasm, because it connected its members with the glory of the Iberian, French, English, Irish, and Scottish courts.

Earlier in the novel, when Sidonia is influenced by false rumors about Pontus's alleged untrustworthiness and withholds her favors from him, Pontus retires into the woods and programs a tournament. He thus proves his worthiness as a knight and his true love for Sidonia by sending the defeated knights to her court. After his return, people reflect on their assumptions of where he had been, thereby revealing that they had believed that he went to war either in Hungary, Poland, or Germany (86, 93). This self-reflection is ironic in a novel written in German for a German, that is, Austrian audience. Moreover, at some point the narrator includes references to the Duke of Austria (92) who, along with many great lords from across Europe, participated in Pontus's tournament.

Eleonore seemingly situated her novel's events in the western part of Europe, not just because of her source, but also because it served her purposes to include an exotic, yet still familiar narrative setting. Her geographical framework is fairly innovative, especially her references to England, Ireland and Scotland, which normally did not figure prominently in medieval German literature. The only exception is Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (c. 1210), a work that initially emphasizes Cornwall—not England—then Ireland, where Tristan awaits his poisoned wound to heal and the marriage of the Irish princess to his uncle Mark. In *Pontus und Sidonia*, we witness a clear sense of national identity, at least when it comes to those particular western kingdoms (Forde et al). This aspect of the novel might have been especially relevant to readers in Tyrol, an area strategically situated between northern Italy, Venice in particular, and Switzerland and the German Empire.

Moreover, by having chosen a French source for her translation project, Eleonore indirectly reflects upon the emerging threat to Christian Europe by the Ottomans, who had conquered Constantinople in 1453 (for historical insights, see Runciman; Crowley). She traces a military conflict that begins in Galicia, then Brittany, and finally England—no other European country faced a more imminent threat than Hungary and finally Austria (for a history of Emperor Sigmund, see Baum).

Each of the Sultan's sons is sent out into the world with a large army. With these resources each son attempts to gain his father's respect by defeating a Christian king, thus further diminishing the Christian religion (43-44). The first of the three sons, Proodus, figures most prominently in the narrative, because he manages to conquer Galicia, forcing young Pontus to flee. However, Proodus is unaware of Pontus's true identity and does not foresee the threat he poses.

Proodus is afflicted by nightmares that predict the future, but which he fails to comprehend as omens of his and his brothers' demise. He experiences one such dream when Pontus escapes by ship (49). Pontus subsequently defeats one of Proodus's brothers during the Muslim attack on Brittany. He later defeats a second sibling by fending off a Muslim assault on England. Proodus experiences a final dream as the matured Pontus returns to Galicia (138). Its prediction of Proodus's downfall is likewise accurate. Pontus gains his revenge by destroying Proodus, thus avenging the death of his father. The references to Santiago de Compostela suggest both the Spanish Reconquista and the historical crusades that ended in 1291 with the fall of Acre (see Alraun et al., eds.). Though no reference is made to Constantinople and the Ottomans in the novel, it is highly probable that Pontus's bravery and glorious victories were most appealing to contemporary audiences. The literary context showed that a strong Christian leader could be as successful in the east, that is, in the Balkans or in the eastern Mediterranean, as Pontus was in the west.

Seen from a different angle, although *Pontus und Sidonia* is primarily centered in western Europe, the political and military circumstances in the novel suggest an intention to appeal to an Austrian audience, especially because the Habsburg empire shared a Balkan frontier with

the Ottoman realm. In a way, Eleonore presented to her readers the very world from where she came, although Scotland is only referenced briefly.

However, we can also recognize a significant political argument in the text that associates it fifteenth-century Tyrol. As historians have confirmed, while Sigmund's father, Frederick IV (1382-1439), managed to amass considerable wealth for the state, his son seems to have pilfered it. The political conditions were highly unstable from early on, partially because Sigmund (1427-96) was under the strict tutelage of his elder cousin, Emperor Frederick III (1415-93).

Sigmund assumed the throne in 1446 but, throughout his life, he faced severe conflicts, not only with the landed gentry, but also with the Church, especially with the Bishop Nicholas of Cusa. His first wife, our Eleonore, died in 1480 in parturition, leaving him heirless; his second wife, Catherine of Saxony (1468-1524), also died without child. Sigmund, though, had numerous affairs that yielded many illegitimate children. Tyrol was in bad financial shape under Sigmund, although the fairly new mining industry was a significant source of income. His 1487 war against Venice ended in a fiasco, and in 1490, six years before his death, the landed estates forced him to resign and turned the state over to King (later Emperor) Maximilian I (see Köfler and Caramelle; Liebertz-Grün).

While we cannot correlate the narrative events in *Pontus und Sidonia* one-to-one with the political situation in Tyrol during Eleonore's lifetime, there are striking parallels. The political elite is consistently portrayed as being in disarray and in desperate need of a strong leader like Pontus. External threats undermine political stability, and only through the emergence of an ideal leader can the various countries regain their footing. The absence of a royal heir in Tyrol is not mentioned in the novel, but inheritance questions and the succession to the throne, given the king's old age, are included. Of course, we can only guess as to Eleonore's strategies when she translated the text, but her deliberate choice of the French work suggests that she had specific purposes in mind.

Ursula Liebertz-Grün opines that the poet overcame the many different courtly cabals and gossip she encountered, especially the rumors about her husband's behavior. Yet, Liebertz-Grün keeps the debate open as to whether Eleonore argued for independent female agency or for traditional patriarchal structures (60). Even though *Pontus und Sidonia* does not promote any particular Austrian view, it apparently targeted the Austrian court society in Innsbruck. Only later, after entering the early modern book market, did this novel reach out to many new audiences and became a "bestseller," probably because by then the Ottoman threat was imminent and pressing.

To turn to the second issue raised, *Pontus und Sidonia* earned a solid position within the larger context of late medieval or early modern German prose novels. In 1437, Eleonore's contemporary, Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken, wrote four novels, all translations as well from the French (Haubrichs and Herrmann; Haubrichs and Oster), while Thüning von Ringoltingen achieved enormous success in 1456 with his *Melusine*, paralleled by the anonymous *Fortunatus* in 1509 and by Veit Warbecks's *Magelone* in 1527 (for bibliographical data, see Gotzkowsky; for commentary, see Jan-Dirk Müller, ed.). In other words, there were only two female authors composing such novels who found large numbers of readers, probably because of authors' high social standing and reputation, their linguistic ability to translate texts from French into German, and because they came up with a narrative subject that appealed to readers then and in the following centuries.

There is no need to discuss the literary quality and significance of Eleonore's *Pontus und Sidonia*. Instead, it suffices to again stress that the work achieved enormous success among early modern audiences. Moreover, we must also recognize that this novel strongly profiles

the character Sidonia, emphasizing her suffering and her ultimate victory over her opponents, particularly the courtier Gendelet. While Pontus roams the world and gains great respect for his military accomplishments, for his extraordinary abilities, and for his particular skills as a knight, Sidonia proves her strength of character through her chastity, modesty, and firm decision-making, qualities that are manifested in her resoluteness and in her tenacious struggle against Gendelet. She shows great respect for her father, but she does all she can to protect her own interests as well as her virtue. Although she is greatly interested in Pontus and falls in love with him, she is aware that courtly society is observing her and that she must keep a safe distance from him if she is to protect herself from accusations of wrongdoing. She agrees to marry the Duke of Burgundy only under the greatest duress that is caused by her father. However, Pontus returns from England and kills the duke. Sidonia agrees to marry Gendelet as well, but only because, had she not, her father would have died of hunger. Again, she is saved by Pontus, who returns from Galicia and kills his malicious adversary.

Her marriage with Pontus leads to a happy and virtuous life together, but the novel is predicated on the long-term struggles they experience from youth to adulthood and the establishment of their sociopolitical positions. Their trials shape them into worthy marriage partners.

Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken pursued a slightly different perspective by presenting female characters who, as wives, are persecuted by their husbands or who suffer from courtly cabals. In general, however, the critic shows more interest in political and military history and strongly reflects the traditional accounts about Emperor Charlemagne and his courtiers, many of whom prove to be evil and untrustworthy. Thüring von Ringoltingen operated with a fairy-tale like motif of the ghostly woman Melusine, who partially transforms into a snake on Saturdays as punishment for her evil actions against her father. That novel is principally focused on the theme of taboos and taboo breaking, which explains why Melusine disappears in the middle of the novel, never to be seen again.

Fortunatus treats the issue of wealth vis-à-vis wisdom and the dangers that arise when people, relying too much on material goods for their well-being, eventually discover that their artificial happiness is just an illusion. Veit Warbeck's *Magelone*, on the other hand, revisits the issues of love and sorrow, marriage, and the loss of a loved one; he asks how individuals can maintain their honor, loyalty, and ideals in a complicated world. Thus, considering the extent to which Eleonore explored gender issues, interlaced with military and political events, we can understand why this novel was such a breakthrough in its time and why it was welcomed by large numbers of readers throughout the centuries.

Therefore, we feel that *Pontus und Sidonia* deserves our scholarly attention and appreciation. It may be argued that Eleonore competed against two German translators whose efforts were not particularly successful. She proved through her work how much she, as a Scottish princess, had so mastered the French and German languages that she was able to translate the work in a meaningful and appealing fashion. Her novel reflects, as her source did, the then major military and political events in Western Europe. In turn, these events also reflect conditions in Eastern Europe as the Ottomans advanced into the Balkans. While it is true that in the 1450s not many in Innsbruck or elsewhere in the region feared a Muslim invasion of Christian Europe, this is nonetheless what occurred.

More importantly, however, Eleonore's *Pontus und Sidonia* provided powerful literary examples of ideal behavior for a young men and women at court. There are also elements borrowed from the tradition of *Mirror for Princes*, particularly advice on how to handle military attacks, to try avoid them, to build political alliances, and to woo courtly ladies. Moreover, this is a novel

dominated by examples of how evil intentions by outsiders can have devastating consequences for virtuous protagonists.

In conclusion, Eleonore intriguingly combined the political with the erotic, the religious with the military, and the personal with the public. Her novel provided hope for Christian Europe in the face of Ottoman aggression, even though, in it, conflicts between Christians and Muslims take place in Spain, France, and England. These were powerful lessons for all Europeans, especially because they were combined with instructions about individual behavior within the courtly context, about how to woo courtly ladies, and how to rule a kingdom.

Notes

1. Some of Geoffrey's works were also translated into German. See, for instance, *Der Ritter vom Thurn. Von den exemplen der Gotsforcht und erberkeit*, trans. Marquart von Stein (Basel: Furter 1513) Stolingwa 1911, and De Gendt 2003. 1 Sept. For an online version of the English translation, see <http://mw.mcmaster.ca/scriptorium/delatur.html>. 1 Sept. 2015

2. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleonore_von_Schottland. 22 Aug. 2015.

3. Version B, by an anonymous, very probably male scribe or cleric, has survived in five manuscripts. See Schneider, ed. for a brief summary; see also Hahn, ed., 10-12.

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