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THE BEST-KEPT SECRET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: BARBAROSSA'S 1534 TUNIS CAMPAIGN*

DOI 10.19229/1828-230X/4952020

ABSTRACT: *This article discusses Hayreddin Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis in 1534 in the light of the chronicles written by contemporary Ottoman historiographers and those of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The aim is to understand how Ottoman chronicles handled the question of the sultan's involvement in the conquest of Tunis since the accounts offered by the chronicles changed radically in the course of time. Some sources indicated that there existed Sultan's authorization/approval behind the conquest whereas some were shy of associating the conquest with the sultan. This uncertainty is also reflected in the modern historiographical approach to the conquest of Tunis. It is interpreted either as part of Süleyman's preconceived plans or as Barbarossa's unauthorized seizing upon an opportunity. By drawing on a comparison of several Ottoman sources, this article analyses the factors that might have influenced the historiographers' contradictory accounts and tries to provide a more accurate picture of the 1534 campaign.*

KEYWORDS: *Barbarossa, Süleyman I, Tunis 1534, Süleymanname, Ottoman historiography.*

IL SEGRETO MEGLIO CUSTODITO DEL MEDITERRANEO: LA CAMPAGNA TUNISINA DI BARBAROSSA DEL 1534

SOMMARIO: *Questo articolo analizza la conquista di Tunisi condotta da Hayreddin Barbarossa nel 1534 alla luce sia della coeva cronachistica ottomana, sia di quella prodotta tra il XVI e il XVII secolo. Tramite quest'ottica, si vuole comprendere come le cronache ottomane abbiano trattato la questione del presunto coinvolgimento del sultano di Istanbul nelle operazioni di conquista della città tunisina, considerato che i resoconti offerti dalle stesse fonti sono molteplici e tra loro contrastanti. Sebbene alcuni testi indichino la presenza di una autorizzazione data dal sultano per svolgere la campagna in Magreb, altre opere non si sbilanciano nell'associare l'operazione militare del 1534 a uno dei numerosi obiettivi della politica estera della dinastia osmani. Questa incertezza si riflette anche nel contemporaneo dibattito storiografico relativo alla prima conquista ottomana di Tunisi. A seconda della prospettiva di indagine, la presa di Tunisi è stata riletta o come parte di una strategia premeditata di Solimano il Magnifico, oppure come un'opportunità unica colta da Barbarossa senza il consenso di Istanbul. Pertanto, confrontando tra loro diverse fonti ottomane, questo articolo si propone di analizzare i fattori che potrebbero aver influenzato i resoconti contraddittori della cronachistica ottomana al fine di fornire un quadro più accurato della campagna tunisina capitanata da Barbarossa nel 1534.*

PAROLE CHIAVI: *Barbarossa, Solimano I, Tunisi 1534, Süleymanname, storiografia ottomana.*

The victory of Charles V at Tunis in 1535 was one of the most cherished episodes of his war against the Ottomans. Spanish chronicles and personal narratives of the expedition as well as its official celebrations and pictorial representations offer detailed accounts and vivid descriptions of the emperor's response to Hayreddin Barbarossa's

* This research was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science (Project PGC2018-099152-B-I00). I would like to express my gratitude to Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, Rubén González Cuerva and María José Rodríguez-Salgado for their support during the project. I would like to thank Paul Latimer, Nagihan Gür and Hasan Çolak for their helpful suggestions and comments on earlier drafts of the paper.

capture of Tunis in 1534. As Charles V's greatest victory against Islam, the year 1535 acquired symbolic and propagandistic resonance for his claim to be the protector of Christendom. On the international political scene, the conquest of Tunis created on the one hand, a triumphal atmosphere among Christian powers that led to the renewal of proposals to forge an anti-Islamic Holy League¹. On the other hand, it deepened divisions among European powers and accelerated the move towards alliances that would provide a strategic counterweight to Charles V's expansion. The most striking result of this process was the «unholy alliance» between Francis I and Süleyman I². Modern historical research, driven by the conquest's historical importance and nourished by abundant primary sources, has produced numerous accounts and analyses of various aspects of the campaign and its results. Scholars have also studied the political and religious significance of the artistic commemorations of the Tunis expedition, such as the tapestries of Vermeyen³, and literary eulogies of the victory, including the poetry of Garcilaso de la Vega⁴. Interestingly, the references to Tunis and Barbarossa in *Gargantua*, the French satirical work that mocked the imperial ambitions of Charles V, have been examined to determine the exact publication date of the work's earlier versions and whether Rabelais published this famous work before or after 1535⁵.

In comparison to the comprehensive studies of 1535 from European perspectives, Ottoman historiography has not shown the same level of interest in Barbarossa's 1534 Tunis campaign, or in his unsuccessful resistance against Charles V in Tunis in 1535 which he followed up with the successful assault on Mahón. Ottoman chronicles reserve little space for these episodes, and Ottoman archival sources, correspondence and first-person narratives relevant to the years 1534 and 1535 are rather scarce. The main reason for this appears to be the 1534-1535 campaign in Iraq against the Safavids, which Süleyman I (hereafter,

¹ M.J. Rodríguez Salgado, *¿Carolus Africanus?: el Emperador y el turco*, in J. Martínez Millán (ed.), *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558)*, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, Madrid, vol. I, pp. 487-531.

² É. Garnier, *L'Alliance impie. François I^{er} et Soliman le Magnifique contre Charles V*, Éditions du Félin, Paris, 2008; M. Heath, *Unholy Alliance: Valois and Ottomans*, «Renaissance Studies», 3 (1989), pp. 303-315.

³ M. Falomir Faus, M.Á. Bunes Ibarra, *Carlos V, Vermeyen y la conquista de Túnez*, in J.L. Castellanos, F. Sánchez-Montes (eds.), *Carlos V. Europeísmo y Universalidad. Religión, cultura y mentalidad*, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, Madrid, 2001, t. V, pp. 243-257.

⁴ V. Beltran, *De Túnez a Cartago. Propaganda política y tradiciones poéticas en la época del emperador*, «Boletín de la Real Academia Española», 315 (2017), pp. 45-114.

⁵ M. Screech, *Some reflexions on the problem of dating Gargantua <A> and *, «Études rabelaisiennes», 11 (1974), pp. 9-56.

Süleyman) decided to lead in person with İbrahim Pasha, his grand vizier and favourite⁶. The prestige arising from the 1535 conquest of Baghdad, former centre of the Abbasid caliphate, not only overshadowed Barbarossa's capture of Tunis but also helped diminish the negative consequences of his immediate defeat by the emperor, Süleyman's archenemy in the Mediterranean. In fact, Süleyman had felt the need to start a naval rearmament programme and shift his priorities towards naval warfare since Andrea Doria's conquest of Koron in 1532. Yet, this shift towards including the Mediterranean and North Africa in Ottoman strategic thinking was still in its infancy in 1534 when Barbarossa was appointed admiral of the Ottoman fleet. The illustrated account that the chronicler Matrakçı Nasuh wrote of the Baghdad campaign, which, in a sense, may be considered as the equivalent of Vermeyen's Tunis tapestries, is indicative of the Sultanate's priorities⁷. Contemporary Ottoman chronicles, therefore, neither glorified excessively Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis nor especially lamented his inability to defend it. Moreover, they did not link the contest over Tunis specifically with the person of Sultan Süleyman. In a period when Charles V was heralded as *Carolus Africanus* in Europe, Sultan Süleyman himself was isolated from the defeat of Barbarossa in North Africa and was lauded as the conqueror of Baghdad.

This article will discuss the 1534-1535 Ottoman-Habsburg struggle over Tunis in the light of the chronicles written by contemporary Ottoman historians and those of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. My aim is to understand how Ottoman chronicles handled the question of the sultan's involvement in the conquest of Tunis, and to trace how the opinions and accounts offered by the chronicles changed radically in the course of time. There were narratives that were simultaneously in circulation which flatly contradicted each other in their explanation of what lay behind the conquest of Tunis. I will first address the arguments and sources of modern historiographical approaches to the conquest of Tunis. In the subsequent section, I will address Ottoman chronicles and historical narratives to understand the framework of their contradictory accounts, and to find an answer to the question whether the conquest of Tunis was the result of a predetermined strategy with the prior knowledge of the sultan, or whether Barbarossa was pursuing a semi-autonomous policy reminiscent of his pre-Ottoman career.

⁶ R. Murphey, *Süleyman's Eastern Policy*, in H. Inalcik, C. Kafadar (eds.), *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, Isis Press, Istanbul, 1993, pp. 229-248.

⁷ R. Murphey, *Süleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary: Ottoman Manifest Destiny or a Delayed Reaction to Charles V's Universalist Vision*, «Journal of Early Modern History», 5 (2001), p. 221.

The conquest of Tunis in modern historiography

Most of the general surveys of Süleyman's Mediterranean policy as well as the few articles focusing on Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis have interpreted it either as part of Süleyman's preconceived plans, or as Barbarossa's unauthorized and opportunistic expedition. İdris Bostan stands out among those who took the position that the objective of the Ottoman fleet from the outset was to conquer Tunis. According to him, the year 1534 was a symbolic year in which the sultan bestowed the office of admiral on Barbarossa, established the province of *Cezâyir-i Bahr-i Sefid* for him and sent him to take Tunis. Bostan argues that the real target of the Ottomans was to end the internal struggles for the Tunisian throne among the ruler and his brothers in favour of the Ottomans, and to block Spanish influence in Tunis, whose ruler, Mulay Hassan, had allied with Charles V and become one of his vassals in North Africa⁸. The Ottomans were to play a decisive role in this struggle because in the previous year, Mulay Rashid, the brother of Mulay Hassan and pretender to the Tunisian throne, had taken refuge in Algiers with Barbarossa and was brought by him to Istanbul where he appealed for Ottoman aid. Bostan also refers to an archival finance register of the spring of 1534 relating to the naval preparations in which the destination of the armada was indicated as *diyâr-ı Mağrib*⁹. However, whether this term referred to Algiers or Tunis or to the whole of North Africa is not specified. Moreover, Bostan discusses the conquest of Tunis in the context of the incipient French-Ottoman alliance and argues that the international conjunction of the war between Charles V and Francis I and the anti-Habsburg rapprochement between the French and the Ottomans were key factors behind the decision to conquer Tunis¹⁰.

Svat Soucek interprets the capture of Tunis as a strategic move that paralleled the sultan's conquest of Iraq and argues that Barbarossa might have discussed this strategy with the sultan and İbrahim Pasha. According to Soucek, the principal objective was to take advantage of the strategic position of Tunis with its suitable gulfs and ports for

⁸ İ. Bostan, *Kanuni ve Akdeniz Siyaseti (1530-1550)* [Kanuni Süleyman and the Mediterranean Politics], in Ö. Kumrular (ed.), *Muhteşem Süleyman* [Süleyman the Magnificent], Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2007, p. 28.

⁹ İ. Bostan, *The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid*, in E. Zachariadou (ed.), *Kapudan Pasha, His Office and His Domain*, Crete University Press, Rethymnon, 2002, p. 246.

¹⁰ İ. Bostan, *Kanuni ve Akdeniz Siyaseti* cit., pp. 28-31.

concentrating a great fleet¹¹. In fact, Soucek bases his argument on the account of Peçevî, a seventeenth century historian, who mentions that Barbarossa sent a petition to Süleyman explaining the political and military importance of Tunis and obtained the sultan's approval for its conquest. Following this line of argument, Özlem Kumrular argues in her analysis of the 1534 campaign that Barbarossa managed to convince the sultan to appreciate the strategic importance of North Africa and take advantage of the dynastic problems and chaotic situation in Tunis. Moreover, on the basis of speculative spy reports from Spanish archives, she maintains that Sultan Süleyman ordered Barbarossa to conquer Tunis because the intense naval preparations and military mobilization in Istanbul were signs of an organized campaign rather than a simple naval expedition into the Mediterranean¹².

However, the same Spanish sources have been the basis for the argument that Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis was his personal initiative, without specific instructions from the sultan. According to José María del Moral, Barbarossa's main objective was to land in Naples and not in Tunis. In support of his opinion, he refers to intelligence reports, which assured the Spanish authorities that the principal target of the Ottoman fleet was the Kingdom of Naples. He argues that Barbarossa's attack was not part of a premeditated plan, and that Tunis became his target only after he had failed to carry out a significant attack on Naples¹³. Another contribution which follows this line of thinking was offered by Emrah Safa Gürkan who, while emphasizing, like Soucek, the chief strategic objectives of the 1534 campaign, agrees with the contention that Barbarossa had no formal authorisation to do so, but decided on his own initiative to take Tunis¹⁴. For Gürkan, the conquest of Tunis is further proof that corsairs could shape Ottoman Mediterranean policy by carrying out measures they had devised to suit their own interests¹⁵.

¹¹ S. Soucek, *Naval Aspects of the Ottoman Conquests of Rhodes, Cyprus and Crete*, «Studia Islamica», 98/99 (2004), p. 228.

¹² Ö. Kumrular, *İspanyol ve İtalyan Arşiv Kaynakları Işığında Barbaros'un 1534 Seferi* [Barbarossa's 1534 Expedition in the light of Spanish and Italian Archival Sources], in Ö. Kumrular (ed.), *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Osmanlı-Habsburg Düellosu* [The Ottoman-Habsburg Duel in the light of New Documents], Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2011, pp. 195-196.

¹³ J.M. del Moral, *El Virrey de Napoles Don Pedro de Toledo y la guerra contra el Turco*, Instituto de Estudios Africanos, Madrid, 1966, p. 169.

¹⁴ E.S. Gürkan, *Osmanlı-Habsburg Rekabeti Çerçevesinde Osmanlılar'ın XVI. Yüzyıl' daki Akdeniz Siyaseti*, [Ottoman Mediterranean Policy in the Sixteenth Century in the framework of Ottoman-Habsburg Competition], in H. Çoruh (ed.), *Osmanlı Dönemi Akdeniz Dünyası* [The Mediterranean World during the Ottoman Period], Yeditepe, İstanbul, 2011, pp. 25-26.

¹⁵ E.S. Gürkan, *The Centre and the Frontier: Ottoman Cooperation with the North African Corsairs in the Sixteenth Century*, «Turkish Historical Review», 1:2 (2010), p. 150.

The argument that Barbarossa initiated and executed the attack to Tunis has been recently adopted by Nicolas Vatin in a historiographical essay on the 1534 campaign. After discussing critically the modern historical literature and Ottoman and European primary sources on the 1534 campaign, Vatin argues that Tunis was not the objective of Barbarossa's first official campaign with Sultan Süleyman's fleet. For Vatin, Soucek's principal source, Peçevî, cannot be considered valid because this account was written more than a century after the events, and analysed the Tunis campaign with the advantage of hindsight, and following a similar approach to that of a modern historian. Vatin also disagrees with İdris Bostan's interpretation of the term *diyâr-ı Mağrib* and argues that if they had wanted to allude specifically to the region of Tunis, they would have used the term *İfrıkıyye*. Vatin bases his own arguments on the statements found in two contemporary Ottoman sources, Lutfi Pasha's chronicle, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman*, and Seyyid Murad's *Gazavât-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, the semi-autobiographical account of Barbarossa's life and deeds. According to Vatin, there is no reason not to rely on the personal testimony of Barbarossa and, in spite of its propagandistic nature, he considers the *Gazavât* as «the most reliable narrative source about Hayreddin». Finally, he concludes that there is no contemporary Ottoman source that confirms that the sultan had determined that the objective of the fleet should be the conquest of Tunis¹⁶.

This interpretative bifurcation among scholars reflects the divergent accounts of their sources, which do not really offer the desired confirmation of either of these two lines of argument. There is no contemporary Ottoman source explicitly indicating the existence of a sultanic order to invade Tunis; nor are the arguments for an unpremeditated or opportunistic campaign convincing enough. In fact, modern historians, depending on their hypothesis, have preferred to prioritize the sources that seem to confirm their point of view while ignoring the others in order to draw their final conclusions. However, apart from the historical sources used by these historians, there are several little known or under-used Ottoman sources that offer different narratives of the 1534 expedition. The fact that there were such diverse representations of the same event points to the problematic perception of the conquest of Tunis. Thus, the question is not that of simply identifying who was behind the conquest; the topic also requires an analysis of the discursive and narrative strategies employed by several Ottoman historiographers, and it is precisely to this, which I now turn.

¹⁶ N. Vatin, *Sur les objectifs de la première campagne navale menée par Hayreddin Barberousse pour le compte de Soliman le Magnifique (1534)*, «Archivum Ottomanicum», 35 (2018), pp. 173-191.

Sultan's *Firman* or *Adverse winds*: The testimony of Ottoman sources

In his biographical encyclopaedia of Ottoman poets (*Meşâirü's-suarâ*), which he completed in 1568 and presented to Sultan Selim II, Âşık Çelebi narrates an anecdote about the poet Mahremî, who was captured in 1534 together with his family by a Christian ship when they were on their way from Salonica to Istanbul. Âşık Çelebi refers the year of Mahremî's captivity with the following words: «It was the beginning of the appearance of [the late] Hayreddin Pasha, [the late] Sultan Süleyman was on campaign in Iraq, and it was the year of Hayreddin Pasha's Tunis fleet»¹⁷. The anecdote further relates that after Mahremî secured his release, he met the poet Esîrî who served as an Ottoman official in Kızılhisar (Karystos, Greece). Mahremî asked him about his poet friends, Kâtibî (Seydi Ali Çelebi) and Nigârî (Nakkaş Haydar), who were also high-ranking mariners in the Ottoman fleet. According to Âşık Çelebi, Esîrî responded: «Hayreddin Pasha is on his way to Tunis with the fleet and Seydi Ali Çelebi and Nakkaş Haydar are serving under him»¹⁸. Âşık Çelebi was fifteen when Barbarossa conquered Tunis and had just settled in Istanbul after his father's death¹⁹. Even though he completed his *Meşâirü's-suarâ* thirty years later, the way in which the 1534 expedition found an echo in such an important source for Ottoman cultural history, demonstrates that it was deeply embedded in popular culture, and specifically as Barbarossa's Tunis campaign.

Ironically, the picture is not that clear in historical sources. Ottoman historiographers produced different and incoherent accounts of the conquest of Tunis throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the reign of Süleyman, historical writing grew significantly and became an indispensable tool for glorifying the military and administrative deeds of the sultan. The panegyric type of historiographical activity, in forms such as *Süleymannâme*, *Şehnâme* or *Gazanâme*, proliferated under his patronage and became important instruments for portraying and promoting his image as a military leader, a just ruler, and

¹⁷ «Miskin Mahremî ehl ü 'yaliyle esir oldu...Hayrû'd-din Paşa-yı merhumun zuhurunun evâ'ili ve Sultan Süleyman-ı merhumun İrakeyn seferinde olup Hayrû'd-din Paşa'nun Tunus donanması yılı idi». Â. Çelebi, *Meşâirü's-suarâ* [Dictionary of Poets], ed. F. Kılıç, Kültür Bakanlığı, Ankara, 2018, p. 334.

¹⁸ «Esîrî cevap virüb Hayrû'd-din Paşa donanma ile Tunus'a 'azimetde ve Seydi Ali Çelebi ve Nakkaş Haydar anunla bile hıdmetdedür diyü haber virür». A. Çelebi, *Meşâirü's-suarâ* cit., p. 334.

¹⁹ H. Aynur, *Kurgusu ve Vurgusuyla Kendi Kaleminden Âşık Çelebi'nin Yaşamöyküsü* [The Life Story of Âşık Çelebi from his Pen through his Fiction and Emphasis], in H. Aynur, A. Niyazioğlu (eds.), *Âşık Çelebi ve Şairler Tezkiresi Üzerine Yazılar* [Articles on Âşık Çelebi and his Dictionary of Poets], İstanbul Koc Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011, p. 34.

so on. The emphasis of these historical accounts was naturally on military and political affairs and they paid particular attention to Süleyman's campaigns that ended in victory²⁰. However, not all historical works were composed as dynastic propaganda. There were also historical texts that transmitted different interpretations of events without being constrained by dynastic concerns. Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis became the subject of various genres of Ottoman historical production and received different treatment from each of them.

There are at least five distinct approaches that can be identified in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman works which included the episode of Barbarossa's occupation of Tunis. The first approach implies that Barbarossa conquered Tunis with the authorization of the sultan. The second approach explains the conquest as the result of Barbarossa's unintended arrival at Tunis without any mention of a sultanic order. The third approach criticizes Barbarossa and argues that the sultan only ordered a campaign against the infidels and not the conquest of Tunis from fellow Muslims. The fourth approach defines the principal objective of the Ottoman-corsair fleet as the peninsula of Morea and explains Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis by alluding to a variety of reasons but not due to the sultan's order. The fifth approach is seen in seventeenth-century sources and argues that the conquest of Tunis was ordered by the sultan and was part of a wider naval strategy to secure a better naval base from which to attack southern Italy. To understand these differences in the historical works we need a thematic and chronological analysis of the narratives as well as to consider the interpretative nuances that unveil their approach to Barbarossa's first campaign.

The first approach appears in the *Süleymannâmes* of Bostan Çelebi (d. 1570) and Matrakçı Nasuh (d. 1564), which were written in panegyric style and were more likely to be in the nature of history either sponsored or intended for consumption by the court. Both authors completed their works at a date very close to the conquest of Tunis and provided concise but vivid accounts of the events in 1534 and 1535. Their explanations for the reasons behind Barbarossa's campaign differ only very slightly from each other, but both refer to the sultan's approval and the just causes of the conquest of Tunis. The earliest of the two is Bostan Çelebi's *Süleymannâme* and, in fact, it is the earliest available account of the conquest of Tunis. He covered the event for the first time in the second version of his *Süleymannâme*

²⁰ C. Woodhead, *Perspectives on Suleyman*, in M. Kunt, C. Woodhead (ed.), *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, Longman, London, 1995, pp. 171-173.

(Ms. Ayasofya 3317), which was written between 1536 and 1537²¹. Since Bostan Çelebi was under the patronage of Süleyman's personal tutor, Hayreddin Efendi, he was very close to the highest court circles. Although it is somewhat less used as a source by modern historians, this *Süleymannâme* is considered a much better-informed source than other contemporary chronicles regarding court-centred decisions²².

Bostan Çelebi offers the most open and direct statement that Barbarossa was given an official commission concerning Tunis. He states clearly that Barbarossa was given an imperial order (*fermân-ı vâcibü'l-izân*) to invite Mulay Hassan to declare his obedience to Sultan Süleyman. Instead of obeying the sultan's orders (*fermân-ı âlî-şân*), Mulay Hassan made an alliance with the Christians and did not pay homage to the "soldiers of Islam". Immediately afterwards, he fled the country and the notables and the local people of Tunis gave the keys of the city to Barbarossa. Bostan Çelebi then states, using the exact geo-historical term, *diyâr-ı İfrîkiyye*, that Tunis then became part of the Ottoman realm (*memâlik-i mahmiyye*):

After these victories [on the Italian coasts], [Barbarossa] set off towards the West and anchored at the port of Bizerta in the province of Tunis. From there he arrived with a propitious wind at the port of Tunis on the sixth day of the victorious month of Safer in the year 941. With the mandatory imperial order of the Lord of Conjunction, may Allah make his Caliphate continuous, [Barbarossa] invited Emir Hasan, the ruler of the lands of Tunis, to obedience [to the sultan]. [Emir Hasan] was in harmony and alliance with the cursed Christians and dependent on that community of perversion. Therefore he [Emir Hasan] did not comply with the imperial order of the sultan, did not welcome the soldiers of Islam, and escaped the city of Tunis. The people of the city of Tunis and the rulers and notables of the castles and countries of that land obeyed and handed over the keys in a manner worthy of the sultan. Thus, the lands of Tunis became part of the protected [Ottoman] domains²³.

Matrakçı Nasuh offers an account of Tunis campaign in the first part of his *Süleymannâme*, which is thought to have been written between 1537 and 1538²⁴. He gives a very straightforward description of Barbarossa's

²¹ H.G. Yurdaydın, *Bostan'ın Süleymannâmesi* [The Süleymannâme of Bostan], «Belleten», 74 (1955), pp. 137-202. The first version of Bostan Çelebi's *Süleymannâme* was published in 1524. The third and the fourth versions were published respectively in 1541 and in 1547. A. Sağırılı, *Süleymannâme*, in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 2010, vol. XXXVIII, p. 125.

²² N. Aykut, *Bostan Çelebi*, in *Türkiye Diyanet* cit., vol. VI, p. 308.

²³ B. Çelebi, *Süleymannâme*, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya, nr. 3317, 168b; Türk Tarih Kurumu Library, nr. Y/0018, 155a -155b; Austrian National Library, H.O. 42a, f. 234v.

²⁴ D. Erkan, *Matrakçı Nasuh'un Süleymân-nâmesi (1520-1537)* [The *Süleymannâme* of Matrakçı Nasuh], M.A. thesis, Marmara Univ., 2005, p. lx.

attack on Tunis and narrates it as a simple campaign of conquest. Matrakçı Nasuh's statements in terms of sultan's authorization are not as explicit as Bostan Çelebi's. According to his account, Barbarossa bombarded the castle of Tunis and conquered the city under the auspices [*sâye-i sa'âdetlerinde feth idüb zabt eyledi*] of Sultan Süleyman. In return for his bravery, Barbarossa was awarded a gilded sword and a robe of honour and was ordered to «preserve and protect» those territories. He stayed in Tunis to establish a «new order and fresh discipline» but its previous ruler forged an alliance with the infidels and together they attacked and reconquered the city²⁵. Although Matrakçı Nasuh's use of the phrase «sâye-i sa'âdetlerinde» and his description of Barbarossa's further endorsement by Istanbul implies the approval of the sultan, this does not explicitly suggest that the sultan had determined that Tunis should be his objective²⁶. However, since Matrakçı Nasuh participated in Süleyman's Iraq campaign in 1534, he must have personally witnessed *in situ* the sultan's positive reaction to Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis.

The second approach is adopted by Seyyid Murad's *Gazavât-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, which does not mention an explicit order from the sultan and denies totally any intentional responsibility of Barbarossa for the conquest of Tunis. Seyyid Murad states that the main source of his work is Barbarossa himself. The author is also known to have participated in some of Barbarossa's campaigns and therefore he probably added his own observations as well as using the testimony of Barbarossa's captains. *Gazavât-ı Hayreddin Paşa* was written both in prose and verse styles. There are several copies of its prose versions reproduced in different centuries. The prose *Gazavât* manuscript in the Escorial library was written before 1578 and is thought to be the closest to the original composition written by Seyyid Murad²⁷. There is only one copy of *Gazavât*'s verse version and it is probable that it was completed before 1543²⁸. With regards to the Tunis campaign, the main argument of both prose and verse versions of *Gazavât* is that the arrival of Barbarossa in Tunis was totally accidental. The *Gazavât* maintains that, after having plundered the Italian coasts as far as Sardinia, Barbarossa thought of sailing directly to Algiers. But an adverse wind (*rüzgâr muhalif olub*) brought the whole fleet to the port

²⁵ İvi, pp. 186-189.

²⁶ N. Vatin, *Sur les objectifs* cit., p. 182.

²⁷ The Italian turcologist Aldo Gallotta carried out an analysis on several versions of *Gazavât* and published a facsimile edition of the prose manuscript found in the Escorial library. A. Gallotta, *Il Gazavat di Hayreddin Pasa di Seyyid Murad: edito in facsimile secondo il ms. 1663 dell'Escorial di Madrid con le varianti degli altri manoscritti*, Centro di Studi Magrebini, Napoli, 1983.

²⁸ İvi, pp. 23-24.

of Bizerta on the Tunisian coast²⁹. Thus, the *Gazavât* only touches on Barbarossa's "unavoidable" landing in Bizerta, dispatching it with just one sentence, and gives the message that the conquest of Tunis was not previously planned and was entirely the result of a chain of events that started with unexpected, adverse weather conditions.

This narrative is reproduced with similar simplicity in several manuscript versions of the *Gazavât* in the following centuries. However, an eighteenth century version that is located in the İstanbul University Library (Ms. 2639) adds more apologetic phrases from Barbarossa in the first person³⁰. In this version, Barbarossa could not sail to Algiers because of a strong westerly wind that propelled the fleet to the port of Bizerta. According to the text, when Barbarossa arrived at the Tunisian coasts, he uttered the following words:

Then, Hayreddin Pasha said to himself: Oh, all-knowing Allah, it is known to you, your sinful slave had never thought of coming by here [Bizerta], yet, many hidden causes of yours must arise from coming to this side, 'Facilitate at once their accomplishment propitiously,' he prayed³¹.

According to Gallotta, the Ms. 2639 version belongs to a group of manuscripts different from the original *Gazavâts* and written by someone other than Seyyid Murad, identifying these manuscripts as the product of "pseudo Seyyid Murad" because they had basic differences from the other versions that he considered originals³². Indeed, the account of Ms. 2639 frames Barbarossa's unintended landing in providential terms and absolves Barbarossa of responsibility with expressions much stronger than the original versions. This makes the account of Ms. 2639 even more interesting since, despite its distinct differences in content and narrative, it maintained the crucial argument of the original *Gazavâts* with further emphasis and narrative diversity. It should be emphasized that the *Gazavât* is a propagandistic text and the fact that both versions of the *Gazavât* made considerable effort to demonstrate that Barbarossa arrived at Tunis unintentionally could be understood as part of the authors' or the copyists' objective to create a positive and virtuous

²⁹ Ivi, p. 233r; The *Gazavât* in verse reads: «Çıkdı deryâya yine olub revân / Bes Cezâyir deyu giderken hemân / Rüzgâr oldı muhalif döndü ol / Tunus'un berrine toğrı tutdı yol». *Gazavât-ı Hayreddin Paşa*, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R1291, 171a.

³⁰ Mustafa Yıldız has published a transcription of this manuscript. M. Yıldız, *Gazavât-ı Hayreddin Paşa: (MS 2639 Universitätsbibliothek İstanbul): kommentierte Edition mit deutsche Zusammenfassung*, Shaker, Aachen, 1993.

³¹ Ivi, p. 314b.

³² For more information about "pseudo Seyyid Murad", see A. Gallotta, *Il Gazavat* cit., pp. 27-30.

image of Barbarossa. As the *Gazavât* was intended to be read aloud in public, it is possible that the continuous intertextual emphasis on the unintended nature of the conquest of Tunis in the Ms. 2639 might have arisen as a rhetorical device throughout its several recitations in public, later to be taken up by the author or the copyist³³. If Barbarossa had admitted to having followed an official order from the sultan and consequently to have intended to conquer Tunis all along, his immediate defeat by Charles V might have meant admitting a significant failure to fulfil the sultan's orders.

The apologetic tone of *Gazavât* makes sense when assessed together with the third approach which was adopted by Lutfi Pasha. He severely criticized the conquest of Tunis in his *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*. Lutfi Pasha wrote his history in the 1550s after he had been dismissed as Grand Vizier, but he had been actively serving the sultan at the time of the campaign. He was married to the sultan's sister and thus enjoyed the high status of a husband of an Ottoman princess, a *damad*³⁴. He had also been the admiral of the Ottoman fleet immediately before Barbarossa's appointment. When Barbarossa was elevated to the status of *Pasha*, Lutfi Pasha remained with the title *Beg* and his rank was relegated to a secondary commander³⁵. Although he never mentioned these episodes in his chronicle, his dismissal from the admiralty must have been upsetting and have seemed unfortunate at a time when he enjoyed great favour with the sultan as a *damad* of the Ottoman dynasty.

Lutfi Pasha's chronicle is famous for his outspoken criticisms of sultans and statesmen, but his negative stance towards Barbarossa is even more evident and it extended throughout his history³⁶. It is not known exactly when he recorded his account of the campaign but his approach provides the harshest criticism of the conquest of Tunis and Barbarossa's actions. He states that Barbarossa's range of action with the Ottoman fleet was supposed to be limited to the Italian or Spanish coasts and that his mission was merely to retaliate against the

³³ T. Değirmenci, *Bir Kitabı Kaç Kişi Okur? Osmanlı'da Okurlar ve Okuma Biçimleri Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler*, «Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar», 13 (2011), pp. 37-38.

³⁴ According to Çağatay Uluçay, Lutfi Pasha got married with Şah Sultan, sister of Sultan Süleyman, before 1523. M. Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahlarnın Kadınları ve Kızları* [The Wives and Daughters of the Sultans], Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 2001, p. 57. A document in Spanish archives also recognizes Lutfi Pasha's marital status as belonging to the sultan's household: «Havea dato esso Signor Turco a Lufetibeı suo genero cento altre galere». S.l., 1533, Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, 1366, f. 212.

³⁵ İ. Bostan, *The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid* cit., p. 245.

³⁶ R. Murphey, *Seyyid Muradi's prose biography of Hızır ibn Yakub, alias Hayreddin Barbarossa*, «Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae», 4 (2001), pp. 519-532.

Spanish occupation of Koron. Barbarossa was simply not ordered to launch an attack on Tunis. His words are worth citing at length:

Hayreddin Pasha was sent to the seas. He was supposed to avenge the atrocities committed by the infidel fleets in the provinces of the Muslims. However, he did not go to the lands of the infidels but went instead to Tunis, which is in the Maghreb. He arrived with the fleet at the port of Tunis. There was a castle called La Goleta that protects Tunis. He took this castle and brought his ships to its port. He landed there and moved on to Tunis. He captured the city and caused many troubles and calamities to the Muslims and massacred the population. Then he declared himself governor and settled in Tunis³⁷.

As an independent source who allowed himself to be critical of his time, Lutfi Pasha's denial of any official authorization for Tunis is a strong testimony in favour of the arguments that see the conquest as Barbarossa's personal initiative. However, his account stands in complete opposition to Bostan Çelebi or Matrakçı Nasuh, who praised with eulogistic overtones how Barbarossa made Tunis part of the Ottoman realm on the orders of the sultan. Most importantly, Lutfi Pasha's account contradicts the official Ottoman register that indicated the destination of the armada as *diyâr-ı Mağrib*, somewhere in North Africa if not exactly Tunis³⁸. In fact, even the *Gazavât* accepted that the fleet before it ostensibly diverted, had been heading for Algiers. Therefore, Lutfi Pasha seems to be mistaken when he believes that the objective of the fleet was limited to the infidel lands. Besides, the fact that he did not mention Barbarossa's attacks on the Italian coastline demonstrates that he was not well-intentioned and to an extent his account also distorted reality³⁹.

There is also another point worth considering. Lutfi Pasha did not regard the conquest of Tunis as a legitimate act. On the contrary, he was outraged by the massacre of Muslim Tunisian coreligionists and specifically emphasises the fact that Barbarossa attacked a Muslim polity and killed its Muslim population. Unlike the *Süleymannâmes* and the *Gazavât*, Lutfi Pasha does not mention the alliance between Mulay Hassan and Charles V as a justification of the conquest. While this might be ascribed to malice or rivalry, perhaps, as someone who at the time defended the Ottoman sultan's right to the caliphate, Lutfi

³⁷ K. Atik, *Lütfi Paşa ve Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* [Lütfi Paşa and his *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*], Kültür Bakanlığı, Ankara, 2001, p. 272.

³⁸ See footnote 9.

³⁹ N. Vatin, *Sur les objectifs cit.*, p. 183.

Pasha might have found Barbarossa's actions against fellow Muslims in Tunis unacceptable⁴⁰.

The fourth approach to the conquest of Tunis appears in the dynastically sponsored historical works of Ârif Çelebi and Seyyid Lokmân, official *şehnâmecis* of the Ottoman dynasty. The post of *şehnâmecî*, official court historian, was created in the 1550s in a period when the Ottoman dynasty was particularly concerned with its self-image. Ârif Çelebi is considered as the first permanent court historian for whom the post of *şehnâmecî* was designed⁴¹. He was officially commissioned by Süleyman to compose a history of the Ottoman dynasty in Persian verse, which he completed in 1558⁴². The outcome was *Şehnâme-i Âl-i Osman*, a book modelled on Firdevsî's *Şehnâme*, which placed the Ottoman dynasty in the framework of sacred history and presented Sultan Süleyman as a divinely elected, prophetic king⁴³. Its fifth and last volume, *Süleymannâme*, is a chronological account of Süleyman's reign until the year 1555 and includes several pages on Barbarossa and the conquest of Tunis.

Ârif Çelebi's account narrates the events using an approach totally different from the earlier *Süleymannâmes* of Bostan Efendi and Matrakçı Nasuh written twenty years before. Unlike them, he does not mention any official order or endorsement by the sultan for the conquest of Tunis. It clearly indicates that the Ottoman fleet's principal aim was to expel the infidel from Koron in the Morean Peninsula. After having achieved his primary objective, Barbarossa attacked and conquered Tunis. According to Ârif Çelebi, the reason behind this conquest was Barbarossa's enmity towards the ruler of Tunis and his personal grudge against him⁴⁴. This information is an unexpected detail in a work written in panegyric style. Barbarossa's antagonistic relations with the members of the Hafsîd dynasty were

⁴⁰ H. Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2018, pp. 163-166; H.A.R. Gibb, *Lufti Paşa on the Ottoman Caliphate*, «Oriens», 15 (1962), pp. 287-295.

⁴¹ C. Woodhead, *An experiment in official historiography: the post of şehnameci in the Ottoman Empire, c.1555-1605*, «Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes», 75 (1983), pp. 157-182. For different views on the nature of the appointments for this post see E. Fetvacı, *The Office of Ottoman Court Historian*, in R. Ousterhout (ed.), *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond: The Freely Papers*, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2007, vol. I, pp. 6-21; F.S. Eryılmaz, *The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman: Arif and Eflatun and their Dynastic Project*, Ph.D. thesis, Chicago University, 2010, pp. 8-9.

⁴² A.F. Çelik, *Fethullah Arifi Çelebi'nin Şahname-i Al-i Osman'ından Süleymannâme* [The *Süleymannâme* of Fethullah Arifi Çelebi], Ph.D. thesis, Ankara University, 2009, p. 28.

⁴³ F.S. Eryılmaz, *The Sulaiman-name (Süleyman-name) as an Historical Source*, in G. van den Berg, C. Melville (eds.), *Shahname Studies III: The Reception of the Shahnama*, Brill, Leiden, 2018, pp. 173-198.

⁴⁴ A.F. Çelik, *Fethullah Arifi Çelebi'nin cit.*, p. 105.

certainly known, even though they were not always discussed or mentioned in the sources. Although Ârif Çelebi criticizes the ruler of Tunis for having befriended an infidel and having become his ally, he implies that Barbarossa used the sultan's fleet to resolve his own, unresolved issues with the Hafsid dynasty. Thus, in the work of the first permanent court historian, Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis appears as something undertaken without prior official authorization.

Ârif Çelebi's approach created a pattern for the subsequent panegyric historical works supported by the Ottoman court. This is especially seen in the works identified with Seyyid Lokmân, the third *şehnâme*ci of the Ottoman dynasty, who served during the reigns of Selim II and Murad III. *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun*, *Zübdetü't-tevârih* (1583) *Hünernâme* (1588) and *Şehnâme-i Âl-i Osman* (1590) dedicated considerable space to Barbarossa's 1534 expedition. The longest account of the Tunis campaign appears in *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun*, which was designed in the form of a huge scroll and composed as a universal history that starts from the creation and finishes with the Ottoman dynasty. *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun* was originally the project of Ârif Çelebi and of the second *şehnâme*ci Eflâtun during the reign of Süleyman, and it was later taken up by Seyyid Lokmân, who extended it to cover the whole of Murad III's reign⁴⁵. Therefore, it is still a matter of debate whether Seyyid Lokmân himself or his predecessors authored the account of the reign of Süleyman⁴⁶. *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun* reproduced Ârif Çelebi's argument that the principal target of the fleet was Morea. However, unlike Ârif Çelebi's 1558 account, it did not attribute the conquest of Tunis to Barbarossa's enmity with Mulay Hassan.

According to *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun*, when Barbarossa heard that the enemy had already evacuated Koron, he headed for North Africa and conquered Tunis. Unsurprisingly, there is no reference to the sultan's order to take Tunis, although the conquest is described as a natural extension of the Ottoman fleet's range of operations after Koron⁴⁷. Thus, *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun* fits with Ârif Çelebi's tendency to detach the sultan from responsibility for the conquest of Tunis, but the

⁴⁵ E. Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2013, pp. 67-68. For a detailed analysis of *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun* [Imperial Scroll], see F.S. Eryılmaz, *The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman* cit., pp. 229-261.

⁴⁶ Bekir Kütükoğlu thinks that Seyyid Lokmân's predecessors wrote the parts until Süleyman's reign. Eryılmaz has recently argued that Eflâtun might have written certain parts of the reign of Süleyman. B. Kütükoğlu, *Lokmân b. Hüseyin*, in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* cit., vol. XXVII, pp. 208-209; F.S. Eryılmaz, *The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman* cit., p. 108.

⁴⁷ «Hayreddin Paşa keferenün firârın malûm idindikde tonanma-yı hümâyunla Mağrib diyârına inüb Tunus vilâyetin ve kal'asın 'Arab elinden alub feth eyledi'. S. Lokmân, *Tomâr-ı Hümâyun* [Imperial Scroll], Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A3599.

differences from the earlier account might have arisen as a result of Seyyid Lokmân's intervention in the text. The same argument, that an attack on Tunis was a natural continuation of the expedition against Koron, after that objective proved redundant, is reproduced in Seyyid Lokmân's *Zübdetü't-tevârih*⁴⁸, which is in fact a summarized edition of *Tomâr-ı Hümâyün* in a book format, and also partly in his *Şehnâme-i Âl-i Osman*, a chronological account of the Ottoman dynasty composed in verse, including the reign of Murad III⁴⁹.

The shortest account of the 1534 expedition is offered in the second volume of *Hünernâme*, a chronological account of Süleyman's reign dedicated to the exaltation of his moral qualities and skills as a ruler. This project was again inherited by Seyyid Lokmân from his predecessors. *Hünernâme*'s account of the conquest of Tunis is rather obscure and, in fact, never mentions Tunis. Barbarossa tears down the enemy in Morea and then sets off for North Africa without Tunis being specified. Five lines later the account mentions that the sultan receives good news from Barbarossa, but it is not specified what this «good news» involved. Interestingly, the subsequent loss of Tunis is also totally omitted from the account, although it is an integral part of Ârif Çelebi's *Süleymannâme* and Seyyid Lokmân's other works⁵⁰.

The narratives of Ârif Çelebi and Seyyid Lokmân demonstrate that the palace was uneasy about the content of earlier *Süleymannâmes* and opted either to rectify or to manipulate the official discourse on Tunis. In fact, during the reign of Süleyman, there were authors who preferred not to touch upon the episode of Barbarossa's occupation of Tunis. For example, Senâyi's *Süleymaniyye*, which was completed in 1540 and written in verse, skips the conquest of Tunis in 1534 and the victory of Charles V in 1535 entirely⁵¹. Celâlzâde's famous *Tabakâtü'l-memâlik ve derecâtü'l-mesâlik*, which was probably completed in the 1560s, after Ârif Çelebi's work, makes no mention of the Tunis campaign even though Celâlzâde was in office as chancellor of

⁴⁸ «Küffâr anın varacağıñ işitdükde bi'l-cümle Mora'dan kalkub müteferrik oldılar badehu varub Mağrib zeminde Tunus nâm kal'ayı 'Arab elinden alub». S. Lokmân, *Zübdetü't-tevârih* [Quintessence of Histories], Dublin Chester Beatty Library, T414, f. 163v.

⁴⁹ L. Akin, *Seyyid Lokman'ın Şehnâme-i Âl-i Osman'ı*, Akademi Titiz Yayınları, İstanbul, 2018, p. 169.

⁵⁰ *Hünernâme*, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H1524, 260a.

⁵¹ M.B. Düzenli, A. Akgül, *Senâyi'nin Manzum Süleymaniyye'si* [Senâyi's *Süleymaniyye* in Verse], Çizgi Kitabevi, Konya, 2018. Eyyübî's *Menâkıb-ı Sultan Süleyman* (1550s) makes no mention of Tunis and not even Barbarossa himself. Eyyübî, *Menâkıb-ı Sultan Süleyman: Risâle-i Pâdişâhnâme* [The Saga of Sultan Süleyman], ed. M. Akkuş, Kültür Bakanlığı, Ankara, 1991, p. 90.

Süleyman after 1534⁵² and must have certainly monitored Ârif Çelebi's account and known the official version. The same is also true for *Künhü'l-Ahbâr* (1600), Gelibolulu Âli's famous historical work, which offers an account of the rise of Barbarossa in Barbary and his appointment as admiral, but is totally silent as to the events between 1534 and 1537⁵³. Thus, it seems that making references to the conquest of Tunis and to the authorization of the sultan had acquired a quasi-taboo status, and the authors did not want to confront or contradict the accepted version offered in official chronicles.

This deadlock was broken in the first half of the seventeenth century by Peçevî, who represents the fifth approach. This asserted that the seizure of Tunis was planned by Barbarossa and supported by Süleyman, and that a sultanic order to take the city was issued. According to Peçevî, Barbarossa wrote a memorandum to the sultan and asked for his authorization to conquer Tunis and hand the city over to Rashid, who in turn would open La Goleta to the Ottoman fleet. The sultan found the proposal appropriate and authorized Barbarossa to pursue this objective:

[Barbarossa writes to the sultan] That frontier is far away from the Threshold of Felicity [İstanbul]. The army of Islam inevitably suffers hardship and fatigue to arrive there. If the Tunisian realm is handed to Rashid, the port of La Goleta is taken and preserved by the sultan and if the Imperial fleet frequently stays in it, with the blessing of Allah, the conquest of the land of al-Andalus would easily be accomplished. The sultan found the proposal appropriate and sent the Imperial fleet with Hayreddin Pasha to those parts⁵⁴.

Peçevî's account is a qualified return to the first approach with previously unmentioned details and a geo-strategic interpretation of the campaign's objectives. The interesting point is that Peçevî did not mention the Tunisian episode in his chapter about Süleyman's reign. Instead, he preferred to write about it as preliminary historical background to Kılıç Ali Pasha's definitive conquest of Tunis in 1574.

⁵² M. Ş. Yılmaz, 'Koca Nişancı' of Kanuni: Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi, *Bureaucracy and 'Kanun' in the Reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, 1520-1566*, Ph.D. thesis, Bilkent University, 2006, p. 95; K. Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman, Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013.

⁵³ G. Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l Ahbâr* [The Essence of Histories], Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 2009, vol. IV, ff. 297v-299v and 305v-307v.

⁵⁴ P.İ. Efendi, *Tarih-i Peçevî* [History of Peçevî], ed. B.S. Baykal, Başbakanlık Matbaası, Ankara, 1981, p. 348. This passage is also translated and discussed in S. Soucek, *Naval Aspects of the Ottoman Conquests* cit., p. 228. It is worth noting that this arrangement was precisely what Charles V would do the following year, albeit with Mulay Hassan rather than Rashid as sovereign.

It gives the impression that Peçevî retrospectively attributes the responsibility of the conquest of Tunis in 1534 to Süleyman and Barbarossa. Thus, the account of Peçevî was overlooked because he wrote his chronicle a century after the conquest of Tunis.

However, a similar version from the sixteenth century verified this. It is by Şaban Reis, a senior captain of Barbarossa's fleet, who was captured by the Spanish captain Álvaro de Bazán in July 1534 near Oran, the main Spanish base in North Africa. Álvaro de Bazán interrogated the Ottoman captain in order to find out Barbarossa's objectives, and according to his report to the emperor, under interrogation Şaban Reis declared the following:

What [Barbarossa] discussed with his captains and with him was that they should head the coast of Calabria and that if there were anything (to be done) along the coast, they would do it; and that without losing time they would head straight to Tunis, to take that city and to use the place to store victuals so that they might (make) war against the Christians in the best manner possible⁵⁵.

This confession indicates that the conquest of Tunis was Barbarossa's objective from the outset, and in order to carry it out he did not want to lose much time attacking the Italian coast. Barbarossa had evidently shared with his captains his plan to use Tunis as a strategic base for future operations against the Christian states. The testimony of Şaban Reis, besides flatly contradicting Barbarossa's testimony in the *Gazavât's* account, shows that Peçevî relies on firm historical evidence and cannot be disregarded or dismissed simply because his account was produced in the seventeenth century. Yet, the most interesting aspect of Peçevî's narrative is that he brought up an important topic that most sixteenth-century Ottoman sources had suppressed: Barbarossa's deception concerning Mulay Rashid.

Upon his arrival at Bizerta, Barbarossa spread the false news among the Tunisians that Rashid, brother of Mulay Hassan, was in the fleet with him. This created excitement among the populace, as Rashid seems to have had considerable support in the city. After the city had been occupied, when the people wanted to see Rashid and he did not appear, the Tunisians understood that they had been deceived and rebelled against Barbarossa. This was an integral part of the

⁵⁵ 1534 Alvaro de Bazán Hace Preso a Xaban Arráez, Capitán de Barbarroja, en La Isla Alhabiba, Archivo de la Frontera, Alcalá de Henares, 2014, p. 9 (<http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1534-ALVARO-DE-BAZ%C3%81N-HACE-PRESO-A-XABAN-ARR%C3%81EZ-con-plantilla.pdf>).

sixteenth-century European narratives of the conquest⁵⁶. However, from Bostan Çelebi to Seyyid Lokmân, none of the Ottoman sources had included the episode concerning Mulay Rashid in their accounts of the conquest. Most importantly, the *Gazavât* never acknowledged the fact that Barbarossa had cheated the Tunisians by creating false expectations when he spread the news that he had come with the Hafsîd pretender to the Tunisian throne. Peçevî seems to be the first Ottoman historian to have used this piece of information, probably known but previously not circulated in any written form. Peçevî, like the sixteenth-century Spanish authors, López de Gómara and Gonzalo de Illescas, interpreted this deception as the key factor that had facilitated Barbarossa's rapid, initial advance in Tunis. In fact, Peçevî portrayed Rashid as the most important element of a greater strategic plan, of which Sultan Süleyman was certainly aware.

The account of Peçevî is recapitulated by Kâtib Çelebi, although with certain differences, in his famous work on maritime history, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr fi Esfârî'l-Bihâr*. He wrote this work after Peçevî's *History* and might have taken the story from him; or both might have used a common source. However, Kâtib Çelebi divides his account of Tunis into two episodes and explains the reasons behind Barbarossa's arrival at Tunis differently in each of them. In the first episode, he comments that while Barbarossa was heading from Sardinia to Algiers, the wind propelled the fleet westwards and they arrived at Tunisian coast. This resembles *Gazavât's* account, which mentioned an adverse wind. In the second episode, Kâtib Çelebi offers an account of Barbarossa's memorandum and the sultan's authorization for the conquest in the same way as it was reported by Peçevî⁵⁷. Thus, Kâtib Çelebi includes two logically incompatible explanations for Barbarossa's arrival in Tunis, as an unintended arrival, and as a predetermined strategy to conquer it, probably as a result of using information from the *Gazavât* and from Peçevî in turn.

All of the five approaches to be found in the Ottoman sources demonstrate that the narrative of the conquest of Tunis was transformed over time and according to genre. The picture resulting from the chronological analysis of the evolution of the narrative on Tunis is striking and requires little explanation. Bostan Çelebi's ignored *Süleymannâme*, if not that of Matrakçı Nasuh, explicitly indicated in the early sixteenth

⁵⁶ F. López de Gómara, *Guerras de mar del emperador Carlos V*, eds. M.Á. Bunes Ibarra, N.E. Jiménez, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, Madrid, 2000, pp. 156-157; G. de Illescas, *Jornada de Carlos V á Túnez*, Real Academia Española, Madrid, 1804, pp. 8-10.

⁵⁷ K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr fi Esfârî'l-Bihar* [The Gift to the Great Ones on Naval Campaigns], ed. O.Ş. Gökyay, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul, 1973, pp. 66-67.

century that there existed a sultanic order and that the seizure of Tunis was supported by the sultan. However, this earliest account of the conquest of Tunis, in fact, became the first and the last account in the sixteenth century to express clearly the sultan's involvement. Beginning from the 1540s, the contest over Tunis was either omitted from the histories or, if included, it was narrated differently. Senâyi's omission of Tunis from his *Süleymannâme* of 1540 can be considered as the first alarm bell indicating a problem in the perception of the conquest of Tunis. Around 1543, Seyyid Murad explicitly denied in the *Gazavât* that Barbarossa had any plan or intention beforehand to carry out an attack on Tunis. This idea, however, remained limited to the *Gazavât*, perhaps as a populist defence put forward by Barbarossa that avoided implicating the sultan and himself, and was not adopted by any other source.

The decisive change in the discourse occurred in the 1550s. Lutfi Pasha accused Barbarossa of arbitrarily overstepping the geographical limitations of the sultan's orders by attacking Tunis. Ârif Çelebi emphasized the recovery of Koron as the principal aim and described the conquest of Tunis as the outcome of Barbarossa's personal ambitions. After the 1560s, there were only two choices in front of Ottoman historians: either to omit the event from their histories or to imply that it was not authorized by the sultan. Thus, Celâlzâde opted for the first choice. If one reads his *Tabakât*, an authoritative and canonical chronicle on the reign of Süleyman, it would be impossible to learn anything about one of the most important events in the Mediterranean for that period. The second choice was adopted by Seyyid Lokmân, who isolated the sultan from the defeat at Tunis in all of his works until the end of his tenure as *şehnâmeçi*. However, in spite of such historiographical interventions in the sixteenth century, the event was reinterpreted in the seventeenth century, with fresh information and a critical examination that reconsidered the sultan's involvement.

This chronology points out that the discourse of different works within a particular genre dealing with the same topic also changed over time. This is especially seen in the narratives of the *Süleymannâme*-style historical works. The drastic difference between the earlier and later *Süleymannâmes* is indicative of the problematic nature of official historical narratives concerned with controversial historical events. Bostan Çelebi probably experienced more autonomy in his historiographical practice than his later counterparts, who played different historiographical roles. Although he lived until 1570, Bostan Çelebi completed the last copy of his *Süleymannâme* in 1547 before the appearance of those composing the court *şehnâme* whose ultimate task was the glorification of Ottoman dynastic power. Recent studies have shown that the preliminary drafts of the historical

productions of the *şehnâme* writers were monitored by the sultan and his intimate circle⁵⁸. In this respect, Süleyman must have directly intervened at least in Ârif Çelebi's *Süleymannâme* and approved its final shape. At the same time, it is also probable that the damage that the Ottoman defeat in 1535 caused to the sultan's image and strategy in the Mediterranean was not seen very clearly at the time of the first *Süleymannâmes*. The concern of Bostan Çelebi and Matrakçı Nasuh seems to be limited to the representation of the ephemeral success of Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis and his subsequent defeat as a mere historical fact. In line with changes in the understanding of Ottoman dynastic image, later *Süleymannâmes* opted for a distinct variety of historical discourse to mask the damage it entailed to the reputation of the sultan and his struggle against the Habsburgs. Nevertheless, as is seen in Âşık Çelebi's *Meşâirü'ş-şuarâ*, non-political contemporary sources identified the year 1534 with Barbarossa and emphasized his Tunis campaign as a marker of that time.

Conclusions

The conquest of Tunis in 1534 provoked a swift retaliation from Charles V and resulted in Barbarossa's defeat by the emperor the following year. Charles V's victory was celebrated Europe-wide and gained an enormous popularity over time, equating the expulsion of Barbarossa from Tunis with the conquest of Carthage by Scipio. In fact, it was the only major setback for Süleyman and Barbarossa against the Habsburgs in the Mediterranean and was seen as an ineradicable stain on the careers of the sultan and his admiral. The outcome affected the way in which the struggle for Tunis was handled in Spanish and Ottoman historiographical traditions. Whereas Charles V's expedition became an important element of Habsburg propaganda over the years, Barbarossa's defeat turned the initial victory into a defeat, making it a problematic event about which Ottoman historiographers produced different narratives. The main divergence among the Ottoman chronicles dealing with this topic lay in their inconsistent explanations as to why Barbarossa took the sultan's fleet towards Tunis and conquered it. Some sources attributed it to the sultan's specific orders and some either denied the existence of any official instruction or avoided addressing the question by ignoring the campaign. The different forms of explanation that the

⁵⁸ F. S. Eryılmaz, *The Sulaiman-nama (Süleyman-name) as an Historical Source* cit., pp. 189-190.

Ottoman historiographers went on producing over the years were not combined into a single, coherent interpretation. Thus, modern historiography on the conquest of Tunis has been caught between two extremes and has suffered from that uncertainty until today. This article, while dwelling upon the historiographical quandary that Barbarossa's conquest of Tunis in 1534 represented, has revealed that there was a real stalemate among the sources, which has turned the issue of the authorization of the conquest of Tunis into a conundrum.

Until now, modern historians have found the most obvious statement of sultan's authorization only in the mid-seventeenth century. The validity of this source has been challenged by the most recent literature basing that challenge on the belief that no contemporary source existed of an order by the sultan. This article has shown that an authorization by the sultan was alleged already in the early sixteenth century. Thus, immediately after the contest for Tunis, the main historiographical tendency was to emphasize the existence of an order by the sultan. After then, Ottoman historiographical practice experimented with silence, denial, accusation and manipulation in its handling of this topic. Especially, the emphasis of panegyric historiographical activity was constrained for a considerable time by the exigencies of dynastic concerns and dynastic propaganda. Their content was updated according to political and dynastic interests so that the sultan was totally removed from the decision and so entirely untouched by the humiliating defeat of Barbarossa in 1535. In a period when the Ottomans perceived themselves as exceptional in universal history and portrayed the sultan's struggle against Habsburgs and Safavids from imperial and messianic perspectives, it would have been impossible to recognize the failure at Tunis as a result of Süleyman's own plans, given that the emperor commemorated his victory for years to come as the greatest victory against the Ottoman Empire.

Would or could Barbarossa have dared to conquer Tunis without the consent of Sultan Süleyman? We cannot completely rule out an opportunistic move by Barbarossa, which would be completely compatible with his previous career particularly as the ruler of Algiers. However, there is no convincing evidence of this. The existence of different narratives, official interventions, deliberate manipulation and what appears in retrospect as an attempt to relegate it to oblivion only reinforces doubts over such an interpretation. Considering the period in which these narratives were produced and the historical genres in which they appeared, accepting that the conquest of Tunis in 1534 was the result of the sultan's authorization would surely be a more appropriate response and much closer to the historical reality.