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**Anachronism at Work**

**Villains and Enemies as Turks in Early Modern Religious Art in Genoa and Liguria**

In western Early Modern *imaginaire*, the Ottoman enemy was often perceived, at a symbolic level, as the quintessence of threat and persecution against the Catholic faith. Figures of 'Turks', identified by way of easily recognizable attributes (such as the turban), were therefore substituted for other, radically different characters in a plurality of visual narratives. In a semantically significant anachronism, Turks populated Old and New Testament scenes as well as the depictions of the martyrdoms of Christians persecuted by the Romans in the first centuries. In parallel, the same attributes were also sometimes superimposed on the figures of other, contemporary enemies of the faith, who lacked an established iconographic tradition of their own: namely the Protestant 'heretics'. This paper aims to illustrate this visual device through a selection of significant case studies taken from the territory of the Republic of Genoa, a state characterized by a long-standing involvement in the fight against Ottoman forces and Barbary corsairs.