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«NO GREAT GLORY IN CHASING A PIRATE».  
THE MANIPULATION OF NEWS DURING THE 1535  
TUNIS CAMPAIGN

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**ABSTRACT:** *Charles V's conquest of Tunis in 1535 remains one of the best known incidents of his reign. It played a key role in the projection of a positive image of the emperor as an idealistic crusader. The propaganda has obscured how the event was understood at the time. This article examines the tactics used to control and manipulate information, both on the part of the emperor and, in particular, by the French and English courts. It traces the strategy of secrecy and misinformation used by the imperial chancelry during the preparations for the campaign, and the emperor's extraordinary efforts to control information in 1535. Why this failed and how the French and English courts responded to these events takes up much of this study, which sets out the varied tactics used by these Christian monarchs to deprive the emperor of publicity. A fascinating example of how news manipulation and falsification as well as propaganda shaped world politics then as much as they do now.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tunis 1535, Charles V, Barbarossa, Henry VIII, Francis I, control and manipulation of news, propaganda.*

«NON VI È GRANDE GLORIA NELL'INSEGUIRE UN PIRATA». LA MANIPOLAZIONE DELLE NOTIZIE DURANTE LA CAMPAGNA DI TUNISI DEL 1535

**SOMMARIO:** *La conquista di Tunisi da parte di Carlo V nel 1535 è stata spesso trattata come un avvenimento epico, uno degli episodi più noti del suo regno. Tale conquista, infatti, giocò un ruolo fondamentale nella costruzione e diffusione di un'immagine positiva dell'imperatore in quanto prototipo ideale del cavaliere crociato. La qualità e la quantità delle opere d'arte che si generarono a partire da quell'episodio sono state oggetto di molti studi, nonostante ciò abbia oscurato la coeva percezione dell'evento. Al fine di recuperare tale dato, questo articolo si propone di esaminare le strategie di controllo e manipolazione delle informazioni adottate sia dall'imperatore, sia dalle corti francesi e inglesi. Partendo dalle reazioni cristiane nella prima parte della presente indagine si delineano le strategie segrete e le manovre di disinformazione messe in atto dalla cancelleria imperiale durante i preparativi per la campagna, nonché gli straordinari sforzi compiuti nel 1535 per controllare l'informazione e gestire la sua diffusione. Successivamente, lo studio mette in rilievo il fallimento di queste strategie e il modo in cui le corti francesi e inglesi risposero agli eventi del 1535, illustrando, in modo particolare, gli stratagemmi usati da questi monarchi per privare l'imperatore della sua notorietà. Questa indagine, dunque, risulta essere di notevole interesse affinché si possa comprendere come la manipolazione e la falsificazione delle notizie, o la stessa propaganda, furono (e continuano ad esserlo) elementi fondamentali per plasmare una politica globale.*

**PAROLE CHIAVI:** *Tunisi 1535, Carlo V, Barbarossa, Enrico VIII, Francesco I, controllo e manipolazione delle notizie, propaganda.*

\* Abbreviations: Ags, E (Archivo General de Simancas, Estado); Ang, Carpi (J. Lestocquoy [ed.], *Acta Nuntiaturae Gallicae. Correspondance des Nonces en France, Carpi et Ferrerio, 1535-1540*, Presses de l'Université Grégorienne/ Editions E. de Boccard, Rome & Paris, 1961); Asm, Ag, b. (Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta); Cdcv (M. Fernández Alvarez [ed.], *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. I, Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, 1971); Charrière (E. Charrière, [ed.], *Négotiations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. I, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1848); Cdcv (K. Lanz [ed.], *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V*, vol. II, F.A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1845); Csp Sp 5 (1) (P. de Gayangos [ed.], *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, vol.5 pt.1, 1534-5*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1886, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/>

Charles V's conquest of Tunis in 1535 was greeted by his supporters with words such as «glorious», «magnificent» and «miraculous». It remains a major event in his reign and is often given heroic treatment, earning him the accolade of The Last Crusader<sup>1</sup>. Imperial propaganda and the control of information have often been credited with the creation of this successful image. Duchhardt dubbed it the first systematic propaganda campaign of modern times, and the beginning of political modernity<sup>2</sup>. The multi-media production of chroniclers, poets and artists still exerts a powerful attraction<sup>3</sup>. Not so well known but crucial in this process, was the contribution of the imperial secretariat who accompanied Charles V, issuing letters and official reports even from the battlefields to disseminate the emperor's version of events. Although historians have occasionally issued injunctions not to confuse propaganda with reality, the message is frequently overwhelmed by the volume and aesthetic value of the

spain/vol5/no1/); *Du Bellay* (R. Scheurer [ed.], *Correspondance du Cardinal Jean du Bellay*, vols. I and II, Librairie C. Klincksieck, Paris, 1969 and 1973); *KFI V* (B. Hofinger et al. [eds.], *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I. Familienkorrespondenz, vol. V: 1535 und 1536*, Böhlau, Wien, 2015); *LP* (J. Gardiner [ed.], *Letters & Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Her Majesty's stationery Office, London, vol. VII, 1883; vol. VIII, 1885, vol. IX, 1886, in <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen>); *PEG* (Ch. Weiss [ed.], *Papiers d'État du cardinal de Granvelle*, vol. II, Imprimerie royale, Paris, 1841).

<sup>1</sup> A classic example of this is M. Fernández Álvarez, *El último cruzado: Túnez*, in his *Carlos V, el César y el Hombre*, Fundación Academia Europea de Yuste and Espasa Calpe, Madrid, 1999, pp. 487-513, an idea he took from H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen Karls V. 1535*, «Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs», 37 (1984), pp. 35-72. Duchhardt argued (p. 63) that the campaign had briefly revived the medieval ideal. My thanks to Miguel Ángel Bunes Ibarra for inviting me to join this fascinating project and to Rubén González Cuerva for securing a number of important secondary works for me.

<sup>2</sup> H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., esp. pp. 64-67 – «während des Tuniszuges erstmals eine wirklich systematische Informationspolitik betrieben wurde» (p. 67). He dismisses Francis I's propaganda efforts as inferior (p. 68).

<sup>3</sup> H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., esp. pp. 66-68; R. González Cuerva, M.Á. de Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535. Voces de una campaña europea*, Polifemo, Madrid, 2017; *Carlos V. Las Armas y Las Letras*, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, Madrid, 2000, pp. 28-30. The tapestries became iconic symbols of royalty and legitimacy. H.J. Horn, *Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, painter of Charles V and his conquest of Tunis*, Davaco, Doornspijk, 1989, 2 vols. M.A. de Bunes, M. Falomir, *Carlos V, Vermeyen y la conquista de Túnez*, in J.L. Castellanos, F. Sánchez-Montes (eds.), *Carlos V. Europeismo y Universalidad. Religión, cultura y mentalidad*, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, Madrid, 2001, pp. 243-257.

materials produced<sup>4</sup>. Others have cautioned against the seductive narratives offered by the chroniclers, without undermining their influence<sup>5</sup>.

Yet there is a general agreement that the political, military and pragmatic consequences of the campaign were limited, even negligible, which is one reason it has left such faint traces in general histories. For recent historians of England and the German lands the conquest of Tunis appears distant and irrelevant, and if mentioned at all, it is dealt with briefly<sup>6</sup>. There is little inducement to include the defeat of two Muslim powers by a Christian-Muslim coalition in recent histories of the Maghreb and the Ottoman empire<sup>7</sup>. As for France, despite the acceptance of Ursu's 1908 statement that the Tunis campaign of 1535 led French diplomacy to take «the decisive step» to forge an alliance with the Ottomans, it has not figured significantly in recent biographies of Francis I. Only the nature of the 1535-6 agreement remains a matter of debate<sup>8</sup>. None the less, the impression endures

<sup>4</sup> Sylvie Deswarte-Rosa includes it in an article devoted to the heroic themes used for Charles V: *L'expédition de Tunis (1535): images, interprétations, répercussions culturelles*, in B. Bennassar, R. Sauzet (eds.), *Chrétiens et Musulmans à la Renaissance*, Honoré Champion, Paris, 1988, pp. 75-132, this at p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> C. Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel. The Ottoman and French alliance in the sixteenth century*, I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2011, blames Paolo Giovio, pp. 144-145, 182, but as Bunes and Falomir pointed out – Carlos V, *Vermeyen y la conquista de Túnez* cit., p. 255 – the imperialists rejected Giovio's account. M.Á. de Bunes Ibarra, *Charles V and the Ottoman war from the Spanish point of view*, «Eurasian Studies», 1 (2002), pp. 161-182.

<sup>6</sup> H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., p. 35, begins citing Bernd Moeller's comment from *Deutschland im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1977, p. 140: «Für den Türkenkrieg... hatte das Jahr 1535 keine hervorgehobene Bedeutung». It scarcely figures in R.B. Wernham, *Before the Armada. The growth of English foreign policy 1485-1588*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1966, or in J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> For example J.M. Abun-Nasr, *A history of the Maghrib in the Islamic period*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 150 and 169; A.C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978, pp. 72-73. H. Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire. The classical age 1300-1600*, Phoenix, London, 1994, p. 36, and S.N. Faroqhi, K. Fleet (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. II. The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453-1603*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013, include it indirectly with Barbarossa.

<sup>8</sup> Brief references in R.J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and patron. The reign of Francis I*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 234, 276 and 299; La Forêt's mission in pp. 329-330. C. Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel* cit., mainly challenges the negative vision of the 1543-4 campaign. I. Ursu, *La Politique Orientale de François Ier (1515-1547)*, H. Champion, Paris, 1908, pp. 83-96: «la politique française se décida à faire le pas décisif en faveur de l'alliance franco-turque» (p. 87). This and Charrière remain essential reading. References to the 1535-6 treaty debate in D. Nordman, *Tempête sur Alger, L'expédition de Charles Quint en 1541*, Editions Bouchene, Condé-sur-Noireau, 2011, pp. 46-47.

that the imperial victory of 1535 must have made a considerable impact, even if, as in the case of Kohler, the unsubstantiated claim that it had «a very positive effect» throughout Europe is accompanied by a warning that the importance of the campaign should not be exaggerated. Similarly, Horn, after acknowledging that «the effect of the Tunis expedition on the political situation in the Mediterranean was slight and of short duration», argued that «most people must have thought of the expedition as a resounding victory»<sup>9</sup>. It is a supposition, made all the more plausible as it was impolitic, if not impossible, given Christian ideology for other powers in Christendom to express hostility to a campaign against Muslim forces.

To test these assumptions, this article considers the information strategy adopted by Charles V and the response of Francis I and Henry VIII to the campaign. Both monarchs were at peace with the emperor but the French were hostile due to unresolved conflicts, especially over Milan, and the English afraid of imperial retaliation due to the king's adoption of a Protestant faith and repudiation of his first wife, Katherine, who was the emperor's aunt. The study of French and English responses is difficult in part because of the problems reconstructing an accurate chronology of the receipt of news due to limited data, the habit of amassing information before accepting news, and the abundance of false news in circulation. Complications also arise due to the use of Tunis as short-hand for events in North Africa as well as for the state and the city; and of Barbarossa to refer indiscriminately to the man, to his Algerian forces, and to the Ottoman forces he now commanded<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, we are dealing with consummate practitioners of dissimulation. Despite these problems the research reveals a great deal about propaganda, international politics and diplomacy in the sixteenth century, and further erodes the myth of a crusade, contributing to the creation of a more balanced and nuanced picture of these events.

### **The art of saying nothing: Charles V's official declarations before the campaign.**

After the Ottoman-corsair conquest of Tunis in 1534 the emperor appealed for aid from fellow Christian princes for a campaign to dislodge them, on the grounds that it was a significant step towards

<sup>9</sup> A. Kohler, *Carlos V, 1500-1558*, Marcial Pons, Madrid, 2000, p. 259. H.J. Horn, *Vermeyen* cit., II, p 113.

<sup>10</sup> The original correspondence of several ambassadors who were in Tunis has not been found, including that of Claude Dodieu de Vély, the French ambassador, or his English counterpart, Richard Pate.

Süleyman's dominance of North Africa and that the union of Ottoman and corsair forces represented a novel and extremely dangerous threat to Christendom, and Italy in particular. He also claimed that «Barbarossa's enterprise is intended solely to favour the interests of the said king of France», since Francis I was known to be considering an alliance with the Ottomans<sup>11</sup>. Despite the danger, most Italian states refused to support the imperial campaign. The Venetians were allied to Süleyman and, along with the rest, feared an imperial victory would make Charles V more powerful in the peninsula<sup>12</sup>. Only Genoa and Paul III agreed to send naval contingents, the former paid for by imperial funds and the latter in exchange for military support against the duke of Urbino and Henry VIII, neither of whom Charles V wanted to attack<sup>13</sup>. The high cost of their support prompted several imperial counsellors to advise against a campaign in North Africa; others opposed it on the grounds that Francis I was a more serious threat. Only a few imperial counsellors urged immediate action to expel the Ottoman-corsair forces from Tunis<sup>14</sup>, among them Andrea Doria, Genoese admiral of the imperial fleet and one of Charles V's most influential military advisers. Doria was convinced that if left alone, Barbarossa would also take Sardinia<sup>15</sup>. Security concerns fused with considerations of honour. As Gómez Suárez de Figueroa put it to Charles V, the whole world was watching «to assess what forces you have to destroy such a powerful enemy»<sup>16</sup>. Imperial advisers were also divided whether to strike against Barbarossa in Algiers or Tunis. The former would remove a great danger to Iberia; the latter would benefit Italy<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Charles V's instructions for Adrian de Croÿ, 1 February 1535, *KFI*, V, pp. 161-169, this at 163 and cit. 164.

<sup>12</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5 (1), n. 100, Count of Cifuentes to Charles V, Rome, 18 October 1534.

<sup>13</sup> Doria and other imperial officials were instructed to solicit aid from the pope and others, *Csp SP*, 5 (1) the emperor's instructions to Tello de Guzmán, 7 December 1534.

<sup>14</sup> *Ags*, E, 1367, ff. 96-97, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V, 18 October 1534.

<sup>15</sup> *Ags*, E, 1367, f. 20, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V, 11 November 1534. Gregorio Casale to Cromwell, 24 October 1534, *LP*, vii, n. 1298 reporting Doria's visit to Rome.

<sup>16</sup> *Ags*, E, 1367, ff. 104-107, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V, 12 December 1534: «por importar tanto a v. magd. este negocio para el veneficio de la empresa y honrra de sus reynos q todo el mundo esta a mirar el esfuerço y pod[e]r de v. Magd. para deshazer tan Rezio enemigo».

<sup>17</sup> 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, 2000, vol. I, pp. 487-531, esp. 504-507; J.M. Jover Zamora, *Carlos V y los Españoles*, Rialp, Madrid, 1963, explored the «Spanish» position.

In December 1534 Charles V issued a formal declaration that he was preparing a campaign against Barbarossa and the Turks<sup>18</sup>. Soon after, the emperor sent letters to other monarchs, instructions to his ambassadors and officials and materials for publication, so that the world would know it was his intention to act against the «common enemy of Christendom»<sup>19</sup>. A heroic note was struck by stressing that he would act alone, which also justified withdrawing his promise of aid to the Hungarian front<sup>20</sup>. But his forces were so substantial – some 25,000 men and 150 ships – that Christian territories became seriously alarmed<sup>21</sup>. Far from stifling speculation, the vague proclamation stoked fear, with both Francis I and Henry VIII suspecting that they were the real targets<sup>22</sup>. Charles V sought to reassure the English monarch by informing English Catholics that he could not help them for now and opening informal negotiations with Henry VIII, ostensibly to hinder the conclusion of an alliance between the English and French monarchs<sup>23</sup>. It was enough to persuade Henry VIII to remain neutral.

Francis I veered from fear of the imperial forces amassing at the frontier, to joy at the thought that the Ottoman-Algerian threat would force Charles V to give him back Milan<sup>24</sup>. Unable to persuade the English to join him, he renewed his efforts to obtain a formal anti-Habsburg alliance with Süleyman and Barbarossa. An interim agreement for a three-year treaty of amity was rapidly concluded with Barbarossa, who offered to persuade Süleyman to join the agreement. It was enough for Francis I to argue, as the Venetians, that he could not join a Christian campaign against these Muslim rulers as it would contravene a formal alliance<sup>25</sup>. Thus far, however, the alliance was only with Barbarossa and to conclude a treaty with Süleyman a formal embassy was sent to the Ottoman court. La Forêt, was instructed to

<sup>18</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 18, Charles V to Chapuys, 5 January 1535.

<sup>19</sup> *Asm*, Ag, b. 287, f. 304. Agnello informed the duke of Mantua on 7 December 1534 that the fleet was «per rispetto di Barbarossa». *PEG*, II, 277, Charles V to Hannart, 5 & 10 January 1535 to inform the French court from where it was sent to England *LP*, viii, n. 186, ca. 8 February 1535; *LP*, viii, n. 18, Charles V to Chapuys, 5 January 1534/5 for Henry VIII.

<sup>20</sup> *KFI*, V, 129 – «und yetz allain thuen muessen wider den Barbarossa, so mit allen des Turcken schief und gewalt auf dem mer vorhanden».

<sup>21</sup> *Asm*, Ag, b. 588, f. 8, Agnello to the duke of Mantua, 19 January 1535.

<sup>22</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 48, Chapuys to Charles V, 14 January 1535; n. 186 (February 1535), Hannart to Granvelle.

<sup>23</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 272, Charles V to his ambassador in England, Eustace Chapuys, 26 February 1535.

<sup>24</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, 11, Rodolfo Pio di Carpi (nuncio in France) to Ambrogio Ricalcato (papal secretary), 26 February 1535.

<sup>25</sup> Charles V's criticism of Francis I's policies, *PEG*, II, 293-294, to Hannart, 25 February 1534/5.

begin negotiations with «le seigneur Haradin-Begii-Baschia, roy d'Arget», both as a sovereign in his own right and as Süleyman's representative. Francis I requested financial, military and diplomatic aid to regain what he considered his rightful possessions, including Genoa, Milan, Asti and sovereignty over Flanders and Artois. He also wanted Ottoman aid to place Janus Zapolya on the throne of Hungary and prevent Charles V's brother Ferdinand I from taking the kingdom. A coordinated campaign was proposed, beginning with the conquest of Genoa, on the grounds that this would enable Francis I to assist the Ottoman-corsair forces to defend Tunis and Algiers, and would protect the subjects, commerce and mutually beneficial enterprises of all three signatories. Francis I offered to help his Muslim allies to take Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily. He requested the right to choose the new king of Sicily, although it was to be an Ottoman possession that would pay tribute to the sultan, and suggested the island's revenues should be used to recoup the costs of the allied campaign. The three sovereigns agreed to abide by the three-year treaty of commerce while they negotiated a full offensive-defensive treaty<sup>26</sup>.

Christian-Muslim alliances were frequent by this period, but there was still opprobrium attached to them. Francis I expected criticism, and to deflect this he claimed that his aim was to seek a universal peace. He also publicised a list of the multiple Christian embassies to the Ottoman court in recent years, many of them from the Habsburgs. The emperor countered this with claims that his embassies were different and licit, because he always informed the pope first, and acted for the defence of Christendom<sup>27</sup>. It seems to have made little difference, although French claims that they were making a commercial alliance were met with cynicism or derision. Henry VIII smiled when referring to the dispatch of a French ambassador to the Ottoman court «to make a trere marchande»<sup>28</sup>. His chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, commented that to recover Milan Francis I would call not just on the Turk but also on the Devil<sup>29</sup>. The emperor's leading minister, Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, denounced it as a mere cloak for military and political negotiations<sup>30</sup>.

The papal nuncio at the French court, Pio di Carpi, was convinced that the French were acting out of fear rather than ambition, however.

<sup>26</sup> Instructions of Francis I to M. de la Forêt, 11 February 1534/5, *Charrière*, I, pp. 255-263, esp. 256-8 and 260-2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 3-4, Carpi to Ricalcato, Lyon, 11 February 1535, *Charrière*, I, Instructions to La Forêt, pp. 259-260. *PEG*, II, p. 265, Charles V to Hannart, 5 January 1535.

<sup>28</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 189, Chapuys to Charles V, 9 February 1535.

<sup>29</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5(1), n. 157, Chapuys to Charles V, 5-8 May 1535.

<sup>30</sup> *PEG*, II, p. 283, Granvelle to Hannart, s.d. [January 1535].

The lord of Vély, French ambassador at the imperial court, kept them well informed of the emperor's military preparations but could not confirm the emperor's target, and the uncertainty exacerbated divisions among French councillors. This, argued Carpi, was making French policy erratic – «negotiano a salti» – and had driven them into the arms of the Ottomans<sup>31</sup>. The nuncio was alarmed when Francis I showed his approval of Süleyman's decision to reinforce Tunis because the greater the danger, the easier it would be to recover Milan and to put Zapolya on the throne of Hungary. The stronger Barbarossa and Süleyman were, the happier the French were<sup>32</sup>. Paul III continued to demand that Francis I join the campaign against Barbarossa, alternating persuasion with threats but all in vain<sup>33</sup>.

The instability caused by the emperor's refusal to declare where his forces would strike affected even his closest collaborators, including his siblings Mary of Hungary and Ferdinand I, whom he had promised to keep informed<sup>34</sup>. They shared what secret information they gleaned with each other, but not with imperial officials, since they did not know who to trust. In April 1535 the imperial secretary Antoine de Perrenin revealed in a secret missive to Mary that Charles V would command an expedition against Tunis. They did not believe it at first, convinced he would surely have informed them of such an important decision<sup>35</sup>. On 10 and 13 May, the imperial secretariat issued another raft of official letters, proclamations and pamphlets with orders to disseminate them widely, announcing the emperor's decision to embark for Italy «to visit» Naples and Sicily, and his decision to attack Barbarossa and Süleyman. There was still no indication of where his forces would strike<sup>36</sup>. By then he was estimated to have over 300 sail

<sup>31</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 11-13, cit. p. 12, Carpi to Ricalcato, 26 February 1535.

<sup>32</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 8-10 (22-23 February 1535) and pp. 18-19 (12 March 1535), Carpi to Ricalcato.

<sup>33</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, p. 28, Instructions for Latino Giovenale, special envoy to Francis I, Rome, 3 March 1535. *LP*, viii, n. 498, Gregorio Casale to Cromwell, Rome, 4 April 1535; n. 535 (12 April 1535); n. 545 (13 April 1535). *Du Bellay*, I, p. 471, Charles Hémard de Denonville to Jean du Bellay, Rome, 15 April 1535.

<sup>34</sup> Hannart, for example, *PEG*, II, pp. 329 and 333, 14 April 1535. *KFI*, V, p. 171, Charles V to Ferdinand I, 3 February 1535.

<sup>35</sup> *KFI*, V, p. 199, Mary of Hungary to Ferdinand I (1 April 1535), ivi, p. 212 (12 April), Ferdinand I to Mary (25 April), p. 225. Salinas to Ferdinand I (21 February 1535), cit., p. 238.

<sup>36</sup> Examples of Charles V's letter from Barcelona ca. 10 May 1535 to Ferdinand I (*KFI*, V, 226-228) who disseminated it to princes and institutions in the Holy Roman Empire and in his own lands (Ferdinand I to Charles V, 7 June, ivi, p. 246); *PEG*, II, p. 354, to Francis I; *Csp Sp* 5(1), n. 158 and *LP*, viii, n. 697, to Henry VIII; *Cdcv*, I, pp. 423-425 to Lope de Soria for the Venetians. Once the pope had it, multiple copies were disseminated, *Du Bellay*, I, p. 485, Gregorio Casale to [Jean du Bellay], 14 May 1535.

and c. 50,000 men<sup>37</sup>. Consequently, the announcement led to more fear, speculation and a multiplicity of false rumours, including one that he had declared war on Süleyman<sup>38</sup>. The few individuals who knew his decision to lead a campaign against Tunis were sworn to secrecy<sup>39</sup>. Some, including the minister Francisco de los Cobos was still pleading ignorance of the emperor's motives and target, but besides Perrenin, others were beginning to talk. Andrea Doria told the Mantuan ambassador in confidence<sup>40</sup>. Perrenot de Granvelle revealed the truth to the papal nuncio, but such was the level of suspicion and disinformation that the nuncio did not believe him, and claimed that the emperor was lying to his own ministers to spread confusion<sup>41</sup>.

Francis I laughed at the emperor's announcement, scornfully noting that no monarch had ever needed 300 ships and thousands of troops to escort him to his own lands. The proclamation strengthened his conviction that Charles V was about to invade, not visit, Italy. Pio di Carpi disagreed, but was highly critical of the emperor's tactics, condemning the mix of hypocrisy and obfuscation of the imperial proclamation<sup>42</sup>. The French court was prey to wild rumours regarding the emperor's intentions<sup>43</sup>. Unable to ascertain the emperor's target, without confirmation of Ottoman help, and with such powerful forces on his borders, Francis I announced that he would maintain peace with the emperor during the campaign against the Muslims, making some propaganda capital out of necessity<sup>44</sup>.

Henry VIII was more frustrated than amused by the emperor's letter. Having read it in silence, he curtly asked the imperial ambassador if he had further information. Eustace Chapuys admitted he did not, nor could he confirm or deny rumours that the emperor was heading for Naples, or personally commanding an expedition against Tunis. This prompted Henry VIII to speak at length of the great power of the Ottoman sultan. He accused Chapuys of disseminating false rumours that Süleyman had been defeated when the opposite

<sup>37</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 744, Thomas Badcock to Cromwell, 6 and 21 May 1535.

<sup>38</sup> *Csp Sp.*, 5 (1), Lope de Soria to Charles V, 21 May 1535.

<sup>39</sup> *KFI*, V, pp. 226-228, Charles V to Ferdinand I, 10 May 1535; *ivi*, p. 248, Ferdinand I to Charles V, 7 June 1535; *ivi*, p. 251, second letter same date. Ferdinand did not reveal that he knew; *ivi*, p. 258, Ferdinand I to Mary, 7 June 1535. Charles wrote in his own hand and apologised for not having revealed this earlier.

<sup>40</sup> *Asm*, Ag, b. 588, f. 69, Agnello to the duke of Mantua, 13 May 1535.

<sup>41</sup> *Asm*, Ag, b. 588 ff. 32-33, Agnello to the duke of Mantua, 6 April 1535.

<sup>42</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 34-35, Carpi to Ricalcato, 23 May 1535.

<sup>43</sup> *Du Bellay*, I, p. 485, Gregorio Casale to [Jean du Bellay], Rome 14 May 1535; *LP*, viii, n. 874, Edmund Harvel to Thomas Starkey, Venice, 15 June 1535; *ivi*, viii, n. 807, Casale to Cromwell, Rome, 1 June 1535.

<sup>44</sup> *CKKV*, II, p. 186, Charles V to Mary of Hungary, s.d. [early July 1535].

was true, and made disparaging references to the emperor's shameful withdrawal from Coron, emphasising that local Christians had failed to support him and returned under the rule of the Ottomans. Chapuys justified what he had said about Süleyman on the grounds that he believed it to be true, and he went on to make an interesting point: «to affirm or deny that news was a matter of indifference and did not alter the case ... each party might construe the report according to his wishes». He went on to attack the Christian credentials of his host by arguing that Coron would still be in Christian hands if other princes had supported the emperor, and that Charles V would not be facing such dangers if Henry VIII emulated his noble predecessors who led crusades to the Holy Land. The king answered coldly that those were different times, when England had Guyenne which facilitated these expeditions<sup>45</sup>. A day after this tense audience, on 6 June, Chapuys received the emperor's announcement that he had set sail for Italy, but before he could inform the English king, the French ambassador disseminated news from the imperial court that Charles V and the Venetians would attack Istanbul. Chapuys thought this was false, but without information from the emperor he could not refute it<sup>46</sup>. The stir caused by the Persian victory over Süleyman died down when the Venetians confirmed they would not abandon their alliance with Süleyman and Charles V failed to offer to lead such a campaign<sup>47</sup>.

The French ambassador to the Porte, La Forêt, returned from his talks with the Ottoman court at the height of these wild rumours and his return caused hardly a stir. The concern remained what the emperor's true target might be<sup>48</sup>. Duchhardt argued that the one important consequence of the imperial campaign against Tunis, indeed its masterstroke, was the success of imperial propaganda condemning Francis I's alliance with the Muslims, which he believes isolated the French king<sup>49</sup>. But it was precisely his isolation that made

<sup>45</sup> *Csp Sp.*, 5(1) n. 170, Chapuys to Charles V, 5 June 1535, variants in *LP*, viii, n. 826.

<sup>46</sup> *Csp Sp.* 5(1), n. 174, Chapuys to Charles V, 6 June 1535.

<sup>47</sup> *Ags*, E, 1311, f. 20, Lope de Soria to Charles V, 21 May 1535. *LP*, viii, n. 876, Chapuys to Charles V, 16 June 1535; n. 899, Edmund Harvel from Venice, 19 June 1535.

<sup>48</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 807, Gregorio Casale to Cromwell, 1 June 1535; n. 874, Harvel to Thomas Starkey, 15 June 1535; Bernandin Sandro to Thomas Starkey, Padua, same date. Thomas Batcock to Cromwell on 22 June with details of the emperor's forces and confirming he would attack Tunis.

<sup>49</sup> H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., esp. pp. 58-61. «Der Tuniszug war unter diesem Gesichtspunkt also auch eine politische Meisterleistung, die über den momentanen militärischen Erfolg weit hinauswies» (p. 61) but notes it made no difference to his pro-Ottoman stance.

Francis I turn to them as Christian princes appreciated. Even the joint campaign of 1543-4 and the use of Toulon as a Muslim base did not result in universal condemnation of Francis I<sup>50</sup>. The king instructed La Forêt and other officials to disseminate information highlighting the power of the Ottomans and their allies, their many victories over the Persians, and Barbarossa's powerful defences in Tunis. They claimed there were 150,000 men under Barbarossa's command and that further reinforcements from Istanbul were on their way to Tunis<sup>51</sup>. At the same time they emphasised the emperor's weakness. Ultimately, Francis I's strategy was to heighten fear of the Muslims to put pressure on the emperor to give him back Milan in exchange for aid against the Turks<sup>52</sup>. It did not work. Charles V was supremely confident of his forces. The Venetians reckoned Christendom had not seen such a force for a long time and that Barbarossa would not withstand an attack<sup>53</sup>.

Ever the pragmatist, once he knew that Charles V was on his way to Tunis, Francis I sent a secret envoy (Baugé) to the imperial court with two sets of instructions. One was to be used if Charles V decisively defeated Barbarossa and destroyed the Muslim fleet, gaining total dominance of the sea; the other if Barbarossa survived and gained the upper hand. Evidently, they reckoned there would be a decisive outcome but could not predict the winner<sup>54</sup>. The French council continued to debate what could be done about Milan if Barbarossa was conclusively defeated. To prepare for this eventuality they proposed a meeting between Queen Leonor, and her sister Mary of Hungary, governor of the Low Countries. Presented as a family reunion, it was universally understood as a political summit which might be used to initiate negotiations<sup>55</sup>. Despite a flurry of diplomatic activity during June and July 1535, Christian Europe was in a state of suspended animation: «all are waiting for the result of the Emperor's

<sup>50</sup> M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado, *A masterclass in Justification: Francis I, Charles V and Pope Paul III in the 1540s*, in J.C. D'Amico, J.-L. Fournel, M. Merluzzi (eds.), *François Ier et l'espace politique italien : états, domaines et territoires*, École Française de Rome, Rome, 2018, pp. 397-420.

<sup>51</sup> Ang, Carpi, p. 39, Carpi to Ricalcato, 6 June 1535.

<sup>52</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, Instructions, 24 June 1535.

<sup>53</sup> In Venice his forces were given as 450 sail, 30,000 foot, 2,000 horse, plus soldiers in the ships and large numbers of adventurers, *LP*, viii, n. 874, Harvel to Thomas Starkey, 15 June 1535.

<sup>54</sup> Ang, Carpi, p. 50, Carpi to Ricalcato, 10 July 1535: «porta gran commissione per servirsene co/ S.M. Cesarea in caso però che quella totalmente extirpasse Barbarossa, et sua armada et restasse patron del mare, et ancora per valersene contrariamente se per sorte Barbarossa restasse vivo et il disopra». The experienced envoy, Baugé, was one of Montmorency's men.

<sup>55</sup> Ang, Carpi, p. 50 (cit.), Carpi to Ricalcato, 15 July 1535, repeated in p. 54.

enterprise». If things went badly for Charles V, Gregorio Casale argued, «all the world» would want to be friends with Francis I and Henry VIII. If the emperor died or lost a large part of his army, Francis I would be welcomed in Italy as their saviour. Similar concerns motivated some German princes to approach Francis I. The Venetians were not alone in hoping the emperor's victory would not be decisive<sup>56</sup>. There were also Italians who feared that if Charles V was defeated Barbarossa would invade Genoa, Tuscany, Rome, Naples and Sicily<sup>57</sup>.

### **Information flows during the imperial invasion of Tunis**

The basic facts of the Tunis campaign in 1535 are well established and need not be rehearsed in detail here<sup>58</sup>. Charles V set sail from Barcelona on 30 May 1535 and reached Mahón in the island of Menorca on 3 June, joining the rest of his forces at Cagliari. On 15 June they reached the gulf of Tunis. Fierce skirmishes and the siege of the fortress of La Goleta outside Tunis occupied them until 14 July when La Goleta fell. Some 80 ships were taken or destroyed but Barbarossa and his veteran forces withdrew towards the city. Despite the lack of the promised military aid from the deposed Tunisian “king”, Mulay Hassan, Charles V followed them. Prevented by Christian captives and renegades from entering the city, Barbarossa and some 4,000 troops withdrew to Bona and left on their remaining ships. On 21 July Charles V's troops entered and brutally sacked the city, despite the fact that it had surrendered. They released around 20,000 Christian slaves and restored Mulay Hassan to power (treaty of 6 August 1535), but annexed La Goleta. Charles V landed safely in Sicily on 20 August.

Imperial officials in Tunis issued detailed letters and reports of these events at frequent intervals with only minor variants, instructing recipients to disseminate them in all media, including manuscript, print and sermons. Hence the abundance and similarity of accounts of the expedition. Couriers were sent around 20 June with reports describing the journey, landing and siege of La Goleta; others around mid to late July with details of the defeat and flight of Barbarossa, and

<sup>56</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, p. 51 (cit.) and 53, Carpi to Ricalcato, 15 July 1535.

<sup>57</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 1121, Gregorio Casale to Cromwell, Ferrara, 27 July 1535.

<sup>58</sup> A fair narrative can be constructed from the letters in French by the emperor to Hannart and Mary of Hungary on 13, 23, 24 and 28 June, 14, 22, 26 and 28, and 23 July (sic), 16 and 31 August, in *CKKV*, II, 186-204; those in Spanish mainly for Lope de Soria in *Cdcv*, I, pp. 408-444, in particular 15 July, pp. 434-435, and 25 July, pp. 438-440; brief, factual account in J.D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 143-149 and 154-157.

soon after with news of the conquest of the city of Tunis<sup>59</sup>. González Cuerva argued that these tactics worked particularly well in the Holy Roman Empire because in the absence of German ambassadors, they depended on official sources. But his own work uncovered independent accounts by German soldiers which could have circulated, as manuscripts often were<sup>60</sup>. Because Charles V had claimed to be on a visit to Naples and Sicily, protocol required ambassadors to travel with him, and they provided independent accounts to their governments. All but Ferdinand I's envoy, Salinas, who was too ill to embark went to Tunis, even the French ambassador, Vély, whom the emperor tried to dissuade<sup>61</sup>. Ferdinand I immediately sent a special envoy to cover for Salinas, and several of his couriers made it from Vienna to Tunis and back with dispatches and verbal reports<sup>62</sup>. It has been assumed that ambassadors merely transmitted information issued by the imperial court<sup>63</sup>. There is no reason why this should be the case as they were able to report as eyewitnesses, and the few documents we have suggest that there was a considerable diversity of information. To control and perhaps intimidate Vély and the English ambassador Richard Pate, Charles V put additional soldiers on their ship and assigned two close aides, Jehan de Vandernesse and Anthonie Badia, as Vély's minders. But Vély and Baugé evaded controls. They sent armed servants to roam the camp, who used underhand tactics («suspectement et à mensongièrès occasions»), to enter the tents of members of the imperial council and even that of the emperor. They managed to get a copy the plans to fortify La Goleta. Charles V accused Vély and Baugé of «excessive curiosity» and of fabricating news reports, which they sent for publication in England<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Compare *KFI*, V, pp. 283ff, Charles V to Ferdinand I, 23 July 1535 to *CKKV*, II, pp. 196-199, to Mary of Hungary. The editors of *KFI*, V, got the same results comparing the emperor's letters to Ferdinand I of 23 and 24 June, pp. 262-264, of 14 July, pp. 279-281; of 16 August, pp. 290ff, with those to Hannart in *CKKV*, II, pp. 188-92, 192-193, 199-201. *PEG*, II, pp. 361-362, Charles V to Francis I, 23 July 1535; *ivi* and same date, pp. 362-363, Charles V to Leonor. Ambassadors and allies got more details, e.g. *PEG*, II, pp. 363-367, Charles V to Hannart, 24 July 1535; *KFI*, V, p. 275, Ferdinand I to Charles V, 13 July 1535; p. 286, Charles V to Ferdinand I, 23 July 1535.

<sup>60</sup> R. González Cuerva, M.Á. Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535* cit., pp. 49-54. H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., p. 50, argued there was no enthusiasm in Protestant areas for these news.

<sup>61</sup> *PEG*, II, pp. 359-360, Charles V to Hannart, 30 May 1535.

<sup>62</sup> *KFI*, V, p. 258, Ferdinand I to Mary, 7 June 1535.

<sup>63</sup> R. González Cuerva, M.Á. Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535* cit., p. 50, suggests that Charles V invited ambassadors to go so that the official interpretation of events could be disseminated further, and H. Duchhardt, *Das Tunisunternehmen* cit., pp. 67-68, assumes they transmitted Charles V's version. Neither point is proven.

<sup>64</sup> *PEG*, II, p. 394, Charles V to Hannart, 23 October 1535.

Despite the tight control of couriers, the emperor's official missives from Tunis usually arrived after the news was known, serving as confirmation rather than announcements and therefore less likely to impose a single vision of events. This was the case even for Ferdinand I, who invariably had news before his brother's letters, which normally took between three to four weeks to arrive. Trusted sources in Venice, Rome and Naples informed him of the emperor's victory long before the official letter of 23 July arrived in Vienna on 28 August<sup>65</sup>. Mary of Hungary often got information earlier, usually from Genoa, and sent it on to him. She heard of the sack of the city from French officials while she was with Leonor in Cambrai and would not believe it until it was confirmed by the duke of Milan, a Habsburg ally<sup>66</sup>. Leonor believed it and informed Ferdinand I, who already knew by the time her letter arrived<sup>67</sup>. Merchants, some of them supplying the forces, often provided information first. Sicilian merchants were the first to inform of the emperor's landing and siege of La Goleta at the end of June, and the news spread widely through the papal nuncio network<sup>68</sup>. The duke of Florence had a dedicated service with brigantines and horses to ensure that news from Tunis reached Florence via Livorno in four days or less<sup>69</sup>.

Sharing such information was integral to the normal exchanges of favour and friendship. For example, the sieur de Langy provided the English ambassador in France, Wallop, with a copy of the treaties between Charles V and Mulay Hassan<sup>70</sup>. During May-June 1535 Paolo Giovio composed a detailed description of Tunis and La Goleta and had a map made which he shared, lent and gifted to many important individuals<sup>71</sup>. The pope, eager to court both the French and the Venetians, shared news as soon as it arrived, often through Nicolas Raince or Renzo, a member of the bishop of Mâcon's household. On 13 July Raince summarised a letter of 23 June from Guidiccione, the papal nuncio who was in Tunis, which the pope had received the previous day. The pope also sent copies directly to the French court, including sketches of the imperial camp and of La Goleta<sup>72</sup>. He had obtained those from a dispatch sent from «the camp near Tunis» that arrived with the official accounts for the count of Cifuentes, imperial

<sup>65</sup> *KFI*, V, pp. 314-315, Ferdinand I to Charles V, 3 September 1535. Charles V's letter from Tunis of 23 July (283ff) was received on 28 August with a verbal report from Jean du May (ivi, p. 300, Ferdinand I to Charles V). *KFI*, V, notes when letters were received.

<sup>66</sup> *KFI*, V, P. 307, Ferdinand I to Mary of Hungary, 27 August 1535.

<sup>67</sup> *KFI*, V, P. 339 Ferdinand I to Leonor, 8 October 1535.

<sup>68</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, P. 45, Ricalcato to Carpi, 1 July 1535.

<sup>69</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 1121, Gregorio Casale to Cromwell, Ferrara, 27 July 1535.

<sup>70</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 338, s.d. [September 1535].

<sup>71</sup> S. Deswarte-Rosa, *L'expédition de Tunis* cit., pp. 82-90.

<sup>72</sup> *Charrière*, I, pp. 268-272, Raince to Francis I, Rome, 13 July 1535.

ambassador in Rome. The courier also brought packets of correspondence from other ambassadors and individuals in Tunis for their patrons and friends in Rome and beyond, but Cifuentes refused to release these until he had an audience with the pope and delivered fresh details directly from Charles V. This was usual practice as it enabled the ambassadors to put their own spin on the information before sovereigns had access to the accounts of their envoys. Raince accused him of exaggerating for effect during the audience and in the triumphalist account he subjected Raince to when he came to pick up the dispatch that Vély and Baugé had sent for the French authorities<sup>73</sup>.

### Francis I's response to Charles V's victories in Tunis

On July 10 the French court was in a state of anxiety because they had no idea of Charles V's whereabouts; five days later they knew he had arrived in Africa. A courier on his way from Spain to the Low Countries claimed that the emperor had won a victory and destroyed part of the Muslim fleet, putting Barbarossa to flight. Few believed him<sup>74</sup>. By 26 July Francis I was overwhelmed with news from all sides but as «no two reports about the emperor and his forces have ever been the same» he had no idea what was happening<sup>75</sup>. News of the taking of La Goleta and fall of Tunis quickly spread from Naples to Rome on 28 July and from there to other parts<sup>76</sup>. The pope refused to believe it until confirmation arrived from his nuncio in Tunis, or the commander of the papal galleys there, the count of Anguillara<sup>77</sup>. This was normal practice, but often such delay was a tactic to gain time to consider the implications and decide the best way to react. The imperial ambassador in Venice communicated the «splendid victory» to the Doge on 9 August on the basis of unnamed correspondents from Sicily<sup>78</sup>. The French court had reliable first-hand accounts by then. A report from Vély dated 15 July probably arrived on or before 7 August with Richard Pate's dispatch describing the conquest of La Goleta, Barbarossa's escape with part of the fleet, and the emperor's march to

<sup>73</sup> Ivi, p. 272.

<sup>74</sup> Ang, Carpi, p. 50, Carpi to Ricalcato, 10 July 1535; p. 53, (15 July), pp. 54-5 (18 July).

<sup>75</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, p. 29: «je n'ay jamais eu de quelque cousté que ce soit deux advis semblables de l'Empereur ne de son armee, dont je ne me puis trop esmerveiller», Francis I to Du Bellay, 26 July 1535.

<sup>76</sup> LP, viii, n. 1144, News from Rome 28 July, from Bologna, 30 July; n. 1155, Sir Clement West [to Cromwell, 31 July], with accurate details.

<sup>77</sup> Ang, Carpi, p. 59, Ricalcato to Carpi, 3 August 1535.

<sup>78</sup> *Csp SP* 5(1), n. 192, Lope de Soria to Charles V, 9 August 1535.

Tunis, which was expected to fall easily. That was the last trustworthy news for several days<sup>79</sup>. On 17 August, thanks to information from the Venetian ambassador and sources in Naples, the French court had solid information of events in Tunis up to 6 August, including the fall of the city, Barbarossa's escape and the emperor's imminent departure for Sicily. The king shared the information with Mary of Hungary and Leonor in Cambrai; Leonor immediately ordered a service of thanksgiving<sup>80</sup>.

By the time that Francis I received the emperor's letter officially informing him of the «defeat of Barbarossa» and the taking of Tunis, he had been given enough time to consider how best to respond. Charles V wrote that he was confident Francis I would be delighted with the good news, not least because of the benefit to Christendom and the 20,000 captives who had been released<sup>81</sup>. The imperial ambassador, Hannart, confirmed that the «glorious victory at Tunis had been received with the utmost joy» and that Francis I declared Charles V the greatest of all Christian conquerors over infidels, adding that if he wished to continue, they needed to make a closer alliance<sup>82</sup>. The French ambassador in England complained that the emperor had not asked Francis I to accompany him to Tunis<sup>83</sup>. Carpi wrote, unhelpfully, that the news would have «the impact that could be expected» on the French<sup>84</sup>. Ferdinand I thought it would lead to a firm peace<sup>85</sup>. As did Hannart, much to the alarm of Pio di Carpi who feared it obviated the need for Paul III to mediate and would deprive him of the opportunity to lead the next campaign against the Infidel<sup>86</sup>. Mary of Hungary was not so certain. She thought the victory had helped restrain and frighten the French, but only because they had not succeeded in getting allies. Francis I's ambitions in Italy had not been dented, and he would pursue them whatever it cost. At best he might

<sup>79</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, p. 33, Francis I to Du Bellay, 15 August 1535, mentions Vély's letter and the lack of news thereafter. Carpi only mentioned receipt of Pate's letters; the king may have kept Vély's report secret. *Ang*, Carpi, p. 60, Carpi to Ricalcato, 7 August 1535.

<sup>80</sup> Archives Generales du Royaume, Brussels, Audience, 48, ff. 137r-142v, Mary of Hungary to Charles V, Brussels, 31 August 1535. The meeting took place between 16 and 19 August.

<sup>81</sup> *PEG*, II, pp. 361-362, Charles V to Francis I, 23 July 1535.

<sup>82</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5(1), n. 202, Hannart to the empress Isabel, 6 September 1535.

<sup>83</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 58, Chapuys to Charles V, 10 August 1535.

<sup>84</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, 60, Carpi to Ricalcato, 7 August 1535.

<sup>85</sup> *KFI*, V, p. 298, Ferdinand I to Mary of Hungary, 24 August 1535: «J'espere que les bonnes nouvelles de Tunèz viendront à cestuy afere fort à propos. Je prie le Createur que viegne à quelque bonne conclusion».

<sup>86</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 69-73 this at p. 72, Carpi to Ricalcato, 26 September 1535.

be less aggressive in his demands for an alliance<sup>87</sup>. She was right. Du Bellay had been sent to Italy to negotiate with potential allies in late June, and despite the intervening events his instructions were not altered<sup>88</sup>.

Once the niceties of the formal audience were over, there was silence from Francis I. Carpi's correspondence, so frequent and full of other matters, did not mention Tunis again until 29 September, when he reported that Francis I and his council had been meeting frequently in secret to discuss the implications of the emperor's victory, but failed to agree on strategy. His secret informant also told him some counsellors favoured an alliance with the emperor if he provided a kingdom for the king's younger son in Africa or elsewhere. Others proposed accepting imperial expansion in North Africa in exchange for Milan<sup>89</sup>. Francis I, usually so open and loquacious with some diplomats, would not speak on the matter. He admitted to the Venetian ambassador, Marin Giustiniano, that his alliance with the Turks was regrettable but vital to undermine the emperor and to secure the return of Milan, and would not be drawn on the impact of the imperial victory in Tunis. In the absence of information, Giustiniano was reduced to *imagining* what the French king was thinking, and sent this to the Doge and his advisers in Venice in lieu of a factual report. Given his intimacy with Francis I, it is worth considering.

Giustiniano reckoned that the French saw Charles V's victory as a serious blow against the Turks and their naval forces, and that it had substantially strengthened the emperor. The victory had transformed the international situation and radically altered the direction of French policy, he argued. Whereas before Francis I had regarded himself as the emperor's rival, Giustiniano believed he was now afraid of Charles V. Before, Francis I's primary goal had been to recover Milan; now, it was to contain imperial power<sup>90</sup>. As for the relationship with

<sup>87</sup> *KFI*, V, p. 317, Mary of Hungary to Ferdinand I, 4 September 1535: «Et croy que les bonnes nouvelles de l'emp. qu'ilz eurent de la prinse de Thunès y a aydè ...mais quoy qu'il couste, ilz auroient volentiers ung pied en l'Ytalie, toutesfois qu'ilz s'en resfroïdissent de le demander si expressement». Knecht argues that Admiral Chabot was hostile to the king's inactivity, *Francis I* cit., pp. 276-277.

<sup>88</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, pp. 1-10 instructions, 26 June 1535; first negotiations, 35-50, s.d. [mid-August 1535].

<sup>89</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 69-73 this at pp. 71-72, cits. p. 72, Carpi to Ricalcato, 26 September 1535.

<sup>90</sup> *Relation de Marin Giustiniano ambassadeur en France, 1535*, in M.N. Tommaseo (ed.), *Relations des ambassadeurs Vénétiens sur les affaires de France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. I, Imprimerie Royale, Paris, 1838, pp. 41-111, this at p. 64; fear at p. 66 and in p. 56: «Quindi è nasciuto tanto timore ... ora primieramente hanno l'occhio alla grandezza di Cesare, e secondariamente a Milano».

Süleyman, that too had changed from being an additional tool to an essential requirement, as the Ottomans were the best allies available against the emperor<sup>91</sup>. An adherent of a “domino theory” of politics, Giustiniano saw Tunis as the start of a run that would give Charles V control of Italy and the German lands, then Ghelders and England, finishing with Denmark which his niece would rule. Francis I would be completely isolated and forced to do the emperor’s bidding. However, Giustiniano also appreciated that Francis I believed he could benefit from the emperor’s victory, as it could make the Venetians and the pope fearful enough to call on him to preserve their freedom<sup>92</sup>. In this he was certainly correct. The Pope had already discussed with the Venetian ambassador in Rome how best to prevent Charles V from getting more power over Italy, and mooted a league with France.<sup>93</sup> Francis I deliberately stoked fears, accusing Charles V of seeking hegemony – *monarchia* – and offering the pope support if the emperor attempted to coerce him<sup>94</sup>. Consequently, when the imperialists publicised details of Francis I’s negotiations with Süleyman taken from intercepted documents, few joined them in condemnation<sup>95</sup>. Even the emperor’s Italian allies wanted Francis I as a credible counter-balance.

The unusual levels of secrecy and the scant public attention given to the emperor’s victory in the French court was made possible by Francis I’s decision to tour the French provinces during these months. This enabled him to avoid large, public audiences and deprived the imperialists of the fora that the frequent, public occasions in Paris would have provided to extoll the emperor’s success. It also gave the French time to digest the news and discuss the implications in secret. Once the initial impact of the victory passed, it was soon apparent that it had not been decisive. All the planning beforehand had considered scenarios where one or other of the contenders destroyed the other. On 17 August the French government learnt from the Venetian ambassador that Barbarossa had embarked safely in Bona for Istanbul with twelve galleys packed with troops, as Doria had failed to

<sup>91</sup> Ivi, p. 66.

<sup>92</sup> Ivi, p. 56.

<sup>93</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5 (1), n. 197, Lope de Soria to the Emperor, 22 August 1535. *Du Bellay*, II, pp. 102-110, Du Bellay and Denonville to Francis I, Rome, 23 September 1535.

<sup>94</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 63-65, Carpi to Ricalcato, 21-22 August 1533: «non haver alcun che possa impedir’ ch’el [Charles V] non arrivi a la Monarchia eccetto il Re di Francia» (p. 65). *Du Bellay*, II, p. 104, Du Bellay and Denonville, 23 September 1535, boasted to Francis I: «Et de ce ... nostred. Saint-Pere a eu en partie advis par les siens mesmes, en partie nous luy avons si bien insinué et faict insinuer qu’il le tient pour tout veritable».

<sup>95</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, pp. 93ff. details of the incident.

intercept him<sup>96</sup>. Other sources put the number of galleys at anything between twenty-five and thirty-seven or more. Many reports stressed the inferiority of the imperial fleet. Rumour had it that Charles V thought Doria's galleys so useless they might as well be at the bottom of the sea<sup>97</sup>. Doria was widely accused of cowardice<sup>98</sup>. By mid-August it was known that Charles V had made virtually no territorial gain as he had restored Tunis to Mulay Hassan and taken only the vulnerable islet of La Goleta outside the port, which had to be fortified and garrisoned<sup>99</sup>.

The papal and French courts were also influenced by the reports of the papal admiral, Anguillara, who emphasised the problems the emperor faced during and after the campaign. On 28 July he reported from La Goleta that Charles V had almost been captured, and that while Barbarossa had lost 40 galleys and other ships, he still had about 50 vessels and some 4,000 Turkish soldiers as well as other troops at his command, and consequently he would easily recover – «si rifarà facilmente». By contrast, Charles V had spent huge sums of money and made little profit from the sack of Tunis, and was facing huge problems disbanding and paying his forces. Du Bellay was delighted at the impact on the pope of the negative reports regarding the emperor sent by Anguillara and Baugé that September<sup>100</sup>. Süleyman's desire to exact revenge and continue the war was also widely discussed. The pope was said to have commented that this would be a good thing as it might force Charles V to be reasonable and accept a mediated peace in Christendom<sup>101</sup>. Francis I welcomed the prospect of another Ottoman campaign, but shared the misgivings of Venice that they might be asked by both sides for support<sup>102</sup>. In other words, the situation was in flux and so unstable it soon overshadowed the imperial victory.

<sup>96</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 61-62, Carpi to Ricalcato, 17 August 1535. The Venetian ambassador's letters from Tunis were dated 6 August; those from Naples, 15 August.

<sup>97</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 526, Wallop's News (English ambassador in France), 3 October 1535, passing on news from Venice dated 7 September 1535.

<sup>98</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, p. 79, Carpi to Ricalcato, 19 October 1535.

<sup>99</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, pp. 60-61, Ricalcato to Carpi, 12 August 1535.

<sup>100</sup> *Charrière*, I, pp. 274-275; *Du Bellay*, II, p. 104, Du Bellay and Denonville to Francis I, 23 September 1535.

<sup>101</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, p. 69, Du Bellay and Denonville to Francis I, 3 September 1535.

<sup>102</sup> *Csp SP* 5(1), n. 192, Lope de Soria to Charles V, Venice, 9 August 1535.

## Reactions in the English Court

Henry VIII was also away from his court in London throughout these crucial months, on an extended hunting excursion in the provinces with his chief ministers and courtiers. The ambassadors were ordered to remain behind in London. This facilitated even higher levels of secrecy and silence. The king's absence has been usually attributed to a desire to distance himself from the outcry following the despoliation of the English church and the executions of Thomas More and John Fisher. The news of their death reached Rome at the same time as the taking of Tunis, causing the pope great distress, and diverting attention from the emperor's success<sup>103</sup>. In England, the court was more concerned about the meeting between Leonor and Mary of Hungary than with events in Tunis, in case it laid the foundations of a Franco-imperial alliance<sup>104</sup>.

Trustworthy news from Tunis reached Henry VIII in early or mid-August. On 11 July Gregorio Casale sent him copies from Rome of the emperor's letters to the pope dated 29 June and 2 July, as well as details that the imperial camp was short of provisions and would suffer heavy losses from disease if the campaign continued into August as was likely<sup>105</sup>. It is possible they could have reached the king by 12 August, when a full report from the ambassador in Tunis, Richard Pate, arrived<sup>106</sup>. Casale and others continued to send Henry VIII up-to-date news from Italy, including details of the conquest and sack of Tunis and Barbarossa's escape<sup>107</sup>. There must have been other letters from Pate, but they have not been found and the king did not admit to having them. Additional information came from the most varied sources, such as Joan Batcok, a resident in the empress' court in Spain, who obtained copies of letters from Charles V to the viceroy of Navarre and sent them to her uncle, John Batcok, who forwarded them (and the copy of a letter from the bishop of Palencia) to Cromwell on 5 August, along with details he had gleaned from talking to men already back from the North African war. These alleged that

<sup>103</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, 58, Ricalcato to Carpi, 3 August 1535.

<sup>104</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 189, Chapuys to Charles V, 3 August 1535; and n. 190, to Granvelle, same date; n. 193, to Charles V, 10 August 1535.

<sup>105</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 1053, Gregorio Casale to Cromwell, Rome, 16 July 1535.

<sup>106</sup> Chapuys found out later, *LP*, ix, n. 178, to Charles V, 25 August 1535; the fate of Pate's dispatch reported by Carpi, *Ang*, Carpi, p. 60.

<sup>107</sup> Some of his letters have been cited already, see also *LP* Henry VIII, viii, n. 1120, s.d. Certayne newes of the emperor, and n. 1144, News from Rome 28 July, Bologna 30 July, Tunis, 6 July, and undated from Naples; *LP* ix, n. 127, Bernardino Sandro to Thomas Starkey, 19 August 1535. *LP*, viii, n. 1155, Sir Clement West [to Cromwell], 31 July 1535.

Barbarossa had escaped with 10,000 Turks and renegades and had such a powerful force he did not fear Charles V<sup>108</sup>.

Chapuys was ignorant of all this. As of 10 August the latest credible news he had were the emperor's letters of 13 and 28 June<sup>109</sup>. He may have received William Lok's letter from Antwerp of 20 July reporting that news of the emperor's victory at Tunis and Barbarossa's escape had been proved false<sup>110</sup>. It was not until 14 August that Chapuys learnt of what he called the glorious and most important victory in La Goleta from the imperial ambassador in France, and sent a courier to Henry VIII with the news. There was no public audience where it could be publicised. Henry VIII gave the envoy some money as customary, and sent a deer he had hunted to the ambassador, which was interpreted as a sign of his great pleasure. Later Chapuys found out that Henry VIII had already known of the emperor's success and had neither celebrated it or shared the information. In fact, the king distanced himself as far as possible without breaching protocol. He instructed Cromwell to relay his «pleasure» at the emperor's success and Cromwell did so in writing rather than in person. By contrast, when they heard that the French ambassador had news of the meeting between Mary of Hungary and Leonor, he was summoned to speak with the king and taken hunting<sup>111</sup>. Among the news he transmitted was false information that suggested Süleyman had been victorious in Persia and was free to retaliate<sup>112</sup>.

In an effort to make an impact, Chapuys sent Cromwell details of the campaign as he received them. His servant arrived at the king's residence to deliver one such letter at the same time as a courier from the English ambassador in France, who brought news that Charles V had taken the city of Tunis. As the news had originated in Rome Henry VIII dismissed it as false. Aware of the offence this would cause if the news were true, Cromwell wrote to Chapuys assuring him that he thought the news credible, and that Henry VIII would accept it once the ambassador provided confirmation<sup>113</sup>. The emperor's letters dated 23 July with the «happy news of the miraculous and immortal victory of your Majesty against Barbarossa, and the capture of Tunis» arrived some time after. The dispatch included letters from Charles V to Henry

<sup>108</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 33, J. Batcok to Cromwell, 5 August 1535.

<sup>109</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 58, Chapuys to Charles V, 10 August 1535.

<sup>110</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 1071, William Lok to Henry VIII, 20 July 1535.

<sup>111</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 178, Chapuys to Charles V, 25 August 1535. He received Hannart's letters on 14 August and acknowledged receipt of the emperor's letters with news of La Goleta (dated 13 July) on 28 August, as he commented in *LP*, ix, n. 287, to Charles V, 6 September 1535.

<sup>112</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 178, Chapuys to Charles V, 25 August 1535.

<sup>113</sup> *Ivi*, n. 287, Chapuys to Charles V, 6 September 1535.

VIII and Cromwell and the norm was for such important documents to be presented at a formal, public audience. None was granted, so Chapuys sent another envoy with them. The king again instructed Cromwell to give him some money and to inform Chapuys that he could not have been more delighted with the victory if it had been his own, and that he congratulated the emperor warmly. On 10 September Cromwell transmitted the message in writing<sup>114</sup>. The offense was so patent, Chapuys reported the bare facts and commented bitterly: «God knows how much more he would have given [the envoy] for contrary news»<sup>115</sup>. According to the envoy, however, the reaction of the English king and courtiers to the news was extreme. He claimed that Cromwell had been left speechless, and the English courtiers so astonished and dismayed he thought they resembled a pack of dogs falling out of a window. Chapuys contrasted this with the rejoicing of «the English people» outside the court who loved Charles V<sup>116</sup>. The king and his court remained inaccessible to Chapuys, who persevered by sending information. He had to be content with polite letters from Cromwell informing him that Henry VIII was «very interested» in the details, and that some of the accounts were so vivid Cromwell could almost imagine himself there<sup>117</sup>.

In other words, Henry VIII followed a similar strategy to that of Francis I. Both belittled the emperor's victory indirectly by starving it of publicity. Henry VIII took it a stage further by avoiding direct contact with the ambassador so that he was not associated with its promulgation or celebration. He deprived the imperialists of a public forum to disseminate the news and praise the emperor. It took repeated demands from the ambassador before even Cromwell agreed to meet him - on 13 October. Even then, it took place late in the day and in private<sup>118</sup>. Chapuys's disappointment is reflected in his comment that he hoped Henry VIII would be punished for «his impious folly and dishonourable joy at the descent of Barbarossa on Naples and at Tunis [in 1534]». To add insult to injury, false rumours spread that Charles V had written friendly letters to Henry VIII during the campaign and entrusted him with the defence of the Low Countries<sup>119</sup>. Worse still, the victory made no difference to Henry VIII's policy, nor did it ameliorate his treatment of the Catholics or of Queen Katherine and princess Mary, as the imperialists had hoped. Indeed its impact

<sup>114</sup> Ivi, n. 326, Cromwell to Chapuys, 10 September 1535.

<sup>115</sup> Ivi, n. 356, Chapuys to Charles V, 13 September 1535.

<sup>116</sup> Ivi, n. 357, Chapuys to Granvelle, 13 September 1535.

<sup>117</sup> Ivi, n. 484, Winchester, 30 September 1535.

<sup>118</sup> Ivi, n. 594, Chapuys to Charles V, 13 October 1535.

<sup>119</sup> From the summary in Ivi, n. 595, Chapuys to Granvelle, 13 October 1535.

was negative: it heightened fears that Charles V would now attack Henry VIII, as the English Catholics were urging him to do<sup>120</sup>. Katherine thanked God for «the great victory» and the emperor's safe return because he could now devote himself to relieving the suffering of English Catholics, not least herself and Mary<sup>121</sup>.

Henry VIII finally deigned to give the imperial ambassador an audience on 30 December 1535. He received Chapuys in public, put his arm around him in a show of friendship, and immediately moved into a private space so they could not be heard. The king's opening words were hardly complimentary: «The Emperor's affairs are not so flourishing as reported; there is no great glory in chasing a pirate». Henry VIII went on to compare the two conquests of Tunis in 1534 and 1535 before concluding that Barbarossa's had been the more impressive since he had not been supported by local «Moors», whereas, «I have it from my ambassador with the Emperor [Pate] that to the Moor's [Mulay Hassan] exertions, and to his valiant co-operation was your victory over Barbarossa in a great measure owing». Chapuys denied that Mulay Hassan had made a contribution and insisted that «Barbarossa was the general-in-chief under one of the most powerful princes in the world, and himself king of two kingdoms»<sup>122</sup>.

It was not only the emperor's covert enemies but his closest relatives and supporters in England who called into question the value of his victory. Chapuys urged Charles V to devote his efforts to saving Catholicism in England which was his duty and more meritorious than anything he had done in Africa<sup>123</sup>. Some English Catholics publicly stated that helping them and organising a general Council of the Church were «more praiseworthy deed(s) than the conquest of Tunis, and more necessary than the recovery of the lands of Christendom from the Turk»<sup>124</sup>. Princess Mary, having praised his triumph in the «holy expedition», complained that he had clearly failed to understand the gravity of the situation in England since he had chosen to fight in Tunis. He must rectify now and do this service to God in England in order to gain «no less fame and glory to himself than in the conquest of Tunis or the whole of Africa»<sup>125</sup>.

<sup>120</sup> Ivi, n. 594, Chapuys to Charles V, 13 October 1535.

<sup>121</sup> Ivi, n. 587, Katherine of Aragon to Charles V, 10 October 1535.

<sup>122</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5 (1), n. 246, Chapuys to Charles V, 30 December 1535.

<sup>123</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 435, Chapuys to Granvelle, 25 September 1535.

<sup>124</sup> Reported by Chapuys to Charles V, 13 October 1535, *LP*, ix, n. 594.

<sup>125</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 596, Princess Mary to Granvelle [sic., Chapuys], October 1535.

## Barbarossa's Revenge

A greater dent in the emperor's reputation was made by Barbarossa. His actions overshadowed and neutralised the impact of the emperor's victory. «He has left in tatters, defeated ... he will have to look to his own defence rather than to attack and offend others» («Va desecho y roto ... antenderá antes a guardarse que a offender y hazer daño»). With these confident words Charles V dismissed the threat from Barbarossa in August 1535<sup>126</sup>. The dignitaries who met the emperor in Sicily and Naples commented that he was only interested in talking «delle cose di Tunisi, delle quali ne tien memoria» and basking in adulation, as Paolo Giovio commented<sup>127</sup>. However, outside the imperial court, as September 1535 drew to a close it was yesterday's news. «I do not write about the taking of Tunis, as the news is known to all the world», wrote Bernardino Sandro to Thomas Starkey from Venice, writing instead of substantial Christian losses as a result of Barbarossa's latest depredations<sup>128</sup>. Doria's failure to intercept the Muslim forces was widely condemned<sup>129</sup>. Then came the shocking news of Barbarossa's brutal sacking of Mahón in Menorca<sup>130</sup>.

On 1 September, Ottoman-Algerian forces with some 30 vessels and 3,000 troops docked where Charles V had stopped on his way to Tunis. They took the port on 5 September, sacking it and leaving the following day with some 800 captives and ample booty<sup>131</sup>. Charles V was informed on 16 September. Within a few days the news reached Rome and thence to France. Some accounts put Barbarossa's fleet at 50 ships; several stated that the captives and goods he had taken more than compensated for his losses in Tunis<sup>132</sup>. News of the raids of the Ottoman-corsair fleet all the way back to Istanbul also circulated and there was even speculation it might destroy the Spanish galley squadron – which it narrowly missed<sup>133</sup>. Distortions soon appeared.

<sup>126</sup> *Cdcv*, II, p. 443, Charles V to Lope de Soria, 16 August 1535.

<sup>127</sup> P. Giovio, *Lettere Volgari di Mons. Paolo Giovio*, Appresso G.B. et M. Sessa, Venezia, 1560, Giovio to Carpi, Rome, 28 December 1535. Charles V spent much of his meeting with Pier Luigi Farnese talking of «la victoire de Thunisi», *Du Bellay*, II, p. 160, Du Bellay and Denonville to Francis I, 27 November 1535.

<sup>128</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 512, Sandro to Starkey, Venice, 1 October 1535.

<sup>129</sup> V.-L. Bourrilly (ed.), *Lettres écrites d'Italie par François de Rabelais (Décembre 1535-Février 1536)*, Honoré Champion, Paris, 1910, p. 49, note 2, citing Jean du Bellay's letter to Francis I, 5 November 1535.

<sup>130</sup> *KFI*, V, p. 260, Charles V to Ferdinand I, 13 June 1535.

<sup>131</sup> The controversial accounts of treason in *Ags*, E, 468 ff. 85 and 86, s.d. [ca. 6-18 September 1535] and in [www.archivodelafrontera.com](http://www.archivodelafrontera.com). My thanks to Miguel Deyá and Miguel Ángel de Bunes for information on the captives taken.

<sup>132</sup> *Du Bellay*, p. 109, Du Bellay and Denonville to Francis I, 23 September 1535.

<sup>133</sup> *Charrière*, I, p. 277, Lavour to Jean du Bellay, Rome, 29 September 1535.

From the imperial court, the English ambassador informed Henry VIII that «Barbarossa ... invaded, with 30 galleys ... he slew and took 3,000, sparing no age, besides setting everything on fy[re]»<sup>134</sup>. The Bishop of Mâcon wrote that 1000 Christians had been impaled and more than 4,000 enslaved<sup>135</sup>. These reports circulated alongside other false news that the Muslim forces had retaken Tunis and La Goleta, where the imperial garrison had been massacred. This information was sent from Rome to Portugal and France and thence to England<sup>136</sup>. It was reported that Henry VIII had shown «great pleasure and joy» at the news<sup>137</sup>. Other rumours in Rome that October described the situation in La Goleta as untenable and the emperor was said to still be in Sicily because he was too scared of Barbarossa to sail to Naples<sup>138</sup>. At the end of that month, the French ambassador in England disseminated news that Barbarossa had regained Tunis, Bona and La Goleta, to the delight of Henry VIII and his court, and the disgust of Chapuys who denounced this «false piece of intelligence» in vain<sup>139</sup>. On 3 October the English ambassador in France reported that the emperor's victory in Tunis mattered little to Francis I and his advisers now. What would make a real difference was whether Süleyman defeated the Sophy and retaliated, at which point Francis I «will little esteem the Emperor's peace, and will begin to practise for the annoyance of the Emperor, as formerly, and, as it is said, he now begins to do»<sup>140</sup>. Not long after this they learnt that Süleyman had made a favourable peace with the Sophy<sup>141</sup>.

The disaster in Mahón merged with and neutralised the positive impact of the emperor's victory in Tunis even in Spain. On 30 September 1535 the empress Isabel, governor of the Spanish realms, reported that she had carried out the emperor's instructions to disseminate everywhere by letters and in print his victory in Tunis and La Goleta, and the treaty with Mulay Hassan, as well as the emperor's explanation why he had not proceeded to attack Algiers. She warned him, however, that as the devastating sack of Mahón and other Ottoman-corsair attacks were already well known, these publications

<sup>134</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 490, [A servant of Pate] to Master Philyp [Hoby?] who sent it to Cromwell, Palermo, [30 September 1535].

<sup>135</sup> V.-L. Bourrilly (ed.), *Lettres Rabelais* cit., p. 49, n. 2, 20 October 1535.

<sup>136</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 526, Wallop's News, 3 October 1535.

<sup>137</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5(1), n. 222, Chapuys to Granvelle, 1 November 1535.

<sup>138</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, pp. 125-126, Du Bellay to Chasseneuf, 20 October 1535.

<sup>139</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5 (1), n. 222, Chapuys to Granvelle, 1 November 1535.

<sup>140</sup> *LP*, ix, n. 526, Wallop's News, Dijon, 3 October 1535.

<sup>141</sup> *Charrière*, I, p. 277, Bishop Lavaur to Montmorency, Rome, 29 September 1535.

were unlikely to satisfy the Spanish people, who were aggrieved that Barbarossa was unharmed and Algiers remained a serious threat<sup>142</sup>.

Charles V was determined not to allow the sack of Mahón to impinge on his celebrations and he did his best to play it down. He described Mahón disparagingly as «une petite ville» and the inhabitants as cowards who had failed to defend it. He avoided giving details of the losses, even to Ferdinand I. He insisted on the strength of his defences, and taunted Barbarossa by claiming he had not been strong enough to hold Mahón<sup>143</sup>. An official proclamation was published accusing Mahón's inhabitants of treason, along with a denial that La Goleta had fallen, and a defence of Andrea Doria. The emperor accused Vély once again of fabricating and disseminating false news<sup>144</sup>. Historians are surprised «that the crown did not take more seriously the sack of Mahón»<sup>145</sup>. It is surely a question of presentation and propaganda rather than inability to appreciate the damage.

The emperor's detractors naturally made much of this defeat and speculated on the damage he would suffer from a counter-attack by Ottoman-Algerian forces. The pope reflected the growing fear of a Muslim invasion, declaring in October 1535 that «the undertaking against the Turk» was more important than anything else<sup>146</sup>. The warm welcome given to Barbarossa in Istanbul reinforced Christian concerns<sup>147</sup>. Most of all, Italian princes were afraid of the emperor and the pope tried to divert his attention by calling for Christian princes to act on his excommunication of Henry VIII<sup>148</sup>.

In early November news from Milan electrified Christian European courts. The childless duke was dead and conflict over the duchy between Francis I and Charles V was now unavoidable<sup>149</sup>. This was why Henry VIII had finally agreed to see the imperial ambassador – to

<sup>142</sup> M.C. Mazario Coletto, *Isabel de Portugal*, CSIC, Madrid, 1951, p. 413, Isabel to Charles V, Madrid, 30 September 1535.

<sup>143</sup> *KFI*, V, p. 351, Charles V to Ferdinand I, 22 October 1535.

<sup>144</sup> *PEG*, II, pp. 391-392, Charles V to Hannart, 23 October 1535.

<sup>145</sup> M.J. Deyá Bauzá, *Prolegómenos y ecos de la conquista de Túnez en Mallorca*, in E. García Hernán, D. Maffi (eds.), *Estudios sobre guerra y sociedad en la Monarquía Hispánica. Guerra marítima, estrategia, organización y cultura militar (1500-1700)*, Albatros, Valencia, 2017, pp. 189-204, this at p. 200.

<sup>146</sup> *Csp Sp*, 5(1), Cifuentes to Charles V, 13 October 1535.

<sup>147</sup> P. Giovio, *Lettere Volgari* cit., Giovio to Carpi, Rome, 28 December 1535.

<sup>148</sup> *LP*, viii, n. 1095, Papal brief, 26 July 1535; *LP*, ix, n. 601, Cifuentes to Charles V, 13 October 1535. *KFI*, V, pp. 346-347, Ferdinand I to Charles V, 22 October 1535; and 313-314 (3 September). The emperor's reply, p. 350 (22 October 1535).

<sup>149</sup> In Rome by 5 November 1535; Vienna on 8; *Du Bellay*, II, p. 129, 136 and 152. *KFI*, V, Ferdinand I to Mary of Hungary, pp. 354-355 (8 November); p. 361, Charles V to Ferdinand I (14 November); p. 362, Charles V to Mary of Hungary.

find out what price the emperor was willing to pay for his alliance<sup>150</sup>. When news of Süleyman's latest defeat reached Europe, the pope's call for a campaign against the Ottomans went unheeded<sup>151</sup>. Ironically, Francis I now found it expedient to exaggerate the importance of the emperor's victory at Tunis, in order to increase fear of the emperor's power and facilitate an anti-Habsburg Christian alliance<sup>152</sup>. He also turned the emperor's propaganda against him. To make the point that he had no territorial ambitions, Charles V had given a great deal of publicity to his decision to give Tunis back to Mulay Hassan. This had prompted some negative propaganda presenting him as a lover of Muslims, more closely allied to them than Francis I. Now it gave the French a powerful argument: if Charles V could give a whole kingdom to a Muslim ruler who did not deserve it, why could he not give a Christian prince the duchy that belonged to him and thus guarantee peace in Christendom?<sup>153</sup> The fate of Milan was regarded as transcendental and overshadowed all other news<sup>154</sup>. As 1536 dawned, all the talk was of war between Charles V and Francis I.

## Conclusion

The material provided by the imperial secretariat was impressive in quantity and in its method of dissemination, but it was far from the only material in circulation about the Tunis campaign. Its impact was short-lived for many reasons, not least the lack of substantial gains by the emperor, and the short time span between victory and defeat. Even supporters of the emperor such as the English Catholics diminished his triumph in an effort to call attention to their own cause; others feared his additional power and so muted their response. Francis I and Henry VIII chose not only to dissimulate, but to delay and stifle news from Tunis; in effect, to starve the news of the oxygen of publicity. By doing so they successfully limited the impact of the

<sup>150</sup> *Csp SP*, 5 (1), n. 246, Chapuys to Charles V, 30 December 1535.

<sup>151</sup> V.-L. Bourrilly (ed.), *Lettres Rabelais* cit., pp. 42-43, Rabelais to Geoffroy d'Estissac, Rome, 30 December 1535.

<sup>152</sup> *Ang*, Carpi, p. 86, Carpi to Ricalcato, 12 November 1535. News arrived on 10 November. The nuncio wrote the previous day (ivi, pp. 85-86): «quelli che naturalmente non devono voler lo Imperatore così grande in Italia».

<sup>153</sup> P. Giovio, *Lettere Volgari* cit., Giovio to Carpi, Roma, 28 December 1535. *Ang*, Carpi, p. 242, Carpi to Ricalcato, 12 March 1537, reporting the complaint of Francis I, «che l'Imperatore é andato in Africa ad acquistar un regno, per lassarlo poi a un infidele et che ad un Re di Francia, suo cognato, non vol rendere quel così ingiustamente si ritien del suo».

<sup>154</sup> *Du Bellay*, II, pp. 202 and 210.

emperor's victory, depriving him of opportunities to project his power and promote his military prowess. But by the same token they could not project a counter narrative. In any case, the unstable situation meant that it suited them at times to emphasise the emperor's strengths, and at others his weaknesses. Directly or indirectly, and sometimes unintentionally, both friends and enemies of the emperor contributed to the creation of a vacuum in 1535 with regards to the emperor's victory that facilitated the manufacture a heroic, mostly unrealistic image of the campaign in the 1550s and beyond.

Even without the enduring attraction of the iconic art that resulted from Habsburg patronage, the Tunis campaign of 1535 might have secured an enduring place in the history of Europe later, because it provided one of the few notable victories in the centuries-long struggle with Islam. The propaganda was consonant with the distinctive and exclusive Christian European identity which triumphed. The reality was far from heroic or clear-cut and it was certainly not a clash of faiths or cultures. While ideology mattered, and war against the infidel was still important morally and in propaganda, it was more an ideal than a reality<sup>155</sup>. Nowadays, the Tunis campaign of 1535 with its blatant control and manipulation of news; the fabrication of information; the dissemination of lies and false news; the competing egos and clash of ambitions; not to mention the naked pragmatism and cross-ideological compromises, can produce a degree of unease, perhaps because of its very topicality. But a case can surely be made that an account that seeks to approximate closer to the compromised and brutal reality is arguably more fascinating than the fabricated version and heroic representation of the campaign that prevails.

<sup>155</sup> For example, in the case of France, G. Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade. Mythes et réalités de la lutte contre les Turcs aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2004 and C. Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel* cit.; For Charles V: M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado, *La Cruzada sin cruzado. Carlos V y el Turco a principios del reinado*, in G. Galasso, A. Musi (eds.), *Carlo V, Napoli e il Mediterraneo*, Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, Napoli, 2001, pp. 201-237; M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado *¿Carolus Africanus?* cit.; M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado, *A masterclass in Justification* cit.