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## INFIDEL FRIENDS: CHARLES V, MULAY HASSAN AND THE THEATRE OF MAJESTY

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**ABSTRACT:** *The famous conquest of Tunis by Charles V in 1535 has been frequently interpreted as one of the last Christian crusades, a European campaign commanded by the virtuous Emperor Charles, a new Saint Louis of France. However, the voluminous propaganda around the campaign tended to overshadow that Charles V actually fought as protector of the Hafsids (the local Muslim dynasty) against the menacing expansion of the Ottoman Empire. While alliances between Muslim and Christian princes were not exceptional in the early modern Mediterranean, the meeting of Emperor Charles V and Mulay Hassan (Sultan Abū `Abd Allāh Muhammad V al-Hasan, known in Christendom as King Muley) represents a unique inter-confessional encounter between two sovereigns who shared neither language nor religion. Consequently, the representation of their alliance (or more exactly, the Hafsid's vassalage to the Emperor) acquired a very performative character. Both sides attempted to show their shared princely culture through different representations. European chroniclers described the ceremonies during their encounters as a mute theatre where majesty and rank had to be negotiated. There were differences in their treatment, however. Spanish chroniclers, with their greater experience and long coexistence with Muslims, tended to present the encounters as part of a familiar exchange, while Central European observers offered detailed depictions of what appeared to them an exotic and amazing event.*

**KEYWORDS:** *inter-confessional diplomacy, Hafsids, Habsburgs, crusade, propaganda.*

AMICI INFEDELI: CARLO V, MULEY HASSAN E IL TEATRO DELLA SOVRANITÀ

**SOMMARIO:** *La celebre conquista di Tunisi da parte di Carlo V nel 1535 è stata spesso ritenuta una delle ultime crociate cristiane: una campagna europea comandata dal virtuoso imperatore Carlo, un nuovo San Luigi di Francia. Tuttavia, la voluminosa propaganda creata attorno alla campagna stessa finì per adombrare il fatto che Carlo V avesse combattuto in difesa della dinastia musulmana degli Hafsidi per respingere la temuta espansione dell'Impero ottomano. Sebbene le alleanze tra i principi musulmani e cristiani non rappresentassero situazioni eccezionali nel Mediterraneo della prima Età Moderna, l'incontro tra l'imperatore Carlo V e Muley Hassan (il sultano Abū `Abd Allāh Muhammad V al-Hasan, più noto alla cristianità con il nome di re Muley) rispecchia un contatto interconfessionale unico, in cui i due sovrani non condividevano né lingua né religione. Di conseguenza, la manifestazione della loro alleanza (o, più esattamente, del rapporto di vassallaggio che unì gli Hafsidi all'imperatore) acquisì presto un carattere estremamente performativo. Entrambe le parti cercarono di mostrare la loro comune cultura principesca attraverso molteplici rappresentazioni. I cronisti europei descrissero i loro incontri come uno spettacolo di teatro muto in cui si negoziava la maestà e il rango a colpi di cerimoniale. Si crearono, tuttavia, differenti visioni e percezioni di tali situazioni. Se da un lato, i cronisti spagnoli, forti di una consolidata esperienza per via di una lunga convivenza con i musulmani, tendevano a presentare gli incontri come parte di uno scambio familiare, dall'altro lato, gli osservatori del centro Europa offrirono rappresentazioni dettagliate di ciò che appariva loro un evento esotico e del tutto sorprendente.*

**PAROLE CHIAVI:** *diplomazia interconfessionale, Hafside, Asburgi, crociata, propaganda.*

\* Abbreviations: BNF (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris); Ags, E (Archivo General de Simancas, Estado). Acknowledgements: This research was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science (Project PGC2018-099152-B-I00).

The *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna preserves the famous cartoons of the set of tapestries on *The Capture of Tunis* by Jan Vermeyen. In the corner of the twelfth of them (*The Sack of Tunis and The Re-embarkation of the Army at La Goleta*), we can see a small scene with the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the Muslim King of Tunis Mulay Hassan. They sat before the imperial tent and signed a treaty of friendship, aided by a translator, and surrounded by their respective escorts. In the sixth tapestry (*The Capture of La Goleta*), another small scene depicts the Emperor and the King sharing a bench on a boat while they seem to hold a conversation<sup>1</sup>.

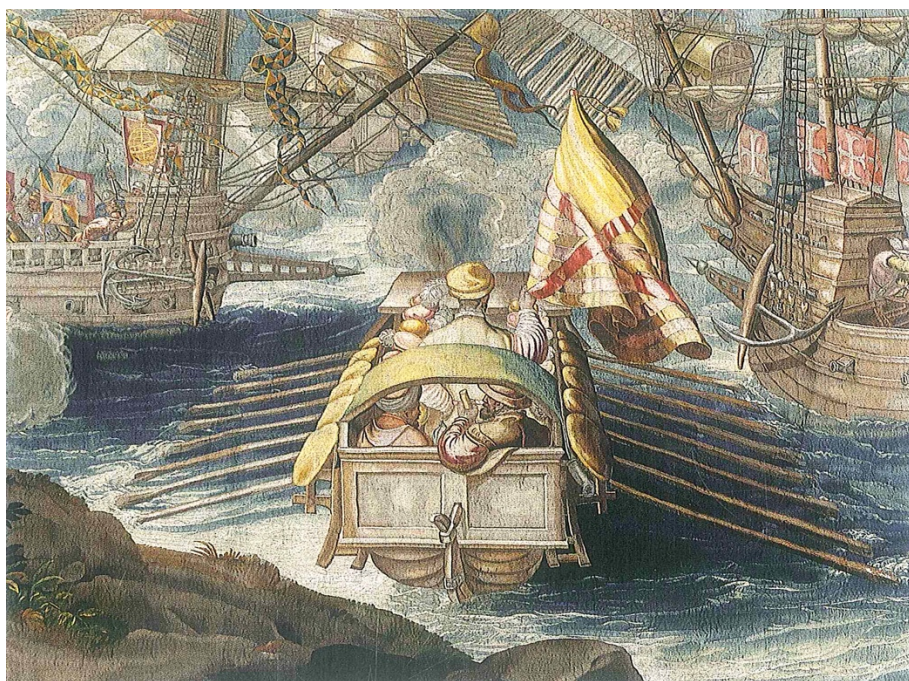


Fig. 1. J.C. Vermeyen, *The Capture of La Goleta* (det.), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (1545)

<sup>1</sup> S. Haag, K. Schmitz-Von Ledebur (eds.), *Kaiser Karl V. erobert Tunis. Dokumentation eines Kriegszuges in Kartons und Tapisserien*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, 2003, pp. 18, 104; F. Checa, *Imágenes hispánicas de otros mundos: turcos y moros en varias series de tapices en la Alta Edad Moderna*, in V. Mínguez, M.I. Rodríguez Moya (eds.), *Arte en los confines del imperio: Visiones hispánicas de otros mundos*, Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, 2014, pp. 41-42.



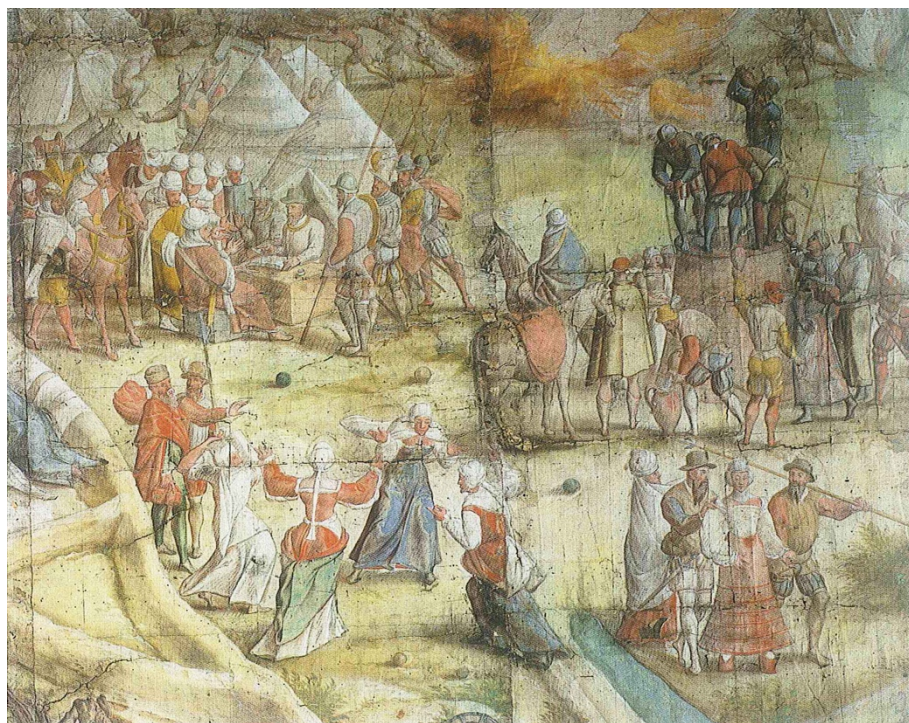


Fig. 2. J.C. Vermeyen, *The Sack of Tunis and The Re-embarkation of the Army at La Goleta* (det.), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (1545)

In contrast with those episodes, the conquest of Tunis in 1535 was rhetorically constructed as one of the last Christian crusades, rightfully commanded by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. For Duchhardt, it constituted «the first modern political event to be ‘sold’ in a great publicist and propagandistic style»<sup>2</sup>. Such propaganda simultaneously legitimised the campaign and discredited Francis I of France, the ally of Sultan Süleyman and the Ottoman admiral Barbarossa. This bombastic vision has been repeated in later literature and popular tradition, as a manifestation of the Christian-European triumph over inferior infidels and of the timeless and

<sup>2</sup> H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen Karls V. 1535*, «Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs», 37 (1984), p. 66; S. Deswarte-Rose, *L'expédition de Tunis (1535): Images, Interprétations, Répercussions Culturelles*, in B. Bennassar, R. Sauzet (eds.), *Chrétiens et Musulmans à la Renaissance*, Honoré Champion, Paris, 1988, pp. 73-131; J. D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V's crusades against Tunis and Algiers: appearance and reality*, Associates of the James Ford Bell Library, Minneapolis, 2001.

indeterminate Christian-Muslim hostility motivated by the «clash of civilizations»<sup>3</sup>.

That interpretation overshadowed the fact that Charles V fought as protector of the Hafsids, the local Muslim dynasty dethroned by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire led by Barbarossa. Before the battle against the latter's forces, the Emperor camped in the bay of Tunis and met the exiled king Mulay Hassan in July 1535. The two sovereigns spent a month together bound by a formal relationship of friendship. As recent research has shown, premodern peaceful relations among sovereigns, even when there was little trust between them, were expressed in the formal, rhetorical language of friendship which did not imply real, emotional ties<sup>4</sup>. We can narrate their cohabitation in three acts with an epilogue.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Act: The Meeting

This princely encounter was a bizarre episode in the early modern society of princes, and not just because it was a rather unprecedented inter-confessional event. Kings did not frequently meet each other because, as Montaigne warned, it required them to establish beforehand who the superior was<sup>5</sup>. Neighbours and by turns allies and rivals, the French and Spanish Kings only met three times throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1525-6, 1538, and 1660)<sup>6</sup>. As Hengerer has stressed, «this history, too, of the early modern princely congress remains unwritten»<sup>7</sup>. Even less frequent were the

<sup>3</sup> B. Fuchs, Y.-G. Liang, *A Forgotten Empire: The Spanish-North African Borderlands*, «Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies», 12:3 (2011), p. 263.

<sup>4</sup> A. Würdler, *Freunde, amis, amici. Freundschaft in Politik und Diplomatie der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft*, in K. Oschema (ed.), *Freundschaft oder amitié? Ein politisch-soziales Konzept der Vormoderne im zwischensprachlichen Vergleich (15.-17. Jahrhundert)*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 2007, p. 193; N. Weber, *Gute Miene zum bösen Spiel? Freundschaft, Kooperation und Vertrauen in den französisch-preußischen Beziehungen des 18. Jahrhunderts*, in B. Haan, C. Kühner (eds.), *Freundschaft: eine politisch-soziale Beziehung in Deutschland und Frankreich, 12.-19. Jahrhundert*, Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris, Paris, 2013 ([https://perspectivia.net/publikationen/8-2013/weber\\_freundschaft](https://perspectivia.net/publikationen/8-2013/weber_freundschaft)).

<sup>5</sup> M. de Montaigne, *Essais*, Simon Millanges, Bourdeaux, 1580, book I, ch. 13.

<sup>6</sup> M. de Foronda y Aguilera, *Estancias y viajes del emperador Carlos V*, S.n., S.l., 1914, pp. 260, 267-268, 455.

<sup>7</sup> M. Hengerer, *Access at the Court of the Austrian Habsburg Dynasty (Mid-Sixteenth to Mid-Eighteenth Century): A Highway from Presence to Politics?*, in D. Raeymaekers, S. Derks (eds.), *The key to power? The culture of access in princely courts, 1400-1750*, Brill, Leiden, 2016, p. 146. See also N. Rubello, *La présence des princes: gli incontri tra sovrani come momenti d'eccezione nei rapporti diplomatici tra gli Stati (XVI secolo)*, in E. Plebani, E. Valeri, P. Volpini (eds.), *Diplomazie. Linguaggi, negoziati e ambasciatori fra XV e XVI secolo*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2018, pp. 139-160.

encounters between Christian and Muslim rulers, due not only to religious differences but also to the very complicated negotiation of rank and reciprocity. Sultan Saladin explained it more clearly when Richard, King of England, arrived in Palestine in 1192 and sought a meeting with him: Saladin refused with well-founded arguments, reminding him that it was customary for kings to meet each other only after a peace treaty had been agreed, and thereafter «it is not seemly for them to make war upon each other»<sup>8</sup>.

However, it was licit to meet a prince of a different religion as a victor or a protector, exhibiting preponderance and dominion. As a Burgundian ruler with a crusader background Charles V did not have a long tradition for such encounters but he did as king of Castile and Aragon<sup>9</sup>. The long coexistence between Christians and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula throughout the Middle Ages enabled the development of a specific tradition of interreligious royal encounters which Charles V revived. From the foundation of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada as a vassal of Castile to the final conquest of Granada by the Catholic Kings (1246-1492), these encounters gave rise to a specific iconographic tradition of submissive Muslim kings before Christian sovereigns. In the Chapel of Saint Catherine of the Cathedral of Burgos, for example, there is a fourteenth century wooden carving of Alhamar (Muhammad I, the first Nasrid king of Granada), kneeling before Ferdinand III of Castile and kissing his hand as a sign of vassalage. The delivery of the keys of the city of Granada from its last king, Boabdil, to the Catholic Kings (1492) was also repeatedly represented in Castilian contemporary art<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> J. Gillingham, *Richard I*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1999, pp. 20-21; I. Shoval, *King John's Delegation to the Almohad Court (1212): Medieval Interreligious Interactions and Modern Historiography*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> The Iberian *Reconquista* (from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries) was connected to the general movement of the Christian Crusades, but was often fought under specific rules and less violent forms of conquest due to the long coexistence and vicinity of Muslims and Christians. When the Christian Kings of Portugal or Aragon sought aid from Northern Europeans crusaders for conquering some cities, the result was catastrophic: both in the sack of Barbastro (1063) and Lisbon (1147), these northern knights killed and sacked whereas local capitulations forbade such actions. L. Villegas-Aristizábal, *Norman and Anglo-Norman Interventions in the Iberian Wars of Reconquest Before and After the First Crusade*, in P. Oldfield, K. Hurlock (eds.), *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge, 2015, pp. 103-122.

<sup>10</sup> Boabdil's surrender was carved in the choir of the cathedral of Toledo (by Rodrigo Alemán) and the Royal Chapel of Granada (by Felipe Vigarny). See F. Pereda Espeso, *Ad vivum? o cómo narrar en imágenes la historia de la Guerra de Granada*, «Reales Sitios», 154 (2002), pp. 2-20; M. Á. Ladero Quesada, *La rendición de Granada, en el gran lienzo de Francisco Pradilla*, in G. Anes, C. Manso Porto (eds.), *Isabel La Católica y el arte*, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 2006, pp. 186-189.





Fig. 3. Anon., *Vassalage of King Alhamar of Granada before Ferdinand III of Castile*, Chapel of Saint Catherine, Cathedral of Burgos (mid-14th century)

In contrast with Iberian tradition, Charles V's contemporary and rival, the French king Francis I, never met his ally the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. They communicated indirectly through agents and ambassadors perhaps to prevent the humiliating image of the submission of a Christian king before an "Infidel" ruler.

After the conquest of Granada in 1492, the Castilian tradition of satellite Muslim kingdoms moved to North Africa, where the kingdoms of Bejaia and Tlemcen (in current Algeria) were formally under Castilian protectorate from 1510<sup>11</sup>. The relationship between the Spanish Monarchy and the Kingdom of Tunis was not clearly established before 1534, but some records remain showing that there were contacts. For example, Mulay Hassan employed the Sicilian noble Visconte Cicala as his ambassador with the Knights of St John, and cooperated with them to contain Ottoman expansion<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Charles V to the Marquis of Comares, 17 January 1534, Ags, E, 28, f. 132; J.M. Escribano Páez, *Negotiating with the "Infidel": Imperial Expansion and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in the Early Modern Maghreb (1492-1516)*, «Itinerario» 40:2 (2016), pp. 192-194, 200-203.

<sup>12</sup> J.A. de Funes, *Coronica de la ilustrissima milicia y sagrada religion de San Juan Bautista de Jerusalem...*, Pedro Verges, Zaragoza, 1639, vol. II, pp. 95-97.



Fig. 4. R. Alemán, *Surrender of Granada*, Lower Choir, Cathedral of Toledo (1495).

There are also testimonies of Mulay Hassan's contacts with Charles V before being dethroned by Barbarossa. Afterwards, he even offered one of his daughters as a lady-in-waiting for the empress Isabella of Portugal. It appears that the little girl was captured during the conquest of Tunis in 1535 and sent to Spain as a slave. Subsequently her father begged Charles V to provide her with a dowry to profess as a nun in a royal convent and she eventually became a member of the Poor Clare convent of Santa Isabel in Barcelona<sup>13</sup>. For their part, some Ottoman chroniclers (including Bostan Çelebi and Seyyid Muradi) insisted on the impious nature of the Hafsids King, who had allied with "Infidels" instead of agreeing with his coreligionists<sup>14</sup>.

In other words, inter-confessional diplomacy in the Mediterranean lands was not exceptional, but the personal involvement and meeting of princes was. Mediterranean diplomacy is being currently analysed through the agency of frontier agents as a "diplomacy from below", but

<sup>13</sup> *Consultas* for Charles V, Toledo, May 1534, Ags, E, 28, f. 168v. She adopted the name sor Juana de África. *Consultas* for Charles V, Toledo, 28 March 1538, Ags, E, 42, f. 190; F. Marca OFM, *Chronica seraphica de la santa provincia de Cataluña de la Regular Observancia de Nuestro Padre S. Francisco*, Imp. Carmelitas Descalzos, Barcelona, 1764, part 2, pp. 364-371.

<sup>14</sup> See E. Türkçelik's article in this same volume.

in this case we witness a courtly encounter<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, Rothman's argument that «all inter-imperial communication is mediated»<sup>16</sup> is also valid in this encounter between Charles V and Mulay Hassan. The two monarchs spoke through interpreters and their meeting was preceded by the negotiations of a group of go-betweens from Genoa and Granada. The Genoese, both as merchants and renegades, were the main European community in Tunis since the thirteenth century and benefitted from the profitable trade conditions set by the Hafsid dynasty<sup>17</sup>. The preliminary contacts between Mulay Hasan and the emperor appear to have been made through a Genoese renegade who is named in the sources as "Chimea" or "Ximaa" and was sent to the imperial court in November 1534 to beg for military support<sup>18</sup>. Another Genoese, Arnolfo Camughi, perhaps a merchant or even a captain of Mulay Hassan's Christian guard, sought help from the Knights of St John in Malta and from the imperial Viceroy of Sicily<sup>19</sup>. A third Genoese, the merchant Luigi Presenda, equally experienced in Maghrebian affairs, continued the contacts on behalf of Charles V. Presenda was given written instructions by the emperor, and letters for Mulay Hassan and his allies, but was not given the official title of ambassador to minimise the risk to the emperor's reputation. Presenda negotiated with Mulay Hassan and drafted the conditions of the imperial support, but his ambiguous status made him looking more like an enemy spy than an official diplomat<sup>20</sup>. His mission ended

<sup>15</sup> N. Planas, *Diplomacy from Below or Cross-Confessional Loyalty? The "Christians of Algiers" between the Lord of Kuko and the King of Spain in the Early 1600s*, «Journal of Early Modern History», 19:2-3 (2015), pp. 153-173.

<sup>16</sup> E.N. Rothman, *Afterword: Intermediaries, Mediation, and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, «Journal of Early Modern History», 19:2-3 (2015), p. 249.

<sup>17</sup> E. Marengo, *Genova e Tunisi, 1388-1515*, Tipografia Artigianelli di S. Giuseppe, Roma, 1901; R. Salicrú Llach, *La diplomacia y las embajadas como expresión de los contactos interculturales entre cristianos y musulmanes en el Mediterráneo Occidental durante la Baja Edad Media*, «Estudios de Historia de España», 9 (2007), pp. 77-106.

<sup>18</sup> L. del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero, y segundo volumen de la primera parte de la descripción general de Affrica, con todos los sucessos de guerra, y cosas memorables...*, René Rabut, Granada, 1573, p. 247v; S. Boubaker, *L'empereur Charles Quint et le roi Mawlay al-Hasan (1520-1535)*, in S. Boubaker, C. Ilham Álvarez Dopico (eds.), *Empreintes espagnoles dans l'histoire tunisienne*, Trea, Gijón, 2011, pp. 20-21.

<sup>19</sup> J. A. de Funes, *Coronica de la ilustrissima milicia* cit., p. 134; Anfrano Camughi to the Viceroy of Sicily, Tripoli, 24 December 1534, Ags, E, 462, in É. De La Primaudaie, *Documents inédits sur l'occupation espagnole en Afrique (1506-1594)*, A. Jourdan, Alger, 1875, p. 92; S. Boubaker, *L'empereur Charles Quint* cit., pp. 20, 33, 47-48, 50.

<sup>20</sup> *Memorias de Luis de Presenda*, Madrid, 7 November 1534, Ags, E, 462, in É. De La Primaudaie, *Documents inédits* cit., pp. 87-92; Instructions by Charles V, Madrid, 14 November 1534, in P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, en casa de Bartholome Paris, Pamplona, 1614, pp. 195-201; Charles V to Mulay Hassan,



in failure when he was captured by Barbarossa in Tunis. After a thorough interrogation, he was executed<sup>21</sup>.

Granada's noble families constituted the second group of go-betweens, with a rather different profile. They had a direct experience in dealing with Muslim conquered people and played a major role in Castilian expansion in the Maghreb, apart from having an easier access to the imperial court as elite actors. A group of noble families based in Granada like the Orozco (Lords of Pioz), Mendoza (marquises of Mondéjar) and Fernández de Córdoba (marquises of Alcaudete and Comares), dominated the government of the Castilian strongholds in Northern Africa, and they also took part in the Tunis campaign, where they intermediated with local authorities<sup>22</sup>.

Despite their preliminary contacts, when Charles V's armada anchored in Carthage, the dethroned king Mulay Hassan remained hidden in the outskirts of the Bay of Tunis and sought confirmation that he would be accepted in the imperial camp<sup>23</sup>. According to the detailed chronicle of events by the imperial secretary Antoine Perrenin, one of the main worries of Charles V's ministers was how to ascertain the Muslim monarch's true intentions and to establish how to overcome the differences in their political cultures, so that they could exchange emissaries and letters. By emphasizing these questions, Perrenin showed the prevalence and centrality of what linguistic anthropology calls «metapragmatic discourse» in diplomatic writings, a «discourse that explicitly characterizes practices, without necessarily determining their social meaning», obsessed to evaluate such artefacts' authenticity based on their conformity to certain evolving standards<sup>24</sup>.

Madrid, 14 November 1534, in *Memorial Histórico Español*, vol. VI, Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1853, pp. 516-517; *Resumen de la conferencia con el rey de Túnez*, 23 July 1535, Ags, E, 462, in E. De La Primaudaie, *Documents inédits* cit., pp. 120-122.

<sup>21</sup> P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia general de todas las cosas sucedidas en el mundo en estos 50 anos de nuestro tiempo...*, Andrea de Portonarijs, Salamanca, 1562-1563, ff. 194v-195r; E. Sola, *Corsarios o reyes. De la saga de los Barbarroja a Miguel de Cervantes*, Archivo de la Frontera, Alcalá de Henares, 1998, pp. 51-53.

<sup>22</sup> L. Salazar y Castro, *Historia genealogica de la casa de Haro*, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 1959, pp. 113-114; A. Gómez de Castro, *De las hazañas de Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros*, Fundación Universitaria Española, Madrid, 1984, p. 257; Y.-G. Liang, *Family and Empire: The Fernández de Córdoba and the Spanish Realm*, Pennsylvania University Press, Philadelphia, 2011, pp. 2-3, 149-169.

<sup>23</sup> Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V, Genoa, 22 October 1534, Ags, E, 1367, n. 120; A. de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V*, Imp. del Patronato de Huérfanos de Intendencia e Intervención Militares, Madrid, 1922, t. 3, p. 203.

<sup>24</sup> E.N. Rothman, *Afterword* cit., p. 251; M. Silverstein, *Metapragmatic Discourse and Metapragmatic Function*, in J.A. Lucy (ed.), *Reflexive Language: Reported Speech and Metapragmatics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 33-58.

Thus, while Charles V had dispatched Luigi Presenda with official letters, Tunisian emissaries did not comply European diplomatic traditions because they did not show accreditations and their royal letters were not sealed. On 24 June 1535 a “Moor” was received by Charles V after assurances that he was a secret envoy of Mulay Hassan, and was said «to have lost his letters of credence along the way»<sup>25</sup>. The next day, «three large Moors on horseback» delivered to Charles V «a letter that they certified and assured him was from the King of Tunis [...] and the letters of the signature were written according to the King’s normal usage, and sent unsealed, according, as they said, to their customs»<sup>26</sup>. Trust was gradually built. A Spanish interpreter (most probably Alvar Gómez de Orozco “El Zagal”, the Granada-born imperial translator) confirmed that the Tunisian envoys were acting according to their local traditions. In reciprocity, imperial presents were given to these emissaries showing the good will and munificence of Charles V: The first Tunisian emissary received «one hundred doubloons as a gift, with many rich cloths of gold and silk to show His Majesty’s liberality», while the second mission was rewarded «with gifts of garments»<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, some precautions were taken: a Tunisian noble was kept as hostage while Orozco was sent to the Tunisian camp as Charles V’s envoy<sup>28</sup>.

With the preliminary exchanges over, the meeting of Charles V and Mulay Hassan on 29 June 1535 was carefully arranged. It was described in considerable detail in contemporary sources and chronicles, both as

<sup>25</sup> «Que había perdido en el camino las cartas de creencia». A. Perrenin, *Goleta de la ciudad de Túnez, 1535. Jornada de Túnez*, in R. González Cuerva, M.Á. Bunes Ibarra (eds.), *Túnez 1535: Voces de una campaña europea*, CSIC, Madrid, 2017, p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> «Tres moros grandes a caballo [delivered to Charles V] una carta que ellos certificaron y afirmaron ser del rey de Túnez [...] Y estarán escritas las dichas letras de la firma acostumbrada del rey, sin sellos, que ellos dicen que ellos tienen esta costumbre». A. Perrenin, *Goleta de la ciudad de Túnez* cit., p. 77. This encounter is also detailed in the letter of Charles V to his brother Ferdinand I, camp before Tunis, 24 June 1535, in B. Hofinger et al. (eds.), *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I. Familienkorrespondenz, V, 1535 und 1536*, Böhlau, Wien, 2015, p. 266.

<sup>27</sup> The first received «cien doblones en don, con muchos atavíos ricos de oro y de seda para mostrar la liberalidad de Su Majestad», and the second departed «con presentes de vestidos». A. Perrenin, *Goleta de la ciudad de Túnez* cit., pp. 77-78.

<sup>28</sup> Mulay Hassan kept to this style of diplomatic communication – so uncomfortable to European Christians – in which trust was guaranteed by the delivery of gifts and not by the exchange of formal documents. In 1536, the King of Tunis wrote to the imperial secretary, Francisco de los Cobos, that he sent «faqui Mahoma cabeza de nuestros oficiales» to ask for further imperial support against the Ottomans. This Mahoma carried as gift «un caballo overo de crines largas». Bernardino de Mendoza, then governor of La Goleta, remarked that this envoy carried no proxy to negotiate, but that Mulay Hassan had asked that Mahoma be entirely trusted. Mulay Hassan to Francisco de los Cobos, 1536 (with addenda by Bernardino de Mendoza), in É. De La Primaudaie, *Documents inédits* cit., pp. 238-239.

a unique event and as a precedent. Mulay was received «honourably as a king», escorted by three Spanish grandees (the duke of Alba, the count of Benavente and the marquis of Valle Siciliana). The arrival of the Muslim king was regarded as a major spectacle by the diverse imperial forces, so that almost all the soldiers (excepts the sentinels) crowded around to witness the scene<sup>29</sup>. However, the actual performance was limited to a selected courtly entourage and took place in the imperial pavilion. In the salutation, Charles V was bareheaded and eager to show his magnanimity with the dethroned king as well as his superior status. The result was a confusing scene during which Mulay tried to kneel before him and to kiss his hand, a gesture commonly understood as an act of submission in both Christian and Muslim cultures – including the Ottoman *el öpmek*<sup>30</sup>. However, Charles V refused to receive those compliments and instead put his arms around Mulay's shoulders, nearly embracing him. Mulay then kissed Charles's shoulders, a Muslim sign of homage, while the imperial ministers feared that he would attempt to kiss Charles V's neck. The official version of the campaign drafted by the imperial secretary Antoine Perrenin skipped this embarrassing moment, which is recorded by other witnesses<sup>31</sup>. Mulay seemed to feel humiliated by the Emperor's condescendence and physical contact, because he claimed himself to be the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu'minin*) as the representative of the last old Arab dynasty, which considered Mamelukes and Ottomans as parvenus<sup>32</sup>.

The formal and polite conversation between both princes was translated by Alvar Gómez Orozco, who was appointed as Mulay's companion and became his shadow throughout the campaign<sup>33</sup>. Apart from the confusion in the initial greeting, the scene was well-prepared

<sup>29</sup> N. Guldin, *Relato de la jornada del emperador Carlos V a Túnez*, in R. González Cuerva and M.A. Bunes Ibarra (eds.), *Túnez 1535 cit.*, p. 123; P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida cit.*, pp. 245-247.

<sup>30</sup> P. Brummett, *A Kiss is Just a Kiss: Rituals of Submission along the East-West Divide*, in M. Birchwood, M. Dimmock (eds.), *Cultural Encounters Between East and West, 1453-1699*, Cambridge Scholar Press, Amersham, 2005, pp. 112-114.

<sup>31</sup> A. Perrenin, *Goleta de la ciudad de Túnez cit.*, p. 80; A. de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del Emperador cit.*, p. 271; P. Girón, *Crónica del emperador Carlos V*, CSIC, Madrid, 1964, p. 49-50.

<sup>32</sup> P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia cit.*, f. 201r. For the humbling symbolism of kissing shoulders to a superior in Persian tradition, P. Brummett, *A Kiss is Just a Kiss cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>33</sup> A. de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del Emperador cit.*, p. 271. Orozco was later appointed governor of Bona (Annaba, Algeria). R. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Crimen y corrupción en la frontera africana: el alcaide Alvar Gómez de Orozco, el Zagal*, in F. Toro Ceballos, J. Rodríguez Molina (eds.), *Fronteras multiculturales. Homenaje a Pedro Martínez Montávez*, Diputación de Jaén, Jaén, 2016, pp. 199-208.



and avoided further cultural clashes. A dais with cushions was prepared for the king to sit on the ground (a practice familiar to Spaniards where the Iberian-Moorish tradition of domestic *estrados* was maintained long after the expulsion, albeit for noble women who continued to sit on raised platforms covered in cushions<sup>34</sup>). Moreover, Mulay and his retinue were offered suitable refreshments, sweet waters and delicacies that took into account and respected their restrictions with regards to wine and meat.<sup>35</sup>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> act: The campaign

Mulay Hassan was easily accepted in the society of princes: he was lodged in the pavilion of Louis of Flanders, a distant relative of Charles V, and received a company of German infantry as escort. In the public appearances during the campaign, the King of Tunis formed a monarchic triumvirate with Charles V and the *infante* Louis of Portugal, all of them separated from the rest of the military leaders<sup>36</sup>.

The imperial chroniclers and painters had no major problem accepting Mulay Hassan and his retinue as a king with his court<sup>37</sup>. The Flemish painter Jan Vermeyen portrayed both the king and his eldest son, Mulay Ahmed (Abū al-`Abbās Ahmed III al-Hafsi), who was referred to as «the prince», using the rhetorical devices of princely portraits<sup>38</sup>. Vermeyen followed with great interest the customs and

<sup>34</sup> B. Fuchs, *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2009, pp. 14-15, 121-122.

<sup>35</sup> P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>36</sup> N. Guldin, *Relato de la jornada cit.*, pp. 125, 126; L. del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero, y segundo volumen cit.*, p. 255r.

<sup>37</sup> S. Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., 2012, p. xiv; E.N. Rothman, *Afterword cit.*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>38</sup> J. L. González García, «Pinturas tejidas». *La guerra como arte y el arte de la guerra en torno a la empresa de Túnez (1535)*, «Reales Sitios», 174 (2007), pp. 33-34. Both oil canvases are lost, but an engraving of Mulay Hassan's portrait (1) and an etching (2) and a Rubens's copy of Mulay Ahmed's portrait (3) remain: (1) S. de Parijs (after Vermeyen), *Mulay Hassan* («Cecy est le roy de Thonis contrefaict a la vie»), Antwerpen, 1535, Bnf, Cabinet des Estampes, reproduced in S. Haag, K. Schmitz-Von Ledebur (eds.), *Kaiser Karl V. erobert Tunis cit.*, p. 49. (2) J.C. Vermeyen, *Portrait of Mulay Ahmad*, circa 1535-1536, etching, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. (3) P.P. Rubens (after a painting by J.C. Vermeyen), *Portrait of Mulay Ahmad*, circa 1609, oil on panel, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, studied in J. S. Held, *Rubens' 'King of Tunis' and Vermeyen's Portrait of Mulay Ahmad*, «Art Quarterly», 3 (1940), pp. 30-36.



Fig. 5. P.P. Rubens (after J.C. Vermeyen), *Portrait of Mulay Ahmad*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (ca. 1609).

traditions of the Tunisian «retinue», which is how he defined the group who joined the imperial camp<sup>39</sup>. Other contemporary observers from the Netherlands and Germany, less accustomed to such sights, marvelled at these courtiers sitting on the ground and particularly at the sight of a king who sat by squatting on a «tapestry» in their midst as was his custom. They were embarrassed by the small number of soldiers he had brought to the campaign, as well as the unceremonious character and loud and (as they saw it) disrespectful voices of Mulay Hassan's noble entourage even when they were with him<sup>40</sup>. Meanwhile, the Granada-born chronicler and eyewitness Luis de Mármol Carvajal lamented the decadence of this exiled court by contrast with the situation before 1534. Tunis, he

explained, had been organised according to a strict, social hierarchy with well-defined offices and clear precedence, a system comparable to the European framework. According to him, the Hafsids had followed the same style for eating and negotiating as the Kings of Fez, thus highlighting the awareness of some of these chroniclers of the different courtly traditions and societies across the Mediterranean<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> J.C. Vermeyen, *King Mulay Hasan and his retinue at a repast in Tunis*, circa 1535, engraving, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, studied in S. Borsch, *Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen: King Mulay Hasan and his retinue at a repast in Tunis*, «The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin», N.S., 52:2 (1994), p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> The King «la mayor parte del tiempo, o casi siempre, estaba sentado en tierra sobre un tapiz que le ponian, y estaba siempre sentado en cuclillas, que era cosa de ver, mas así es la costumbre de la tierra. Y así estaban todos alrededor de él en tierra, vestidos mal y desnudos, sin mucha ceremonia. Antes, muchas veces hablaban todos juntamente tan alto, más que el mismo rey, aunque siempre retenia en sí alguna majestad real». A. Perrenin, *Goleta de la ciudad de Túnez* cit., p. 87.

<sup>41</sup> L. del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero, y segundo volumen* cit., pp. 244v-245v. Some modern authors have assumed that there was a general courtly Maghrebi style, humbler and more public than contemporary Ottoman protocol. J. Dakhliia, J. Valensi, *Le spectacle de la Cour : éléments de comparaison des modes de souveraineté au Maghreb et dans l'Empire ottoman*, in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, La Documentation Française, Paris, 1992, pp. 148-152.



Fig. 6. J.C. Vermeyen, *King Mulay Hasan and his retinue at a repast in Tunis*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (ca. 1535).

The rules of the princely game were clear to both sides, so that the recently acquired bond of protection was expressed through the exchange of gifts, which were much richer from the imperial side. Charles V gave the king 40.000 ducats and a costly cargo of brocade and silk, i.e., the money and clothes required for Mulay Hassan to appear again as a real king. For his part, Mulay offered an auburn mare, aware that Maghrebian horses were much appreciated in Christian Europe<sup>42</sup>.

Mulay Hassan needed more than new clothes and the presentation of gifts to demonstrate his royal status. He was deliberately concerned with performing and thereby demonstrating his nobility. Christian eye-witnesses were unanimous in characterising him as a «courteous and liberal» prince who «demonstrated that he was a king despite being expelled from his city»<sup>43</sup>. His dignity was comparable to that expected from a Christian king, except for his sexual vices, which were said to

<sup>42</sup> P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida cit.*, pp. 247, 255.

<sup>43</sup> «Cortés y liberal». L. del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero, y segundo volumen cit.*, p. 253r. «Era hombre de buena persona, que demostraba ser Rey aunque echado de su ciudad». P. Girón, *Crónica del emperador cit.*, p. 59.



include polygamy and paedophilia<sup>44</sup>. The imperial chroniclers' writers had a difficult balancing act: they needed to stress his majesty despite his religious and other forms of deviance, because as the friend and ally of the Emperor he could be an infidel, but not worthless.

However, the most efficient and visual way to demonstrate his aristocratic excellence was through chivalric skills. During the campaign of Tunis, Mulay Hassan and his entourage took part in a game of canes<sup>45</sup>. This was a type of tournament which had originated in Muslim courts and remained very popular among the Iberian Christian nobility, and to a lesser extent in Italy. Vermeyen depicted these Tunisian tournaments as an exotic event for a Flemish audience in three drawings: one entitled *A Fantasy in Tunis: the Game of Canes*<sup>46</sup> and two others both known as *Military tournament in Tunis*<sup>47</sup>. However, it is unclear whether these scenes really depicted the events in Tunis in 1535, or similar tournaments held in Naples (1536), Valladolid (1536) or Toledo (1539), because it was normal for the Christian participants to dress up as Moors, often with clothing bought in the Kingdom of Tlemcen<sup>48</sup>. The game of canes was also used as a distinctive Spanish contribution to celebrate and enhance important royal events all around Europe, such as during the celebration of Phillip II and Mary Tudor's marriage in London (1554). Games of canes were more habitual in Italy where Iberian influence was greater, such as Naples, Rome, Milan, and Bologna, but Italians were also very familiar with the customs of neighbouring North African Moors and the Ottoman Empire<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> «Era viciosísimo, sucio en las torpezas de la carne en todo género». P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida* cit., p. 247.

<sup>45</sup> N. Guldin, *Relato de la jornada* cit., pp. 126-127; P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia* cit., ch. 14; P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida* cit., p. 247.

<sup>46</sup> J.C. Vermeyen, *Une fantasia à Tunis : le jeu des cannes*, s.d., Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, Fonds des dessins et miniatures, Inv. 19191, reproduced and commented in J.C. Hernández Núñez, *Fantasia caballeresca en Túnez*, in A.J. Morales (ed.), *La Fiesta en la Europa de Carlos V*, SECC, Sevilla, 2000, p. 375; T.-H. Borchert, *Reiterphantasie in Tunis*, in L. Altringer et al. (eds.), *Kaiser Karl V. (1500-1558): Macht und Ohnmacht Europas*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, 2000, notice 371.2.

<sup>47</sup> J.C. Vermeyen, *Tournoi militaire à Tunis*, s.d., Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, Fonds des dessins et miniatures, Inv. 19192 and 19193, reproduced and commented in T.-H. Borchert, *Das "Mohrenturnier"*, in L. Altringer et al. (eds.), *Kaiser Karl V.* cit., notice 371.1.

<sup>48</sup> H.J. Horn, *Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, painter of Charles V and his conquest of Tunis, Paintings, Etchings, Drawings, Cartoons and Tapestries*, Davaco, Doornspijk, 1989, vol. I, p. 25; N. Dacos, *Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, Martin van Heemskerck, Herman Posthumus. À propos de deux livres récents*, «Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art», 60 (1991), p. 100; S. Deswarte-Rose, *L'expédition de Tunis* cit., p. 118.

<sup>49</sup> B. Fuchs, *Exotic Nation* cit., pp. 94-101; J. Irigoyen-García, 'Poco os falta para moros, pues tanto lo parecís': Impersonating the Moor in the Spanish Mediterranean, «Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies», 12:3 (2011), pp. 356-357.



Fig. 7. J.C. Vermeyen, *A Fantasy in Tunis: the Game of Canes*, Louvre Museum, Paris (ca. 1535).

By showing his mastery in the riding style of the *gineta* (in which riders used shorter stirrups that allowed for an easier manoeuvring of the horse and in spear-throwing), Mulay Hassan both demonstrated his aristocratic skills, which compared well with those of Spanish noblemen, and deeply impressed the northern European members of the campaign for whom it was more of a novelty<sup>50</sup>. It is recorded that the Tunisian riders engaged with Christian riders in this game, as happened again in Naples in 1543. On that occasion, as Mulay Hassan began another period of exile, a game of canes was held in his honour, with Spanish, Italian, and Tunisian knights all participating in these equestrian games. It can be hypothesized that the game of canes served as the expression of a shared cultural practice between the three Mediterranean realms<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> N. Guldin, *Relato de la jornada* cit., pp. 126-127; R. Puddu, 'Toros y cañas': *I giochi equestri nella Spagna del Secolo d'Oro*, «Quaderni Storici», 117:3 (2004), 807-829.

<sup>51</sup> P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida* cit., p. 247; G. De Spenis, *Breve cronica dai 2 giugno 1543 a 25 maggio 1547*, ed. by B. Capasso, «Archivio Storico per le provincie napoletane», 2 (1877), pp. 518-521. There are also later testimonies of such mock battles between Moors of Tlemcen and Christians of the garrison of Oran in J. Irigoyen-García, *Poco os falta para moros* cit., p. 362.

Returning to the Tunis campaign, it should be pointed that despite these signs of trust and acceptance, the Emperor ensured that Mulay did not have freedom of movement. Orozco was his permanent escort, his eternal guard and his means of communicating with Charles V. Furthermore, Mulay Hassan was not allowed to take part in the imperial war council, although he knew the local situation much better than any of them. The imperial generals appreciated this and discreetly consulted him on the strategy to follow during visits in which they showed him all due reverence<sup>52</sup>. The King had a limited ability to impose his views, both because of the limitations in communication and lack of financial or military means with which to apply pressure. At times he resorted to the most pathetic means to make his opinion clear. After the conquest of the fortress of La Goleta, the imperial generals were reluctant to risk an attack on the city of Tunis and the option of withdrawing was raised. Orozco informed Mulay Hassan of this debate and the King refused to eat and sleep until the lieutenant general, the Marquis of Vasto, assured him that it had been decided to proceed with the conquest of the city<sup>53</sup>. Mulay Hassan soon lamented this, because after the city's surrender, the imperial army subjected it to a cruel sack that impacted even Charles V's chroniclers. The power of Mulay Hassan was minimal at that critical moment: his former vassals clamoured for him to intercede on their behalf, but Charles V's gracious promises were meaningless in the face of the troop's appetite for booty<sup>54</sup>.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Act: The Treaty

After the conquest of the city of Tunis and with much of the old state that Mulay Hassan had governed under their control, the two rulers negotiated a treaty of vassalage. In effect, Charles V imposed it on his powerless new client on 6 August 1535. The document has been repeatedly presented as the start of a diplomatic revolution, normalising trans-religious pacts. The most salient element of its many detailed clauses was the declaration of perpetual friendship, a key element of treaties among Christian princes, rather than stipulating that the alliance was merely for a few years as it was customary with similar agreements

<sup>52</sup> P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia* cit., f. 201v; G. de Illescas, *Jornada de Carlos V á Túnez*, Real Academia Española, Madrid, 1804, pp. 25-27.

<sup>53</sup> L. del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero, y segundo volumen* cit., pp. 255r-255v.

<sup>54</sup> P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida* cit., p. 279; L. del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero, y segundo volumen* cit., pp. 259r-260r.



with Muslim powers.<sup>55</sup> The direct imposition of conditions by Charles V is fully appreciated if we study its language: a feudal terminology alien to Maghreb political culture is employed, including the option of dethroning again Mulay Hassan if this imperial “protégé” failed to pay the *parias*, that is the agreed contributions, for three consecutive years. The annual payment of money and a symbolic gift in exchange for military protection were deeply rooted Medieval traditions. In this case, the King of Tunis had to deliver an annual tribute of 12.000 ducats, six good horses and twelve falcons. Additionally, he ceded the strategic stronghold of La Goleta, which secured the entrance to the Tunisian port, accepting the creation of a Spanish presidio – a fortified settlement – there.<sup>56</sup> In the aforementioned tapestries by Vermeyen, the scene of the treaty’s signature is represented with Charles V in a dominant position and Orozco acting as translator. The event seems discreet and secluded: for Vermeyen, neither the signing of the treaty nor the journeys of the Emperor and the King were central to the narrative of the campaign he depicted in this series.

It would have been unprecedented if Orozco had been the only translator and participant in such an important performative and illocutionary act as the signing of the treaty<sup>57</sup>. In fact, two Spanish Franciscan friars, fray Diego Valentín and Bartolomé de los Ángeles, complemented this work, which was under the strict control of imperial officials<sup>58</sup>. The texts, with Spanish and Arabic versions, had imperial and royal seals affixed, following the usage of the imperial chancellery. Since it was impossible to have a single ceremony for the oath under the name of the same god, the performance was flexibly interpreted. Charles V put his hand over a cross woven in the vest of a commander of the Order of Saint James, thus adding an element of crusade into to the act. Meanwhile, Mulay Hassan performed the ceremony of obedience (*bay’a*) usual in Muslim political practice: he drew his sword one span and swore in the name of Allah and the Coran. The scene continued with Mulay’s reverent

<sup>55</sup> P. Marino (ed.), *Tratados internacionales de España. Periodo de preponderancia española, Carlos V, II, España-Norte de África*, CSIC, Madrid, 1980, pp. xvi, xci; H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., pp. 68-70.

<sup>56</sup> S. Boubaker, *L’empereur Charles Quint* cit., pp. 29-36.

<sup>57</sup> B. Stollberg-Rillinger, *The Impact of Communication Theory on the Analysis of the Early Modern Statebuilding Processes*, in W. Blockmans, A. Holenstein, J. Mathieu (eds.), *Empowering Interactions. Political Culture and the Emergence of the State in Europe 1300-1900*, Ashgate, Farnham 2009, p. 315.

<sup>58</sup> P. Marino (ed.), *Tratados internacionales de España* cit., p. 52; A. de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del Emperador* cit., p. 246.

words towards his new master and with the Tunisian knights kissing Charles V's hand<sup>59</sup>.

Charles V immediately sent the Spanish version of the treaty to his wife Isabella and another in French to his brother Ferdinand I, and they both sponsored the publication of the document in their respective lands. After only three months, it was available in print in Spanish, French, German and Italian<sup>60</sup>. Before that, Italian diplomats escorting Charles V to Tunis, like the Milanese orator Giovanni Tomaso Gallarati, got manuscript summaries of the negotiation, but did not obtain a copy of the final treaty until it was printed<sup>61</sup>. Charles V demonstrated with this text the right way to interact with a Muslim prince: acting as a magnanimous master while obtaining substantial concessions from him, by contrast with the humiliating conditions imposed by Ottoman diplomacy to other Christian princes<sup>62</sup>. To dissipate doubts on the credibility of Mulay Hassan's oath, Charles V declared that his word could be trusted because Mulay was an honourable king, albeit African<sup>63</sup>. However, this European idea of honour and dynastic legitimacy was challenged by evidence of Mulay Hassan's lack of local support. Charles V confessed to the ambassador of Ferrara and also wrote to his brother Ferdinand I that in effect he did not trust the reinstated king because Mulay Hassan had no supporters in Tunis. He was aware that Mulay Hassan's former vassals who had dethroned him one year ago, hated him even more after the savage sack of the city<sup>64</sup>. In spite of Charles V's well-

<sup>59</sup> A. de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del Emperador* cit., p. 292; P. de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida* cit., p. 287; S. Boubaker, *L'empereur Charles Quint* cit., pp. 35-36.

<sup>60</sup> Isabella of Portugal to Charles V, Madrid, 30 September 1535, Ags, E, 31, f. 205v; Charles V to Ferdinand I, La Goleta, 16 August 1535, in B. Hofinger et al. (eds.), *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I.* cit., p. 292; *Vertrags artickel Römischer Keis. Ma. vnd des restituirten Königs von Tunisi: Sampt jrer Maiestet ankunfft in Italien, und ettlichen andern frischen zeytungen*; 30. Septembris. 1535, s.l., 1535; *Capitoli dello Appontamento fatto tra la Cesarea Maesta dello Imperatore [et] il Re di Tunisi*, Antonio Blado, Roma, 1535.

<sup>61</sup> Giovanni Tomaso Gallarati to the Duke Francesco II of Milan, Di galera a Capo Zafrano, 17 August 1535, in D. Muoni, *Tunisi: Spedizione di Carlo V Imperatore*, 30 maggio--17 agosto 1535, Giuseppe Bernardoni, Milano, 1876, pp. 88-89.

<sup>62</sup> The restitution of Tunis to Mulay Hassan was not regarded as a concession towards Muslims but as another trait of Charles V's glory. In one of the triumphal arches for the imperial entry in Rome (1536), it was represented thus: «sua Maestà e tribunal sedere restituire la Corona al Re de Tunisi, alli piedi del quale si leggeua: *Mulfasses insigni victoria restitutus*». Z. Cessino, *La triumphante entrata di Carlo V. imperatore augusto inelalma* [sic] *citta de Roma*, Roma, 1536, p. 3v.

<sup>63</sup> «por ser de hombre Africano pudiera tenerla por sospechosa, el se fiaua della porque en vn animo de vn rey como el creya que confirmaria la fe que le daua». P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia* cit., f. 201r; P. Marino (ed.), *Tratados internacionales de España* cit., pp. 50-52.

<sup>64</sup> Charles V to Ferdinand I, camp before Tunis, 14 July 1535, and Tunis, 23 July 1535, in B. Hofinger et al. (eds.), *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I.* cit., pp. 280-281, 284; J. Castillo Fernández, *Luis del Mármol Carvajal*, PhD thesis, University of Granada, 2013, p. 113.

founded doubts, the performance of the act of vassalage which followed European traditions had been a success. With this, the imperial army was ready to depart.

## Epilogue

As the Emperor suspected, his Tunisian client was incapable of consolidating his power and unable to win back the old Hafsîd kingdom. In 1543, after eight years of unstable rule, Mulay Hassan travelled to Italy to meet his old friend (as he called him in his letters) Charles V again, and to beg him to give further support. In his absence from Tunis, his son, the prince Mulay Ahmed, usurped the throne and Mulay Hassan spent his last years of life in a venturesome exile.

There are four scenes in his last period that deserve our attention. His first stop after leaving Tunis in the spring of 1543 was Palermo, where he was honourably received by local gentlemen and lodged in the Palazzo di Aiutamicristo. Charles V had stayed in this same palace in 1535 after the conquest of Tunis, thus showing a parallel in kingship and dignity<sup>65</sup>. After Palermo he sailed to Naples, where the viceroy Pedro de Toledo treated him with royal magnificence. Don Pedro went beyond the city walls to meet him, but made clear the inferior nature of an infidel king by greeting him without dismounting his horse as he would have done for a Christian monarch, while Mulay Hassan made a reverence in reply. Among the many activities offered by both the viceroy and the king in the Neapolitan summer of 1543, the most outstanding one was the aforementioned game of canes in which, for the first time in Europe, the Moorish riders could demonstrate their skills and compete with Spanish and Italian knights<sup>66</sup>.

After this, Mulay Hassan became an attraction in Christian European courts, playing the role of a friend of Christians, a disgraced but courteous and refined Muslim king. In 1547-1548, following an unsuccessful attempt to recover his kingdom that led to him being blinded by his son Mulay Ahmed, and fleeing again into exile, Mulay Hassan initiated a more extended European tour, escorted by a small retinue made up of five Tunisians and the interpreter Hernando de

<sup>65</sup> T. Fazello, *Le due deche del'Historia di Sicilia*, appresso Domenico, et Gio. Battista Guerra, Venetia, 1574, p. 915.

<sup>66</sup> G.A. Summonte, *Dell'istoria della città, e regno di Napoli*, a spese di Antonio Bulifon, Napoli, 1675, vol. IV, p. 155; G. De Spenis, *Breve cronica cit.*, pp. 518-524; B. Capasso, *Muleassen re di Tunisi nel Palazzo Colonna (1543)*, «Napoli Nobilissima», 3:7 (1894), pp. 100-103; III/8, pp. 117-120; G. Varriale, *Dal simposio alla prigionia: gli ultimi hafsîdi e il meridione italiano*, «Orientalia Parthenopea», 11 (2011), pp. 16-17.



Fig. 8. N. Van Der Horst, *Mulay Hazen Roy de Thunes*, in J. Chiflet, *Les marques d'honneur de la maison de Tassis*, Balthasar Moretus, Anvers, 1645, p. 76.

Velasco<sup>67</sup>. Mulay Hassan went to Augsburg for another personal meeting with Charles V, but before that he travelled extensively through Italy; his movements were widely disseminated by local chroniclers and especially by his friend the humanist Paolo Giovio. Giovio praised Mulay Hassan as a cultivated man who surprised his European interlocutors with his delicate taste for perfumes, his passion as a book collector and his proficiency in the philosophy of Averroes and judicial astrology, all common fields of discussion beyond religious difference<sup>68</sup>.

Mulay Hassan also visited the viceroys of Sardinia<sup>69</sup>, Sicily and Naples. During that second journey, the viceroy of Naples, Pedro de Toledo, granted him a dignified lodging and treatment, but, as a proof of Mulay Hassan's diminished status, the viceroy did not even visit

him<sup>70</sup>. Mulay Hassan was received by pope Paul III in Rome on 28 January 1548, however, as his role as an enemy of the Ottoman sultan was considered more important than his Muslim faith. The blind king refused to convert to Christianity and showed a distant – even disdainful – attitude towards the Pontiff, by refusing to take part in the usual

<sup>67</sup> Ferrante Gonzaga to Charles V, 15 January 1546, Ags, E, 1117, n. 9; Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V, Genoa, 1 december 1547, Ags, E, 1379, n. 255, f. 1v.

<sup>68</sup> The communication between both men was intermediated by Arabic translators, a situation that dismayed Giovio for «speaking through idiot interpreters» [«aunque hablábamos por intérpretes idiotas»]. P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia* cit., ff. 201r, 206r-207v, 398r; J. Naclerus, *Chronicon*, Quentel, Coloniae, 1564, p. 703; S. Deswarte-Rose, *L'expédition de Tunis* cit., pp. 117-118, 121-129.

<sup>69</sup> Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V, Genoa, 1 December 1547, Ags, E, 1379, n. 255, f. 1v.

<sup>70</sup> «no le he podido ver, pero hele hecho tratar y recoger bien». Pedro de Toledo to Charles V, Naples, 9 December 1547, Ags, E, 1037, n. 145.





Fig. 9 – N. Van Der Horst, *Muley Hazen Roy de Thunes*, in J. Chiflet, *Les marques d'honneur de la maison de Tassis*, Balthasar Moretus, Anvers, 1645, p. 77.

ceremony of prostrating himself before the pontiff and kissing the papal slipper. He deigned merely to kiss his knee<sup>71</sup>.

Fully accepted as a royal figure, Mulay was also received by the Duke of Ferrara and his famed court surgeons vainly tried to heal Mulay's burnt eyelids<sup>72</sup>. Beyond these courteous encounters, Mulay failed in the main objective of his journey. When he arrived to Augsburg he had to settle for limited lodgings as the city was full with members of the Imperial Diet and the royal family. Charles V granted him an amicable audience on 8 May 1548 but did not keep his promises of sending further military aid<sup>73</sup>.

Mulay Hassan was installed in Sicily under the protection of the viceroy, Ferrante Gonzaga, and died in July 1550 while taking part in an imperial expedition sent

to conquer Mahdia in North Africa. He was finally laid to rest in a tomb in the Tunisian holy city of Kairuan<sup>74</sup>.

The impact of Mulay Hassan's presence in Europe and the ambivalent feelings he provoked led to the creation of an incredible legend in seventeenth-century Flanders: according to it, Mulay Hassan had also stayed in Brussels, a visit that was supposed to have occurred in 1535 according to one version (when he was in hiding in the mountains of the

<sup>71</sup> P. Giovio, *Segunda parte de la historia* cit., f. 398r. In Ottoman protocol, kissing the foot meant the biggest symbol of respect and submission, as happened in the ceremonies of begging for forgiveness. P. Brummett, *A Kiss is Just a Kiss* cit., p. 116.

<sup>72</sup> G. Giraldi, *Commentario delle cose di Ferrara*, Sessa, Venetia, 1597, p. 179; A. Faustini, *Aggiunta alle Historie del Sig. Guasparo Sardi*, in G. Sardi, *Libro delle historie Ferraresi*, Giuseppe Gironi, Ferrara, 1646, p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> The prior of Granada to the master Bobadilla, Augsburg, 20 May 1548, in *Epistolae mixtae ex variis Europae locis ab anno 1537 ad 1556 scriptae*, A. Avrial, Matriti, 1898, p. 505; F. Arnoulet, *Les derniers princes hafside de Tunis (1526-1574)*, «Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies», 15-16 (1997), p. 46.

<sup>74</sup> C. Baskins, *De Aphrodisio Expugnato: The Siege of Mahdia in the Habsburg Imaginary*, «Il Capitale Culturale», 6 (2017), pp. 28-35.

Maghreb), or in 1555 (five years after his death) according to another, staying with Charles V and his family. In 1644, a celebratory publication on the grandeur of the House of Tassis included twin portraits of the King of Tunis and Jean Baptiste de Tassis, the Flemish nobleman who allegedly hosted his visit, both dressed *alla turca*<sup>75</sup>. By that time, an infidel royal friend, whose dresses were shared, represented an exotic mark of distinction rather than a problematic relationship.

## Conclusions

The rhetorically constructed friendship between Emperor Charles V and Mulay Hassan of Tunis barely hid the reality of a Christian monarch acting as the superior and protector of a Muslim vassal prince. The relationship failed to meet expectations due to several factors. Despite all that was said, Mulay Hassan lacked legitimacy because he was unable to control the territory he had ruled, or overcome local opposition, and had failed to reward loyal tribes, as well as being turned into a vassal first by the Ottomans and then by the Emperor. He had accepted a Spanish garrison outside the main city of Tunis which was as unpopular as it was predatory on the surrounding area. However, the personal meetings and the negotiations and treaties between both princes had highlighted the possibilities of inter-confessional diplomacy in the Mediterranean.

As David Do Paço has expressed, models of exotic cross-cultural encounters do not apply for these Christian-Muslims contacts which were characterised by a long-lasting familiarity<sup>76</sup>. Neither does the traditional idea of a Mediterranean frontier diplomacy conducted “from below” by subordinate or marginal actors fit the case studied here. It is evident that there were military, commercial and clerical figures involved in the negotiations, especially from Genoa and Granada, but there was also direct participation by the Emperor, the King of Tunis and their respective ministers. This personal contact, and especially

<sup>75</sup> M. Mastelinus, *Necrologium monasterii viridis vallis ordinis canonicorum regularium S. Augustini congregationis Lateranensis et capituli Windezemensis in nemore Zoniae prope Bruxellam*, J. Meerbecius, Bruxellae, 1630, p. 73; J. Chiflet, *Les marques d'honneur de la maison de Tassis*, Balthasar Moretus, Anvers, 1645, pp. 70-78; E. Puteanus, *Bruxella, incomparabili exemplo Septenaria*, Joannes Mommaert, Bruxellae, 1646, pp. 34-36. Some details of the supposed Mulay Hassan's stay in Flanders (his riding style, his passion for spices and music) were copied from Paolo Giovio's book.

<sup>76</sup> D. Do Paço, *Trans-imperial familiarity: Ottoman Ambassadors in eighteenth-century Vienna*, in T. Sowerby, J. Hennings (eds.), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410-1800*, Routledge, London, 2017, pp. 167-168.

the crushing conquest of Tunis, facilitated the signature of a harsh treaty that made Charles V's support the decisive factor for keeping order in the Kingdom of Tunis. There were constant allusions to the perceived inferiority of the Tunisian ruler. While Mulay Hassan's regal condition was undisputed, he never managed to be fully accepted into the European society of princes, nor was his daughter included among the Empress's ladies-in-waiting.

During the campaign against Tunis in 1535, the traditional diplomatic framework of Christendom had merged with a Mediterranean shared political culture overcoming religious difference which was hard for northern Europeans to grasp. Apparently exotic practices like the games of canes or the act of sitting on carpets were shared by Iberian aristocracy, and this familiarity in performative culture made the contacts easier to manage. This does not mean that they avoided misunderstandings and discomfort, which reappeared at key moments, such as the ceremonies of salutation and oath, because the performance of power relations had not yet been clearly established between them, and Hafsids diplomatic practices were deemed insufficient by imperial policy-makers. However, these and other episodes were dissimulated and overcome. Arguably the greatest relevance of the Tunisian campaign with regards to sixteenth century Mediterranean politics, was the fact that Charles V demonstrated he could act as a successful emperor against Ottoman expansion. The Ottoman sultans were the real enemies. The Emperor did not need to conquer every Muslim land to demonstrate his power: it sufficed to establish a protectorate.