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THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1494-1495 IN THE ITALIAN SOUTH:  
OTTOMAN THREAT, SPANISH PREPARATIONS,  
AND JEWISH GOLD

Studies concerning the reign of the Catholic monarchs usually end in 1492 as it is the year of the discovery of the New World, the conquest of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, and the expulsion of the Jews. Thus, the later years of their reign are often ignored, though they were crucial for building the Spanish position in the Mediterranean for centuries to come. The beginning of this period is characterized by war and preparations for war against both France and the Ottoman Empire<sup>1</sup>.

The descent of Charles VIII of France into Italy in 1494 to assert his dynastic rights over the Kingdom of Naples precipitated a series of events that ended in Spanish dominance in Italian politics, a situation that in modern times led Benedetto Croce to the conclusion that Spanish armies and Spanish spirit overwhelmed Italy: «La Spagna parve allora invadere l'Italia non solo con le sue armi, ma con tutto il suo spirito nazionale»<sup>2</sup>. The fact that the Spanish monarchs

List of abbreviations: Aca, Arxiu de la Corona de Aragó, Barcelona; Asp, Archivio di Stato di Palermo.

<sup>1</sup> Though of little use as regards Spain, Setton's work is the most comprehensive on the international political situation in this period: K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, II. (1204-1571)*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1978, vol. II. See also N. Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274-1580*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992. Although it stretches well unto the last years of Ferdinand's rule, the book of J. N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250-1516*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, Vol. II, does not mention the conflict with the Turks. One of the few studies regarding Spanish - Ottoman relations in this period is that of A. Hess, *The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire in the Age of the Oceanic Discoveries, 1453-1525*, «The American Historical Review», 75 (1970), pp. 1982-1919. Indeed, in a recently published paper, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra argues that war was against the Ottomans was not an issue prior to the reign of Charles V: *Charles V and the Ottoman War From the Spanish Point of View*, «Eurasian Studies», 1.2 (2002), pp. 164-165. For bibliography on the Ottoman side of the conflict in this period see note 8 below.

<sup>2</sup> B. Croce, *La Spagna nella vita italiana durante la rinascenza*, Laterza, Bari, 1949, p. 112.

already ruled Sicily and the adjacent islands played a crucial part in these developments. Between 1494 and 1511 the Spanish army used Sicily as a base in the wars in the Kingdom of Naples, in North Africa, and the expedition to the island of Cephalonia. According to the Spanish historian Luis Suárez Fernández, the war in the kingdom of Naples was not solely the beginning of international Spanish diplomacy but also the birth of Spanish foreign military force, headed at that time by two figures: Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba (the 'Gran Capitán') and Galceran de Resquesens, Count of Trivento<sup>3</sup>. The documents cited below show that the period of 1494-1495 was crucial in the building up of Spanish forces in the Italian south, even before the creation of the Holy League against France, concluded in 31 March 1495 between Spain, Pope Alexander VI, Maximilian of Austria, Milan and Venice<sup>4</sup>. One of the considerations that led to the gathering of a Spanish army and navy in Sicily and in South Italy in this period was the estimation that a possible attack by the Turks was imminent. It should be noted that while the war against the French in South Italy is a well-studied subject, Spanish policies towards the Ottomans in this period are almost totally disregarded.

This paper would like to focus on the years 1494-1495 and the preparations for war that took place then. Several hitherto unpublished documents, to be discussed in the following pages, throw light on these preparations and attest to the strategic importance of Sicily, the war's intended aims and the monetary sources used to finance the coming war. At least in part, the funds came from the money extracted from the Jews during the expulsion from Sicily<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> «Estaba naciendo la diplomacia española. También estaba naciendo, aunque de manera menos deliberada, el Ejército de operaciones el exterior, con Gonzalo Fernández y el conde de Trivento» (L. Suárez Fernández, *El camino hacia Europa*, Ediciones Rialp, Madrid, 1990, p. 61).

<sup>4</sup> Charles VIII: H. F. Delaborde, *L'Expédition de Charles VIII en Italie*, Paris, 1888; Y. Labande-Maillfert, *Charles VIII. Le vouloir et la destinée*, Fayard, Paris, 1986; D. Abulafia (ed.), *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy. Antecedents and Effects*, Aldershot, 1995; K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. II, pp. 460-507. However the account of Guicciardini is still relevant: F. Guicciardini, *La storia d'Italia*, ed. Ettore Mazzali, Garzanti, Milano, 1988. For a good summary concerning the Spanish involvement see: J. N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, vol. II, pp. 534-577. See also the work of Suárez Fernández cited in note 3 above.

<sup>5</sup> Some of the documents referred to in this paper were published by A. De La Torre, *Documentos sobre las relaciones internacionales de los Reyes Católicos*, Barce-

## 1. *Prelude to the events of 1494-1495: Turkish menace and ineffectual crusade*

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 shocked Christian Europe. It soon became clear that the Ottomans now posed a threat not only to the Greeks, or to the Christian states in the Balkans, but to all western Christendom, starting with the Italian peninsula. Cardinal Bessarion, a scholarly refugee from Byzantium, warned complacent Christian rulers that the Turk [Mehmet II] was already planning to invade Italy: *Oh miserable Christians! Oh blind Italians! We are not expecting the Turk to invade Italy! He is looking here, believe me, this is how he acts...*<sup>6</sup>. Interestingly, Bessarion also raised the possibility that he would first take Sicily: *He [Mehmet] will pass through the whole kingdom of Sicily. He will reach even Rome. Who will stop him?*<sup>7</sup>

And yet, Pope Pius II failed in his efforts to raise a crusade against the Ottomans<sup>8</sup>. In fact, Venice was the only European power that fought effectively against Turks, but after suffering a serious defeat with the fall of Negroponte in 1470, and further setbacks in the coming years, in January 1479 it concluded a peace treaty with Mehmet II

lona, Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas: 1949-1966, esp. vol. IV. Others are found in the Arxiu de la Corona de Aragó in Barcelona and in the Archivio di Stato di Palermo still in manuscript form, to be referred to specifically in the following pages. I came upon the latter while looking for material that could throw light on the aftermath of the expulsion of the Jews from Sicily. My first foray into this topic was the publishing of several letters of Queen Isabella: N. Zeldes, *The Queen's Property: Isabel I and the Jews and Converts of the Sicilian Camera Reginale after the 1492 Expulsion*, «Hispania Judaica Bulletin», 4 (2004), pp. 70-85.

<sup>6</sup> «O miseros Christianos! O caecos Italos! Non expectemus certe Turcum Italiam invadentem. Huc spectat, crede mihi, hoc agit», Bessarion, *Orationes contra Turcas, Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeco-latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris, 1866, CLXI, column. 648.

<sup>7</sup> «Peragrabit totum Siciliae regnum. Romam usque perveniet. Quis erit impedimento?», *ibid.*, column. 650.

<sup>8</sup> N. Housley, *The Later Crusades* cit., p. 99. On Pius II attempts to raise a crusade see K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* cit., vol. II, pp. 150ff. On Ottoman history in this period see: F. Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time* (Trans. Ralph Manheim), ed. William C. Hickman, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1978; S.N. Fisher, *The Foreign Relations of Turkey, 1481-1512*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1948; P. Brummett, *The Ottomans as a World Power: What We don't know about Ottoman Sea-Power*, «Oriente Moderno» 20 (2001), pp. 1-21; Id., *Ottoman Sea Power and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discoveries*, State University of New York Press, New-York, 1994; T.G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan. Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

which ceded the sultan, Negroponte, parts of Albania and other territories, and committed the city-state to an annual tribute of 10,000 ducats, in exchange for trading privileges in the Ottoman Empire. The Veneto-Ottoman peace of 1479 signaled the emergence of the Ottomans as a formidable force at sea as well as on land<sup>9</sup>. In 1480 Mehmet II launched two simultaneous amphibious operations: an attack on the Hospitallers of Rhodes and a sea landing at Otranto in Apulia. The latter action finally brought home the Ottoman threat to Italy, and Sixtus IV issued an appeal for a crusade to recover Otranto<sup>10</sup>. The Turkish force was driven off Otranto in 1481 mainly by the pope's galleys and the Neapolitan forces, although, it should be noted that King Ferdinand too sent an expeditionary force<sup>11</sup>. This intervention was probably perceived by the next pope, Innocent VIII, as halfhearted at best, and in 1484, while attempting in vain to organize a crusade, the pope reiterated the dire prophesies of Bessarion warning Ferdinand that Sicily might be the next object of Turkish cupidity. The Pope pointed out that in the past the Turk concentrated his forces on Hungary but now, after taking Asia and Greece unhindered while the Christians were at odds with one another, he was again turning his attention towards Italy and Sicily, and Innocent VIII warned Ferdinand that both lands were quite unprepared to withstand a large scale attack<sup>12</sup>.

Turkish plans for the conquest of Italy collapsed with the death of Mehmet II in May 1481. The sultan's death was followed by strife and upheavals within the Ottoman Empire where internal discontent was channeled into a civil war between The Conqueror's sons: Bayazid and Jem (Turkish modern spelling: Cem). In June 1481 Jem was defeated by his brother and he turned to Christian Europe for help, first to the knights Hospitallers of Rhodes, then to France, and

<sup>9</sup> N. Housley, *The Later Crusades* cit., p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. II, p. 364; A. Hess, *Ottoman Seaborne Empire*, pp. 1903-1904.

<sup>11</sup> J. N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms* cit., vol. II, p. 546. According to sixteenth century Sicilian historian Francesco Maurolico Ferdinand sent the fleet in response to the appeal of his cousin King Ferrante but it was not needed because of the sultan's unexpected death: «anno salutis 1480 in de turci bello in Apuliam tralato Hydruntem (=Otranto) expugnaverunt [...] Tunc Ferdinandus Catholicus à Ferdinando patruelle rogatus, classe 70 ratium subs Franciscus Henriques praefecto auxiliatum misit, quae cum Neapolim ex inde Panormum apulisset ia Turci, audito Mahumeti obitu, oppidum ex pacto reddiderant», F. Maurolico, *Sicanicarum rerum compendium*, Messina, 1562, p. 188v.

<sup>12</sup> K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* cit., vol. II, p. 400.

finally he came under the custody of the Holy See. As long as Prince Jem was alive, Sultan Bayazid II paid 45,000 Venetian ducats a year to his brother's hosts to keep him in the West, plagued by the constant worry that he might return and attempt to usurp the throne. According to the sixteenth century Venetian historian, Marino Sanuto, Charles VIII planned to seize Jem and bring him to Naples in order to sail later to Greece and conquer the lands of Turkey<sup>13</sup>. Such plans were undoubtedly cause for worry for the Ottoman sultan. However, though Bayazid refrained from open war during this period, he nevertheless began to acquire experienced naval officers to expand his fleet, and he summoned to Istanbul a number of corsair captains; by 1495 he thus recruited into Ottoman service sea captains such as Kemal Reis, Burak Reis and Piri Reis, later famous for their exploits<sup>14</sup>. There was also a Spanish angle to these preparations: a rumor that a cry for help from the Muslims in Spain reached the Ottomans. Even if this appeal does not necessarily have a historical basis, there is no doubt that the contemporaries believed it indeed took place, as the possibility of Ottoman intervention in favor of the Moriscos later figured in the embassy of 1501 of Pietro Martire de Angheria to *Ḳānsawh al-Ghawri*, the Mamluk sultan of Egypt<sup>15</sup>.

Ferdinand the Catholic was not unaware of these developments and already in January 1495 he hinted that he had intelligence (whether accurate or not, is another matter) regarding Ottoman intentions, and he warned Juan de la Nuza, the newly appointed viceroy of Sicily:

Firstly, as you reach the said kingdom of Sicily and take possession of your office as our viceroy, say for us to those of that kingdom that We, seeing the war that engulfs the whole of Italy, and as it became known to us by various means that the Turk has a great army ready to enter the lands of the Christians when he would see that the war flares up, it is possible that he entertains the thought of coming upon that kingdom<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> M. Sanuto, *La spedizione di Carlo VIII in Italia*, ed. R. Fulin, Venice, 1883, pp. 33-53; S.N. Fisher, *The Foreign Relations of Turkey* cit., pp. 47-49.

<sup>14</sup> A. Hess, *Ottoman Seaborne Empire* cit., p. 1905.

<sup>15</sup> Letter by Ferdinand the Catholic from 1501: Aca, Cancellaria Real, reg. 3669, cc. 145-146, published by A. De La Torre, *La embajada a Egipto de Pedro Mártir de Angleria, Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch. Miscel·lània d'estudis literaris històrics i lingüístics*, Casa de Caritat Atenes, Barcelona, 1936, vol. I, p. 448.

<sup>16</sup> «Primeramente, luego que lleguéis al dicho reino de Sicilia y hayáis tomado posesión de vuestro officio de visorrey nuestro, diréis de nuestra parte a los del dicho

Thus, it appears that the king was indeed convinced that a Turkish attack was imminent at the same time that he was planning to enter into campaign against the French in southern Italy.

## 2. *Fear of invasion and defense of the islands*

Already in March 1494 Pope Alexander VI voiced his concern that the Turks might take advantage of the developing crisis in Italy and strike<sup>17</sup>. King Ferdinand, as ruler of Sicily and the adjacent islands, apparently concurred with the Pope on this matter. In the summer of 1494 the king began his preparations in earnest, ordering the fortification of coastal cities and castles, gathering an army and looking for additional financial sources that he could draw upon. In August 1494 he ordered the fortification of Malta and Gozo (still part of the kingdom of Sicily at the time), and he even foresaw the possible abandonment of coastal villages as they faced a Turkish invasion:

And if it seems to you necessary and worthwhile, for war by the Turk, or fear of an attack, you must remove the population from the villages of that island and evacuate the houses, and settle them in the city. We charge you to put this in practice, providing [for it] and giving the order<sup>18</sup>.

These preparations are also mentioned by the Aragonese chronicler, Jeronimo Zurita. According to Zurita the king told Fernando D'Acugna, the viceroy of Sicily, of the advance of the French army and warned him of a possible Turkish attack, ordering him to fortify

reino que Nos, viendo la guerra que hay en toda Italia, y porque avemos sabido por diversas vias que el Turco tiene aparejada gruesa armada para entrar en tierras de christianos cuando vea más encendida la guerra de Nápoles, y podría ser que tuviese pensamiento de venir sobre aquel reino», Archivo de Zabálburu, vol. 237 fol. 6, published by Luciano Serrano y Peneda, *Nuevos datos sobre el Gran Capitán*, «Hispania», X (1943), pp. 71-72.

<sup>17</sup>A. de Boüard, *Lettres de Rome de Bartholomeo de Bracciano à Virginio Orsini [1489-1494]*, «Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire», XXXIII (1913), n. XLIX, pp. 329-330 (cited by K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* cit., vol. II, p. 448, note 2).

<sup>18</sup> «E si a vos pareciere cosa necessaria e prociente que, por causa de la guerra del turco o recelo della, los casales de aquella illa [isla?] diverse despoblar, y desemparrar las habitaciones dellos, y avezindarlas en la ciudad, vos encargamos que los pongays en platiqua, proveyendo y dando orden», A. De La Torre, *Documentos*, vol. IV, n. 177, pp. 505-506.

the ports and the shores of Sicily<sup>19</sup>. By November the king was issuing orders to all his island possessions to prepare for war and he wrote to the governor of Majorca:

As you see the disturbances and perturbations that now occur in diverse parts of Italy, how great and perilous they are, and in particular the suspicion that they would permit the entrance of the Turks, enemies of our Catholic Faith; that it cannot be otherwise but put the Christian religion in great peril, and especially those kingdoms and islands and lands which are close to the Moors and face the sea<sup>20</sup>.

Although the letter was addressed specifically to the governor of Majorca, it reveals the king's concern for all the territories facing possible attack by the Infidel. In fact, Sicily was considerably closer to the Ottoman territories than Majorca and thus a major source of worry for the king. Lack of funds might have hindered these plans and here was where monies resulting from the expulsion of the Jews from Sicily came into play.

### 3. *The Gold of the Jews*

In their personal lives the Catholic kings lived rather frugally, but they were constantly in need of funds for their military operations. When in 1482 they began their assault on the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, it was a great financial advantage that Pope Sixtus declared the war a crusade against the Infidel thus allowing the monarchs to tax the population in all their territories, including Sicily, in order

<sup>19</sup>Zurita's account: «Prevención de don Hernando de Acuña visorey en Sicilia. Pero don Hernando de Acuña que era visorey de Sicilia, por la armada y empresa de los franceses con color que se recelaba de armada turquesca mandó poner a buen recaudo los puertos y lugares marítimos que estaban en defensa de Sicilia y los que son vecinos a Calabria fornercerlos de gente», J. Zurita, *Historia del rey Don Hernando el Católico: de las empresas y ligas de Italia*, Ed. Angel Canellas Lopez, Departamiento de Cultura y Educación, Zaragoza 1991, vol. I, I XXXIV, p. 126.

<sup>20</sup>«Ya vedes las revoluciones y turbaciones que oy concorren en las partes de Italia, quanto son grandes y quanto peligrosas, mayoramente por la sospecha que se tiene de dar entrada a turcos, enemigos de nuestra Fe Catholica; lo qual no puede ser sin gran peligro de la religion Christiana, y specialmente de los reynos e islas y tierras que stan propinquas a los moros y puestas en la mar», A. De La Torre, *Documentos*, vol. IV, n. 255, p. 588.



to provide the necessary funds<sup>21</sup>. But in 1494 Pope Alexander VI was vacillating between the French cause and the demands of the Catholic monarchs, and thus no financial help could be expected from the Apostolic See. How then did the king manage to finance these operations? Where did the money come from for the repairs of castles, fortifications and the maintenance of a large army in Sicily and in South Italy? The expulsion of the Jews from Sicily that ended in January 1493 fortuitously provided the Spanish monarchs with certain funds that came from the 'composition' set on the Jews, namely 120,000 florins, which as we shall see, were used to finance the war effort.

The edict of expulsion was published in Sicily on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1492. The conditions of departure were particularly harsh: the Jews were allowed to take very little with them and they were also forced to pay the taxes they owed the royal treasury. The financial arrangements of the expulsion from Sicily are well-known, but since they are important for understanding the role they fulfilled in the preparations for the war of 1494-1495 we shall discuss them briefly before returning to the main subject at hand. Instead of paying the taxes as stipulated at the beginning, by the end of October 1492, a compromise was reached as the Jews 'offered' to substitute a lump sum, a 'composition' of 100,000 florins to be paid by the communities of the kingdom of Sicily. A 'composition' meant in this period a fixed sum usually paid by a debtor or a guilty person in order to avoid punishment. Thus, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1492 the Sicilian Jewish communities promised to pay the 100,000 florins to the royal treasury and at the same time the king agreed to extend the period of expulsion by forty days; it is hard to say whether the due taxes would have amounted to a greater sum, but given that the extension of the period of the expulsion coincides with the "offer" of the lump sum by the Jews, it indicates that the king and his treasury saw an advantage in this mode of payment and rewarded the Jews by allowing them a little more time to organize their departure<sup>22</sup>. Another 'composition' of 20,000 florins was paid by the Jewish communities of the Queen's

<sup>21</sup> J. Goñi Gaztambide, *La Bula de la cruzada en España*, Editorial del seminario, Vitoria, 1958, pp. 371-435.

<sup>22</sup> G. & B. Lagumina, *Codice diplomatico dei Giudei di Sicilia*, Società siciliana per la Storia Patria, Palermo, 1992<sup>2</sup>, vol. III, n. MIX, p. 217 and n. MXII, pp. 220-227, n. MXV, pp. 229-241.



enclave (the Camera Reginale), i.e. Syracuse and the adjacent territory.<sup>23</sup> On the 10<sup>th</sup> of the same month, the Jews of Sicily offered a 'gift' (donativo) of 5,000 florins to the viceroy Don Fernando D'Acugna. It has been suggested by certain historians that this 'gift' was an inducement for the Viceroy to exercise his powers to prevent acts of violence against the Jews<sup>24</sup>. In any case, it cannot be ruled out that the Jews' gift bought the good will of the Viceroy to the extent that he agreed to postpone their time of departure by another fifteen days, until January 1495. The 'gift' to the viceroy and the extension of the period of the expulsion were supposedly made with the king's permission<sup>25</sup>, nevertheless, in a letter written in August 1494 King Ferdinand ordered an investigation in the Kingdom of Naples of the exiles regarding the irregularities that accompanied the expulsion from Sicily, the king also demanded to know how much the Jews gave for the postponement of the expulsion by fifteen days, and to whom [the money] had been given<sup>26</sup>. The enquiry leaves no doubt as to the fact that the postponement did not have the king's authorization.

Carmelo Trasselli, in his most comprehensive study of this period, *Da Ferdinando il Cattolico a Carlo V, L'esperienza Siciliana 1475-1525*, was of the opinion that the 'composition' did not bring the hoped for results (i.e. improvement of the king's finances), but was dissolved like

<sup>23</sup>The order of expulsion from the *Camera Reginale* is a slightly different version of the Edict of Expulsion from the kingdom of Sicily: *Fonti per la storia dell'espulsione degli ebrei dalla Sicilia*, ed. R. Giuffrida, A. Sparti, S. Di Matteo, Accademia nazionale di Scienze Lettere e Arti di Palermo, Palermo, 1992, pp. 29-35. Payment of the 20,000 florins by the Jews of the Camera Reginale: N. Ferorelli, *Gli Ebrei nell'Italia meridionale dall'età romana al secolo XVIII*, ed. F. Patroni Griffi, D. Peerson, Napoli, 1990, p. 93 note 3. A lawsuit brought by one of the leaders of the Syracuse community, Leone Sacerdote who was forced to pay the money for the whole community after the expulsion, confirms that the sum was paid in full: G. Modica Scala, *Le comunità ebraiche nella contea di Modica*, Edizioni Setim, Modica, 1978, pp. 551-552; C. Colafemmina, *Per la storia degli ebrei in Calabria*, Soveria Mannelli, Messina 1996, pp. 38-39.

<sup>24</sup>This opinion regarding the Viceroy's role in the relatively peaceful departure of the Jews was voiced first by I. Peri, *Restaurazione e pacifico stato in Sicilia 1377-1501*, Laterza, Bari, 1988, p. 108 and later by F. Renda, *La fine del giudaismo siciliano*, Sellerio, Palermo, 1993, p. 118.

<sup>25</sup>B. Lagumina, *Codice cit.*, vol. III, n. MXII, pp. 220-227, n. MXV, p. 231.

<sup>26</sup>Postponing the expulsion by fifteen days: B. Lagumina, *Codice cit.*, vol. III, n. MXXXII, pp. 272-273, n. MXXXIII, p. 276. Ordering the investigation of the postponement: *sean preguntados si saben quanto dieron los dichos judios por los XV dias que les alargaron el plazo de la expulsion, y a quien lo dieron*, A. De la Torre, *Documentos cit.*, vol. IV, n. 173, pp. 502-503. See also note 38 below.

a ball of snow in the “great fire” of the taking of Granada<sup>27</sup>. It should be pointed out that in this work Trasselli gave little consideration to the political and military events, strangely disregarding even the Spanish conquest of the nearby kingdom of Naples and its implications for Sicily. Even the work of Giuseppe Giarrizzo<sup>28</sup> that also concerns this period (and criticizes some of Trasselli’s conclusions), still has nothing to say regarding the political and military situation of Sicily the last decade of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, Giarrizzo was the first to draw the attention to the anxieties caused in Sicily by the Turkish advance in the 1470’s, interpreting the outburst of violence against the Jews in the summer of 1474 as a popular reaction to these anxieties<sup>29</sup>. Whether such a link can be proved is another matter, but worry about a possible invasion of Sicily must have been a constant concern. Fear of an attack by the Turks is indeed present in the memorandum offered by members of the high royal administration of Sicily that warned the king of the damages that would cause the expulsion of the Jews. They reminded their sovereign that the enemy’s forces could invade Sicily just *as they have passed once through Italy*<sup>30</sup>, referring to the conquest of Otranto in 1480 by Sultan Mehmet II and to the fact that the Adriatic coast facing Sicily was in Ottoman hands. It is a common assumption that the king disregarded these warnings and complaints as he did the whole purpose of the memorandum, i.e. cancellation of the edict of expulsion. In truth, although the king did not rescind the decree, he probably recognized the justice of these complaints. The fact that most of the money was later re-invested in Sicily (to buy alienated domains), or used to fortify the islands, is a point in favor of this argument. In 1494, when the money (or most of it) had already been collected, the king gave the appropriate dispositions to his treasurer in Sicily, Aloysio Sánchez.

<sup>27</sup> «La ‘composizione’ di 100,000 fiorini (Trasselli overlooked the 20,000 florins paid by the communities of the Camera Reginale) si era dissolta come una palla di neve nel grande incendio dell’impresa di Granada», C. Trasselli, *Da Ferdinando* cit., vol. I, p. 161.

<sup>28</sup> G. Giarrizzo, *La Sicilia dal Cinquecento all’Unità d’Italia*, V. D’Alessandro, G. Giarrizzo, *La Sicilia dal Vespro all’Unità d’Italia*, Storia d’Italia, ed. G. Galasso, UTET, Torino 1989, vol. 16, pp. 99-177.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-112.

<sup>30</sup> «Quando absit accidissi alcuno invadimentu di lu turczu chi una volta havendo passatu in Italia et havendo la potencia marittima como ha chi potiria accadiri venire alcuna armata in Sicilia quantu mancamentu di homini si troviria a li citati et terri del dicto regno», B. Lagumina, *Codice* cit., vol. III, n. DCCCXCIV, p. 47.

Aloysio Sánchez was a man of *converso* origins born in Saragossa to a high ranking family who was part of the king's entourage since the fourteenth century<sup>31</sup>. In 1487 or 1488, in danger of being condemned by the Inquisition of heresy, he fled Spain with his wife and twelve children and settled in Sicily. Soon after his coming, in 1491, he established himself as a banker together with another *converso*, Ambrogio Levi, of whom nothing is known. In the same year he married two of his children to the children of Pietro Augusti, *magistro razionale* of the Sicilian treasury<sup>32</sup>. Aloysio Sánchez, as the king's treasurer, was empowered to receive the composition of 100,000 florins exacted from the departing Jews as attested by a letter dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1494: *the money of the composition of a hundred thousand florins of the Jewries of this kingdom that came into your power*<sup>33</sup>. The funds were used primarily to buy alienated property of the king's demesne, but at least part of it served to fortify Sicily against possible invasion. In another letter dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1494 the king instructed Aloysio Sánchez to pay the Sicilian treasurer, Alferio de Leofante, 200 *onze* out of the composition of the Jews for the repair of the castle of Trapani because it was situated on the sea shore and it needed to be fortified: «per esseri maritimo [...] mancandoli maxime lo necessario reparo per la sua fortificacioni»<sup>34</sup>. Jewish property also figures in the letter of Ferdinand concerning Malta and Gozo. According to the king's letter, it had been registered by a notary of Malta, one Nardo de Salva, and the king now instructed the governor of

<sup>31</sup> Elazar Gulluf had been in the service of Don Juan and Doña Violante as an official of the treasury. His son, Isaac Gulluf, converted in 1389 and took the name Juan Sánchez de Calatayud. He was the grandfather of Gabriel Sánchez, the treasurer of Aragon in the lifetime of Ferdinand the Catholic, and was either the grandfather or great grandfather of Aloysio Sánchez. On the Gulluf /Sánchez family see: Y. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Trans. B. R. Gampel), The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia and Jerusalem, 1992, vol. II, pp. 92-93.

<sup>32</sup> *Libro Verde de Aragon, documentos aragoneses*, ed. D. Isidro de las Cacicgas, Compañía ibero-americana de publicaciones, Madrid, 1929, pp. 26-27. On the family's fortunes in Sicily see: C. Trasselli, *I banchi delle città minori del Cinquecento siciliano*, «Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione», 8 (1970), p. 130; N. Zeldes, «The Former Jews of this Kingdom». *Sicilian Converts after the Expulsion (1492-1516)*, Brill, Leiden, 2003, pp. 44-47.

<sup>33</sup> «Li dinari di la composicioni di li chento milia floreni di li iudechi di questo regno, in vostri putiri pervenuti», Asp, Real Cancelleria, reg. 190, c. 9r, Palermo, 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1494.

<sup>34</sup> Asp, Conservatoria di Registro, reg. 874, c. 5r, Palermo, 20 November 1494; Asp, Real Cancelleria, reg. 190 cc. 159r-v, Palermo, 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1494.

Malta, Alvaro de Nava, to dispose of this property, including pieces of land that used to belong to the Jews, worth no more than four or five *onze*<sup>35</sup>. It is interesting to note that the letter specified that this property was not included in the recently made 'composition' of 50,000 florins, obtained for the property of the Jews of "this kingdom" (i.e. Sicily)<sup>36</sup>. But the Jews of Malta had already paid their share in the general 'composition' set on the Jews of the Kingdom of Sicily<sup>37</sup>, so what was this other 'composition' that the king was referring to? Here we must digress a little from the main issue at hand, as this new 'composition' needs to be explained. In April 1494 King Ferdinand made enquiries among the Sicilian Jews who immigrated to the Kingdom of Naples, in an attempt to discover disorders, bribes and abuses committed during the period of expulsion. The information regarding these enquiries and their conclusion is unfortunately partial, but we do know that the end result was an agreement concluded in September 1495 between the king and the exiled Jews represented by a convert, the physician Ferrando de Aragona. The agreement stipulated that the Jews (in later documents it is revealed that this arrangement in fact concerned the converted Jews) would be allowed to recover the property they left in Sicily in return for a 'composition', which at first was calculated as 50,000 florins, and was later increased to 65,000 florins<sup>38</sup>. Was this new composition decided upon because the original 100,000 florins were not collected in full, or was it because all the revenues resulting from the expulsion were exha-

<sup>35</sup> On Jewish property and debts to the Jews in Malta after the expulsion see: G. Wettinger, *The Jews of Malta in the Later Middle Ages*, Midsea Books, Valletta, 1985, pp. 119-125.

<sup>36</sup> «Vos mandamos que vos informeys dello. Y si tal lo fallardes, y hoviere alli algun pedaço de tierra, de las que fueron de los jodios, que en propriedat valga quatro o cinco onzas, jela fagays dar e transportar, pues no sean bienes comprehendidos en la composicion de los L mil florines, çagueramente fecha, de los bienes de jodios desse reyno», A. De La Torre, *Documentos* cit., vol. IV, n. 177, p. 508. The key word here is "çagueramente" (lately), which derives from the verb "çaguer" or "saguer" in Catalan, whose meaning is "to be behind" or "to be the last": *Diccionari Català-Valencià-Baleàr*, Grafiques Miramar, Palma de Mallorca, 1959, vol. IX, pp. 672-673. In other documents this composition is referred to as "ultimamente fecha", see: A. De La Torre, *Documentos*, vol. IV, n. 174, p. 504.

<sup>37</sup> B. Lagumina, *Codice* cit., vol. III, n. MXXVIII, p. 256; G. Wettinger, *The Jews of Malta* cit., p. 119.

<sup>38</sup> On the enquiries made in the Kingdom of Naples, see: F. Giunta, *Una 'inquisitio' dei re cattolici sulla cacciata degli ebrei dalla Sicilia*, *Studi di Storia Economica Toscana nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento*, in memoria di Federigo Melis, Pacini, Pisa 1987, pp.

sted by that time, and the king needed to find an additional source of income? In any case, the letter regarding the fortification of Malta and Gozo reveals that the islands were not included in the new agreement and therefore the property previously owned by the Jews could be sold, as they would not claim it<sup>39</sup>.

In January 1495 danger of attack by Bayazid seemed imminent. Possibly it had to do with the fact that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January Pope Alexander VI agreed to transfer Jem into the hands of Charles VIII who then marched south with the Ottoman prince in tow. Bayazid responded by calling all the pirate captains to Istanbul and employing workmen to repair and rebuild the fleet<sup>40</sup>. As mentioned before, Ferdinand was well-informed on Turkish movements. In his letter addressed to Juan de La Nuza (cited above) also described his plans to counter a possible attack:

We, wishing to avoid and prevent that danger for the love we have for that kingdom, as well as for its being an important member of our Royal Crown and State, as well as for the great loyalty those of that kingdom have always manifested and still manifest towards Us and to the kings our ancestors, we have decided to send there a thousand lances of our guards [headed] by a grand nobleman of our realms and the good sea armada.

And having already sent the Count of Trivento, our captain general of the said armada, with that part of it as could be mustered at short notice, and Gonzalo Hernández, our captain, to follow the said count with five hundred lances of those mentioned above, and more sea forces [...] And because it is reasonable to think that if the Turk enters, he will come with great force, and to resist him and in order to be able to take the offensive we need a large army<sup>41</sup>.

173-178. But what lay behind the agreements was the unspoken understanding that the Jews would convert to Christianity and then would be allowed to recover their property after ceding forty percent (later increased to forty five) to the royal treasury. The amount was first calculated as 50,000 florins, referred in the letter cited above, but when the agreement was concluded in September 1495, it mentioned the sum of 65,000 florins. The agreements regarding the recovery of Jewish property after the expulsion are discussed in my book: N. Zeldes, *The Former Jews of This Kingdom* cit., pp. 71-81.

<sup>39</sup> This meant that the Jews of Malta were not part of the agreement, probably because no exiles intended to convert and reclaim their property.

<sup>40</sup> M. Sanuto, *La Spedizione* cit., pp. 221-222; S. N. Fisher, *The Foreign Policy* cit., p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> «Nos queriendo proveer y obviar a este peligro por el amor que tenemos a aquel reino, así por ser miembro tan principla de nuestra Real Corona y Estado, como por la

The need for a large army implied more funds. As Ferdinand tied the recruitment of the army to a possible attack by the Ottomans, he could presumably draw funds from the Crusade allotment accorded the Spanish monarchs by Pope Sixtus IV and the pontiffs who succeed him<sup>42</sup>, but this did not suffice, and in any case, in 1494 Alexander VI was not eager to support the Spanish cause in the coming conflict. Therefore, the king needed other financial sources that had no strings attached. The additional funds came from the money exacted from the Jews, both those of the kingdom of Sicily and those of the Camera Reginale. The king apparently convinced his royal spouse to give up her share of the expulsion money, and thus, by the end of January, Isabella of Castile ordered the governor of her fief, Juan de Cárdenas, to transfer most of the 'composition' paid by her Jews, namely the 20,000 florins, to finance the military operations. Only one thousand florins were deducted from the total in order to pay back a loan she owed the treasurer of Aragon, Gabriel Sánchez, who was a relative of the same Aloysio, mentioned above. The rest of the money, i.e. 19,000 florins, the queen gave her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon, to cover the expenses of the expeditionary force headed by the count of Trivento<sup>43</sup>. There are three more letters written on the

grande lealtad que los del dicho reino an siempre tenido y tienemen a Nos y a los reyes nuestros antepasados, de buena momoria, avemos acordado de embiar luego allá mil lanzas de las de nuestras guardas con un grande de nuestros reinos y buena armada de mar. Y avemos embiado delante al conde de Trivento, nuestro capitán general de la dicha armada de mar, con la parte della que de presto se pudo facer, y que así mismo va en pos del dicho conde, Gozalo Hernández, nuestro capitán, con las quinientas lanzas de las susodichas y con más armada de mar... Y porque es de creer que si el Turco enrare, entrará muy poderoso, que para que mejor se puede resistir y ofender, habemos acordado facer gruesa armada», Luciano Serrano y Peneda, *Nuevos datos sobre el Gran Capitán*, «Hispania», a. X (1943), pp. 71-72.

<sup>42</sup> J. Goñi Gaztambid, *La Bula de la cruzada* cit., pp. 434-435.

<sup>43</sup> «A vos Gabriel Sánchez thesorero general del Rey mi Señor, maestre secreto de la mi reginal camara del mi reyno de Sicilia o a su lugarteniente salud y gracia. Con tenor de la presente vos digo y mando de mi cierta sciencia y expressamente que de qualesquieres pecunias mías a vuestras manos pervenidas o perveniendo pervenideras e señalamente de las pecunias procedidas de la composicion de los judios de la dicha mi camara expulsos, deys e pagueys realmente y de fecho a Nunio de Campo pagador de la armada e gente que el Rey mi señor e yo embiamos al dicho reyno, o a su procurador, diznueve mil florines moneda de aquel reyno los quales empero quiero e mando que deys y pagueys en moneda de Sicilia en las vezes y tiempos que el dicho Nunio de Campo vos mostrare carta o cartas de Don Galceran de Requesens conde de Palacios y Trivento nuestro capitán general de la dicha armada», Aca, Cancelleria Diversorum Camere Reginalis, reg. 3687, c. 139r, published: N. Zeldes, *The Queen's Property* cit., n. 2, p. 82.

same day dealing with this matter. Why did the king and queen decide to use these particular revenues and not others? It could be that Ferdinand took heed of the warnings of Sicily's high officials on the eve of the expulsion and decided to use part of the money in order to fortify the coasts of Sicily and the islands. However, the fact that the funds had already been collected and were physically in place, without any need to convert them into another coin, may have also played a part. This consideration is hinted at in Isabella's letters that refer to the money being in Sicilian florins (or the equivalent in local coin), which was convenient to use in Sicily itself, but she foresaw the possibility that the need might arise to convert this money into a different coin, and there would be loss in the transaction<sup>44</sup>. It is interesting that the queen used the plural when referring to the decision of sending an army to Sicily, but all the revenues from the expulsion of the Jews in fact ended in the hands of the Aragonese treasury. The queen kept nothing for herself; a pending crusade against the Infidel might explain Isabella's readiness to surrender the money to finance the campaign, as the spirit of crusade guided the queen all her life. And yet, in her opinion, Italy was not the primary locus of the fight against the Infidel. In her correspondence with Pope Sixtus IV who was clamoring for help against the Turk after the landing in Otranto, Isabella insisted that war in Granada was the most important service that Spain could render Christianity<sup>45</sup>. Indeed, there is no indication that Isabella was in any way involved in the later stages of the war against the French or the Turk. In her letters, including those cited above, Isabella made it clear that she did not support war against Christian princes. She agreed to put at the disposition of Ferdinand all the means at her disposal, but the decisions as to how to conduct the war in Italy remained Ferdinand's<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> «Deys e pagueys al dicho Nunio de Campo XVIIIIm florines moneda del dicho reyno de Sicilia de qualesquier pecunias mias, que haveys recebido o recibieredes de las pecunias proceydas de la composicion de los judios que fueron expulsos de la dicha mi camara que han de ser dados e pagados como dicho es al dicho Nunio de Campo... E por quanto podria ser que la dicha armada no ste stante en el dicho reyno y que haya de yr a otra parte donde la dicha moneda de Sicilia no corre, y se perdio mucho en llevarlo a otra qualquiere parte», Aca, Cancelleria Diversorum Camere Reginalis, reg. 3687, cc. 139v-140r, published: N. Zeldes, *The Queen's Property* cit., n. 4, p. 84.

<sup>45</sup> L. Suárez Fernández, *Isabel I, reina (1451-1504)*, Editorial Ariel, Barcelona, 2000, p. 222.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426.



Some well-known factors, and others, less known, probably contributed to Isabella's lack of interest, beyond her reluctance to involve herself in Italian affairs. A series of personal tragedies hit the queen in the succeeding years. In October 1497 the Crown prince died in the town of Tormes, thus banishing the hopes for a unified kingdom. Isabella and her entourage sank into deep mourning. Shortly afterwards, the monarchs' remaining hopes for the unification of the Iberian Peninsula were dashed again by the death of their daughter, Isabella, the queen of Portugal, and later by that of her infant son. By that time Queen Isabella herself became ill, and did not fully recover her health until her death in 1504. The mental state of Isabella's remaining heir, her daughter Joanna, was also a source of worry for the ailing queen<sup>47</sup>. Among the less known factors was the situation in the Camera Reginale of Sicily. The able governor of the queen's fief of Syracuse, Juan de Cárdenas, died in March 1496. The queen appointed then the bishop of Syracuse, Dalmatio de Sandionisio, a Dominican of Catalan origin, as temporary governor. Soon afterwards he was replaced by Luis Margarit, who was hot tempered. When the Gran Capitán, after inspecting the city's defenses, decided that Syracuse should be fortified to withstand Ottoman incursions and entrusted Margarit with that task, the new governor impounded holy vessels from the local churches to finance the construction works and as a result quarreled with the bishop. Their altercation ended in physical violence, Margarit hitting the bishop on his head in plain view of the crowd. The offended bishop left Syracuse and later excommunicated the governor. Finally, the Gran Capitán decided to remove Margarit from office and in 1501 or 1502 he appointed a new governor, Luis Peyro<sup>48</sup>. These upheavals in the Camera Reginale are probably an indication of Isabella's loss of interest in her Sicilian domain in the years that preceded her death. In any case, Isabella's involvement in the campaigns in the Italian south was minimal.

The last years of the fifteenth century were used by the Catholic monarchs to defeat the French and consolidate their hold on the Neapolitan kingdom. The armies gathered in 1494 by Ferdinand the

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 447-449, 485-488.

<sup>48</sup> J. Zurita, *Historia* cit., vol. IV, book XIX pp. 232-233; S. Privitera, *Storia di Siracusa antica e moderna*, II, Naples 1878-9 (reprint Palermo 2000), pp. 134-137; N. Zeldes, *The Queen's Property* cit., p. 79.

Catholic fought mainly in the Italian south under the inspired leadership of the Gran Capitán until the final victory in 1503. Only in 1501 the Turkish menace was mentioned again in regard to southern Italy when King Federigo of Naples (1497-1501), in his final efforts to maintain his throne appealed to the Turks promising to allow 15,000 or 20,000 armed men to cross the Adriatic to his assistance<sup>49</sup>. However, there was no direct confrontation between the Spanish armies and the Turks in the reign of the Catholic monarchs except for the intervention in the Ottoman-Venetian war of 1499-1503. Gonsalvo Fernández de Córdoba, the Gran Capitán, offered on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1500 to send the Spanish fleet to help the Venetians defend Modon; unfortunately, the help offer arrived too late as Modon had already fallen on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August that same year<sup>50</sup>. In December 1500 the Gran Capitán successfully prevented the conquest of Corfu by the Ottomans and relieved Cephalonia, nevertheless, the war ended in Turkish victory over Venice, and in May 1501 the Serenissima signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire.

In the Italian south the military victories of the Gran Capitán were complemented by astute diplomacy. In November 1500 the king concluded the treaty of Granada with France aiming at the partition of the kingdom of Naples<sup>51</sup>. It cannot be excluded that the furor over Federigo's appeal to the Turks was no more than part of the propaganda intended to discredit him once his rule was becoming an impediment to the policies of both the pope and Ferdinand the Catholic. In fact, at the time when the treaty of Granada was signed he had not yet committed himself to the Turks<sup>52</sup>. But the treaty of Granada did not end the war with France and it continued until the definitive victories of the Gran Capitán in Barletta and Cerignola in 1503.

<sup>49</sup> J. Zurita, *Historia* cit., vol. II, books IV, XIX, XXXIX, XLV, pp. 232-234, 296-299, 316; J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, vol. II, pp. 555-556.

<sup>50</sup> K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* cit., vol. II, p. 522.

<sup>51</sup> Concerning Pope Alexander VI, see note 8 above. For the treaty of Granada: J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms* cit., vol. II, pp. 555.

<sup>52</sup> In a bull dated 25 June 1501 Pope Alexander VI charged Federigo with breaking his oath of fealty to the pope and *what is worse and more abominable and quite unworthy of a Christian prince*, maintaining intelligence with the Turkish sultan, with whom he had frequently exchanged embassies in an effort to encourage the Turkish invasion of Christian territories, even Italy: K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* cit., vol. II, p. 537.

It was only after the conquest of Naples that Ferdinand decided to strike the Ottomans, albeit indirectly, when he began the campaign to conquer the coastal cities of North Africa, again using Sicily as a base for the Spanish army<sup>53</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

In a way this article is mostly about a war that never was, as no Ottoman attempt to invade Sicily or Malta took place in this period, and neither there was direct confrontation between the Spanish armada and the Turks in the 1490's. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Ferdinand considered Ottoman intervention a real possibility, as it is revealed in his letters written in the summer of 1494 and at the beginning of 1495. It cannot be ruled out that the preparations for war, i.e. fortification of coastal cities and villages and strongholds, as well as the presence of Spanish armed forces in the Italian south, prevented an intended Turkish invasion. A careful reading of the sources shows that the armies recruited by Ferdinand for the war in South Italy were aimed at two different targets: the French and the Ottomans. The fact that the true aims of the campaign were a little blurred is perhaps characteristic of the period; King Charles VIII declared very loudly that his true purpose was a crusade against the Infidel and after having conquered the kingdom of Naples he intended to take Jerusalem. Was this indeed his intention or was it simply an excuse for his conquest of the Kingdom of Naples? Modern historians doubt his sincerity<sup>54</sup>. Even Guicciardini was not entirely sure of the French king's motives:

<sup>53</sup> M. García Arenal y M. Á. de Bunes, *Los españoles y el Norte de África. Siglos XV-XVIII*, Mapfre, Madrid, 1992, pp. 45ff; C. Trasselli, *La conquista di Tripoli nel 1510 vista dalla Sicilia, Histoire économique du monde Méditerranéen 1450-1650, Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel*, Toulouse, 1973, vol. 1, pp 611-619. On the Jewish angle: N. Zeldes, *Un tragico ritorno: schiavi ebrei in Sicilia dopo la conquista spagnola di Tripoli (1510)*, «Nuove Effemeridi. Rassegna trimestrale di cultura», a. XIV, n. 54 (2001), pp. 47-55.

<sup>54</sup> See for example: A. Marongiu, *Carlo VIII e la sua crociata come problema storiografico, Byzantine, Norman, Swabian and Later Institutions in Southern Italy*, (Collected Studies), Variorum Reprints, London, 1972, pp. 95-258, and more recently David Abulafia who takes the opposite view considering him a dreamer who truly sought to redeem Christendom: *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*, pp. 248-249 and see the bibliography cited there.

Charles was not at all unwilling to attempt to acquire by force the Kingdom of Naples as his own rightful property. The idea had been with him almost instinctively since childhood, and had been nourished by the encouragement of certain people who were very close to him. They made him believe this was an opportunity to surpass the glory of his predecessors, as once he had conquered the kingdom of Naples, he could easily defeat the empire of the Turks<sup>55</sup>.

But were Ferdinand's motives any less devious? In 1506, after the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples when Ferdinand was at the height of his powers, a well-meaning servant of the king, the Sicilian Giovanni Luca Barberi, wrote in his chronicle that the Catholic would wrest Jerusalem from the Saracens<sup>56</sup>. However, the king's letters cited above are rather prosaic, as they concern themselves with strategic decisions, financial matters and detailed instructions calculated to achieve his ends with as little expenditure as possible, not disdaining even very small sums such as a the few ounces to be had for "pieces of land" abandoned by the departing Jews of Malta. Thus we come to the other aspect of the war preparations: the decision to finance it by using the money provided by the expulsion of the Jews.

The documents analyzed above show that there might be need to examine at greater length the Mediterranean policies of the Catholic kings, beyond the wars in Italy and North Africa. The first are usually viewed as a part of the power struggle for dominating European politics, while the latter are usually interpreted as an extension of the conquest of Granada<sup>57</sup>. Spanish interest in the Levant in this period is also largely ignored, though Martire's embassy to the Mamluk sul-

<sup>55</sup> «Né mancava nell'animo de Carlo inclinazione a cercare d'acquistare con l'armi il regno de Napoli, come giustamente appartenemente a sè, cominciata per un certo istinto quasi naturale insino da puerizia e nutrita di conforti di alcuni che gli erano molto acetti; i quali empiendolo di pensieri vani gli prponevano questa essere occasione di avanzare la gloria de' suoi predecessori, perché acquistato il reame di Napoli, gli sarebbe agevole il vincere lo imperio de turchi», F. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia* cit., vol. I, libro I, cap. 4, p. 29.

<sup>56</sup> «Sanctam Jherosolimitanam terram a Sarracenis cristiani nominis acerrimus hostibus in ipsius cristiane fidey maximum dedecus diu occupatam et detemptam ipsi cristiano consortio restituendo et agregando», *Genealogia Catholicorum Aragonie Regum*, ed. F. Giunta, *Cronache siciliane inedite della fine del Medioevo*, Società Siciliana per la Storia Patria, Palermo, 1955, p. 145.

<sup>57</sup> See for example the works of Suárez Fernández, *El camino hacia Europa* (note 3 above) and M. García Arenal y M. Á. de Bunes, *Los españoles y el Norte de África* (note 53 above).

tan of Egypt had been studied at length. However, the embassy is rarely seen in the context of a Mediterranean policy that had its beginnings in the preceding decade. Therefore, the preparations for the war that never was, show that the conflict with the Ottoman Empire began already in the reign of the Catholic monarchs to continue throughout the sixteenth century until the victory of Lepanto.

## APPENDIX

Asp, Real Cancelleria, reg. 190, c. 247r, Palermo, 6 April 1494

Ferdinandus etc.

Magister justiciarius<sup>58</sup> etc. Magnifico Aloysio Sanches rece\ptore pecuniarum reservatarum sacre regie Maiestatis consiliario \ regio dilecto salutem. Tenorem presentium vi dichimo et \ expresse comandamo ki di li denari in vostri putiri convenuti \ di la compositioni di li florini chento milia di li judei \ nomine dicte regie Maiestatis digiati pagari et consignari \ a lu magnifico Alferio de Leofante regio thesaurario unci milli \ novi chentu quatordichi tari sey et gr' xi intrandu in la dicta summa docati MLI et chinco li quali comperativo \ a tari tridichi et gr' cinque lu peczu aliquali prezu \ ancora quilli consigniriti infra la dicta summa a lu prefatto \ magnifico regiu thesaurario ad opu di pagarisi lu cambiù di flo\rini trenta milia a lu spectabili conti di Triventu capitani \ di l'armata maritima esistenti in quisto portu ordinatu \ ordinatu (sic) per comandamentu di la dicta Maiestati recuperando da ipsu magnifico thesaurario apoteca de soluto. Datum in nobili civitate \ Messane, die VI mensis aprilis XIII Ind. 1494.

<sup>58</sup>The Master Justice of the realm at the time was Count Giovanni Tommaso de Moncada, see G.E. Di Blasi, *Introduzione di I. Peri*, Edizioni della Regione siciliana, Palermo, 1974, I, pp. 308-309.