

“Instead of attacking the Turks...”: The 1535 War of Tunis in Habsburg Imperial Propaganda¹

Tamás Kiss

When the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V set out to attack Tunis in 1535, he took with him a number of artists, chroniclers and musicians, including Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, who was commissioned to immortalize the events of the war in paintings and etchings. Vermeyen's sketches later served for the unparalleled series of *The Conquest of Tunis* tapestries by Willem de Panne-maker:² from the summer of 1546 to the autumn of 1550, Vermeyen worked on the large cartoons for the series. From these years (ca. 1547-49) also dates one of Vermeyen's lesser-known works, the so-called *Micault Triptych* (fig. 1). The triptych originally stood in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in St. Michael's Cathedral in Brussels, where Charles V's collector-general, Jean Micault and his wife Livine Cats van Welle had been laid to eternal rest and was probably commissioned in their memory by their second son, Nicolas.³ The middle piece depicts the biblical theme of the raising of Lazarus. In the wings are painted the late parents with their offspring behind them – the males on the left, the females on the right. Behind the men ancient Carthage, with the Bay of Tunis, serves as background. The scenery continues in the centre piece, where an improbable-looking mountain and an obelisk create a division between the Roman aqueduct of Carthage on the left and an antique temple on the right. In the background of the right wing are the aqueduct of Segovia, a primitive basilica, a domed tomb and a curious sarcophagus-shaped building.

¹ All translations in this chapter from Ottoman, Spanish and Hungarian are mine. The quote in the title is taken from the sixteenth-century Ottoman *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa* (see note 43).

² Vermeyen's cartoons are now on display in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and the original set of tapestries is to be found in the Royal Palace in Madrid.

³ Hendrik Horn, *Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen: Painter of Charles V and His Conquest of Tunis*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1989), I, 35.



Fig. 1: Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen: *Triptych of the Micault Family* (c. 1547-49) (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels); source: http://www.wga.hu/support/viewer_m/z.html

Made and displayed in Brussels in commemoration of a couple who are very unlikely ever to have seen Tunis with their own eyes, the *Micault Triptych's* Carthage and the Bay of Tunis, at first glance, seem confusingly out of context for all but the artist. But Vermeyen's much larger project and the Micault family's commission equally reflect the centrality of the 1535 conquest of Tunis to the public identity of Charles V. Although some of the male progeny of Jean Micault may have taken part in the Tunis campaign, most likely the altarpiece's commissioner Nicolas (Micault himself cannot have fought at Tunis as he had by then retired due to ill health),⁴ the real relevance of the triptych's background landscape lies in the family's wish to perpetuate the glory of being in close association with the Holy Roman Emperor. Key to this symbolism was the collocation of sixteenth-century Tunis with ancient Carthage: in victory, Charles V was heralded as the heir of his antique Roman forbears, an emperor who had succeeded in re-enacting Scipio Africanus's victory over Hannibal in the course of the Second Punic War (218-201 BC). The altarpiece's background does not reveal any signs of Tunis itself, but it is the connection without which the portrayal of the ruins of Carthage would be meaningless.⁵

⁴ Ibidem, 36.

⁵ Although in the centre piece, the tower-like building has been interpreted as the minaret of Al-Zatouna, the great mosque of Tunis, the minaret was only erected some four centuries later. It rather resembles the minaret of the great mosque of Kairouan, which, built from 724 to 728 AD, is the oldest standing minaret in the world. However, Charles's campaign never bore upon Kairouan. For that matter, Charles's campaign never bore upon the long uninhabited ancient city of Carthage either.

The *Micault Triptych* was made at a time in an empire when the emperor was struggling with fierce opposition from a good number of his subjects,⁶ and the Micaults's homeland was a particularly difficult case. Since 1521 Charles had resorted to severe persecution of Lutherans and Anabaptists, in the Low Countries.⁷ Tension between Charles and his subjects in Flanders reached its height in Ghent when the populace's remonstrance against high taxes resulted in an uprising in 1539. These and the ongoing struggle over Burgundian and Guelders duchies in the Low Countries (later Seventeen Provinces), which marked the first half of the sixteenth century,⁸ formed a political environment where the *Micault Triptych's* Carthage was an allusion to the family's commitment to the emperor, which, given the circumstances, was a demonstrative act of loyalism.⁹ And yet it is important to note the form and symbolism of this gesture: more than a decade after the conquest, during which time Charles had suffered several military setbacks in his ongoing struggles in the Mediterranean, the association of Tunis with Carthage remained the height of the emperor's claims to glory.

As a continuation of the *reconquista* of the Iberian peninsula, throughout the second half of the fifteenth and into the first two decades of the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal established military and trading outposts along the North African coastline. While Portugal was advancing southwards along the Atlantic coast towards the Cape of Good Hope, Spain moved east along the

⁶ The formation of the Protestant League of Schmalkalden in 1531 led to a range of internal conflicts between Catholic orthodoxy and the German princes supporting religious reform. With the external support of Francis I of France and Henry VIII the Lutherans managed to confound Charles's attempts to suppress reformist efforts and thus prevent civil war. The tension eventually resulted in a war between the League, in the person of John Frederick of Electoral Saxony, and Charles in 1547, around the time of the triptych's making: see Glenn Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V* (London: Arnold, 2002), 48. Protestant ideas, however, reached and spread rapidly in the Low Countries too. Being a Catholic king trying to prevent the turmoil spreading over to the Low Countries, Charles was obliged to abide by the papal bull calling for capital punishment on heretics: see Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V: 1500-1558* (London: Arnold, 2002), 99-106.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibid.51-57.

⁹ The role of Segovia in the female wing of the triptych is more enigmatic than that of Carthage in the male wing. Horn proposes that Micault, Treasurer of the Golden Fleece and Receiver General of Charles V, may have seen the aqueduct of Segovia in 1506, when he accompanied Philip the Fair (Charles's father) on Philip's Spanish journey: hence the almost full view of the antique construction. It is also possible that Micault was in Segovia with Charles V and Vermeyen in 1534: see Horn, *Vermeyen: Painter of Charles V*, 36. However, as the altarpiece was not commissioned by Micault himself, it is perhaps unlikely that his old memories of an aqueduct would have influenced Vermeyen's choice of background. I would rather suggest the family's, or in fact the Cats van Welles', association, either by family ties or service, to Isabel I of Castile, who resided and was crowned as Queen of Castile and Leon in 1474 in the Alcazar of Segovia.

Mediterranean coast, towards the Holy Land. Spain's North African garrisons were established at the expense of local Muslim rulers and defended by Spain's naval and military superiority. Nevertheless, Spanish control of the coast was partial, and in 1513 the Barbarossa brothers, Ottoman corsairs, made an arrangement with the Hafsid sultan of Tunis, Muhammad V, that allowed them free passage to the port of La Goletta, the fort at the entrance of the Bay of Tunis. Thus western Mediterranean shipping routes came under the constant threat of attack from the two most successful of the Barbarossa brothers, Oruç and Hızır (later Kheir-ed-Din or Hayreddin). Pinned between the Spanish-occupied western part of the North African coast, and Ottoman Maghrib, Tunis was a strategic no-man's-land, ideal as a base for trade and piracy. The power and reputation of the Barbarossas grew during the following years, and the Spanish garrisons along the coast gradually fell by 1525 when the whole of Algiers was under Hayreddin's governance. Such success did not go unnoticed, and as a consequence of the Ottoman navy's defeat in the Morea in 1532 at the hands of Charles V's admiral, Andrea Doria, the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I appointed Hayreddin commander of the Ottoman fleet. This establishing of bonds between Hayreddin and the Porte was a clear statement of intent that Süleyman wished to strengthen not only the capacity of his navy but also his empire's position in North Africa and the western Mediterranean. In 1534 Hayreddin's soldiers occupied Tunis, expelling the allied Hafsid sultan Mulay Hasan and leaving Tunis, as the property of a man in command of the Ottoman fleet, in an ambivalent position to the Ottoman Empire. In response, Charles V's war machine swung into action and, assured of cavalry support from Mulay Hasan, in 1535 the emperor attacked Tunis. It was a hopeless contest for Hayreddin's army. The Christian army's superior power forced Hayreddin to flee to Algiers. In August 1535, Charles restored Mulay Hasan to his throne under terms of tributary dependency, and left Tunis by way of Sicily and Italy.¹⁰

From Charles's point of view, the Tunis campaign had several pragmatic justifications. When Hayreddin Barbarossa, corsair and *beglerbeg* of Algiers had occupied Tunis, and Mulay Hasan had fled the city in 1534, Charles's war council saw clearly that Hayreddin's control over one side of the Sicilian channel would allow the Ottomans unchecked passage between the eastern and western Mediterranean, and that it was imperative that Habsburg Spain deny Ottomans access to the Sicilian channel.¹¹ Thus, the Porte's control over Tunis, which could potentially serve as a fortified garrison from where an attack on

¹⁰ *The Autobiography of the Emperor Charles V*, trans. Leonard Francis Simpson (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1862), 23-28; For a concise account of this historical episode see William Robertson, *History of the Reign of Charles the Fifth* (London: Routledge, 1857; repr. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004), 258-64.

¹¹ Andrew C. Hess: *The Forgotten Frontier* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 72-73.

Spain might be launched, had to be annihilated.¹² Also, in the early years of his reign Charles had turned his attention away from the Mediterranean and thus was losing possessions in North Africa. The emperor's failure to attend to North Africa remained a source of conflict and tension with the Spanish nobility. It is true that Spain's most prominent families had begun to gradually associate themselves with Charles's imperial vision of expansion against France and within the Holy Roman Empire, but there endured a traditional view that saw the interests of Spain in the south, and its natural expansion in Africa.¹³ Consequently, Charles was under pressure to lead a crusade in North Africa to appease Spain as well as to confront Ottoman interest on the western shores of the Maghrib and also diverting the Ottomans from reaching the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁴ Although it was in Habsburg Spain's best interest not to let the Ottoman navy pass through the Sicilian channel, and thus to avoid Ottoman competition in the western Mediterranean, Charles's invasion of Tunis not only served such pragmatic reasons but it also provided Charles with an event suitable for conveying a multi-faceted Habsburg imperial propaganda.

The success of Charles V's Tunis campaign played a key role in Habsburg imperial mythology and propaganda for the rest of the emperor's life, and this seems to have been in view from the first stages of the campaign's planning. Besides Vermeyen, the emperor took with him the poets Garcilaso de la Vega and Johannes Secundus; the musician, mathematician and astrologer Jean Tainier, and the historians Guillaume van Male and Jean Vandenesse to immortalise his offensive in North Africa.¹⁵ Before embarking, the emperor had arranged a triumphal procession through Italy to take place immediately after the campaign, for which triumphal arches were erected;¹⁶ Vermeyen's drawings, etchings and paintings, the aforementioned series of *The Conquest of Tunis*

¹² Svatopluk Soucek: "Naval Aspects of the Ottoman Conquests of Rhodes, Cyprus and Crete," *Studia Islamica*, 98/99 (2004): 219-62 (228).

¹³ M. J. Rodriguez-Salgado: *The Changing Face of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 253, 255.

¹⁴ Abbas Hamdani: "Ottoman Response to the Discovery of America and the New Route to India," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), 323-30 (329).

¹⁵ Horn, *Vermeyen: Painter of Charles V I*, 15.

¹⁶ "The emperor's triumphal march in 1535-36 in Italy and his imperial entries into Palermo, Messina, Naples, Rome, and Florence, organized after similar entries of Roman Caesars, presented an unusually prolonged opportunity to propagate the Emperor's image as defender of the faith, 'Destroyer of the Turks', and 'Tamer of Africa'" in Gábor Ágoston, "Information, ideology, and limits of imperial policy: Ottoman grand strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75-103 (98). For a more concise account on Charles's 1535-6 triumphal march through Italy see Kenneth N. Setton: *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1984), 398-400 and Helge Gamrath, *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2007), 76-80.

tapestries,¹⁷ Martin Heemskerk's woodcut series called *The Chief Victories of the Emperor Charles the Fifth* and some narrative accounts were all commissioned to propagate an official interpretation of the emperor's victory in Tunis.

The existing imperial mythology in which the 1535 North African campaign was intended to be encased was an elaborate set of *topoi* exploiting the Mediterranean region's familiarity with – and demand for – antique and medieval residual imageries. The emperor's motto *Plus Ultra*, combined with the Pillars of Hercules in the imperial coat of arms, was meant to herald a ruler who not only associated himself with the mythological legacy bequeathed to him in his role as Roman emperor, but who sought to improve upon and surpass the geographical and intellectual limitations of that inheritance. According to Roman mythology, Hercules split the monolithic mountain separating the Atlantic Ocean from the Mediterranean Sea with the blow of a club, and thus created the Straits of Gibraltar that marked the border of the known world – hence the allusion to the phrase 'non plus ultra' or 'no further beyond'. There certainly *was* further beyond and not only in terms of trans-Atlantic expansionism but also in the long sought confrontation with the Ottomans in empire's backyard.

Such symbolism was thoroughly exploited in Heemskerk's 1555 *Chief Victories of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*. In this series, twelve heavily manipulated and propagandistic spectacles of the most memorable events of the emperor's reign were presented as parallels with the Twelve Labours of Hercules.¹⁸ Tunis took the place of the seventh victory in the series with the title: "The Emperor enters Tunis in triumph, victorious through his courage in the war; the African yields at once and is put to flight" (fig. 2).¹⁹ The picture shows the mounted Charles in full armour while his army slay the fleeing defenders of the castle of Tunis. Heemskerk's presentation of the event is distorted to the point of historical fantasy, but in this it is not alone: it is one of the exemplars of the repeated exploitation of the story of Tunis in the visual arts, festival architecture and narrative writing.

¹⁷ Charles ordered the tapestries by proxy: in the commission, Charles's sister, Mary of Hungary (the Widow of Mohács) acted as the emperor's agent.

¹⁸ 1 – Charles V and his vanquished enemies; 2 – Francis I taken prisoner at Pavia; 3 – Sultan Solyman repulsed; 4 – The death of Bourbon; 5 – Pope Clement VII besieged at St. Angelo; 6 – Civilisation of the New World; 7 – The taking of Tunis; 8 – Submission of the Duke of Clere; 9 – Charles V joined by the Count of Buren; 10 – The capture of the Elector of Saxony; 11 – Submission of the Protestant cities; 12 – Submission of the Landgrave of Hessen.

¹⁹ The title's Latin original quotes "TUNETAM CAESAR, BELLI VIRTUTE TRIVM-PHANS, \NGREDUVR VICTOR, CEDENS FVGIT ILLICET AFER".



Fig. 2: D.V. Coornhert after Martin van Heemskerck: *The Fall of Tunis* (1555-56); source: Bart Rosier, "The Victories of Charles V: A Series of Prints by Maarten van Heemskerck, 1555-56," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 1 (1990-91): 24-38 (31)

Charles's yearning for the image of a classical hero was deeply rooted in his upbringing, as the court of his native Burgundy saw the last serious flowering of the ideology of chivalry. Medieval ideals were combined with the revival and adaptation of antique models of behaviour by renaissance humanism, the two coalescing in the time's speculative idea that chivalry was of Roman origin.²⁰ Thus it is not surprising that, alongside his celebration of antique ideals, Charles should have ordered in 1540 a Castilian translation of perhaps one of the most influential allegorical romances of chivalry, *Le Chevalier délibéré*, written by Oliver de la Marche, chronicler to the court of Burgundy.²¹ In line with de la Marche's chivalric ideals, Charles was thoroughly aware of the political value of his honour and reputation, and cultivated them assiduously. However, the realities of empire allowed little space to endear and practise medieval virtues. On the eve of his campaign against the Rhineland, which had joined with France in attacking the Low Countries in 1543, Charles wrote, somewhat confessantly, to Philip, his son:

I undertake this journey against my will, for the sake of honour and reputation, for if our vassals will not serve us, one cannot sustain the burden of governing. [...] This voyage is full of danger for my honour and reputation [...] Believe that what I do has been forced upon me to preserve my honour, for without it my ability to govern and your inheritance will be diminished.²²

²⁰ Zachary Sayre Schiffman, *Humanism and the Renaissance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 39.

²¹ Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V*, 169.

²² James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 36-37.

It would be hard not to hear the Machiavellian undertone in these lines, which echo Chapter XVII of the Italian political philosopher's *Il Principe*. However, the pragmatic Machiavellian reasoning for waging war on his own subjects is contrasted with a hesitant thought that while trying to save his honour, the means of doing it may in fact cost him what he was fighting for. This ambivalence between pragmatism and chivalric disquietude over a fragile reputation played a significant part in the fabricated imageries created around the 1535 Tunis war in imperial propaganda, and in the reasons which led to Charles V's decision to finally take personal command of his army and launch an offensive against Tunis.

In respect of Charles V's honour and reputation, expectations were high for the 'Protector of Christendom' to destroy the Ottomans or at least repulse the Ottoman advance claiming Christian lands and souls. Paulus Jovius's (Giovio) 1531 *Commentario de le cose de Turchi*, which appeared in English translation in 1546 under the title *Shorte treatise vpon the Turkes Chronicles*, gives a detailed history of the Ottoman sultans. (The importance of the text is indicated by the fact that Henry VIII was presented with a copy by Henry Parker, Lord Morley, diplomat and translator, and an admirer of Italian humanist writing.²³ Later, Diego de Haedo, the writer of the rightly influential *Topographia e historia general de Argel*, heavily relied on it for his Ottoman references.) Jovius had dedicated his 1531 text to Charles V, and he marked out the emperor for the task of reviving imperial fortunes:

[...] [M]any men thynke that God wyll nowe bring all the world agayne into one monarchye, & make one gouerner of the whole that hereby, it may please hym to make your maiestie [Charles], by one conquest & victory, as wel in dede as in name, most myghtest, noble, and redoubted Cesar.²⁴

And clearly, Charles did not miss the opportunity to exploit this claim: At the pinnacle of the emperor's triumphal progress after his victory in Tunis, on St. Peter's Square in Rome, after having passed through the Porta S. Sebastiano decorated for the occasion with paintings depicting Romulus, Scipio Africanus the Younger and Elder at the Punic wars in Carthage, having continued to the Colosseum, and ridden along a newly constructed avenue through the Forum, parading through two triumphal arches, one of which dedicated to "Charles V, Augustus", he was greeted with yet another newly built triumphal arch, on which the dedication ran: "To Charles V, the promoter of Respublica Christiana".²⁵

²³ Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 46-47.

²⁴ Paolo Giovio, *A Shorte treatise vpon the Turkes Chronicles, compyled by Paulus Jovius byshop of Nucerne, and dedicated to Charles the. v. Emperor. Drawen oute of the Italyen tong in to Latyne, by Franciscus Niger Bassianates. And translated out of Latyne into englysh by Peter Ashton...* (London, 1546), fol. 118v.

²⁵ Helge Gamrath, *Farnese*, 77-78.

The 1546 English translation of the *Short treatise* starts with an epistle addressed to all Christians, in which the anonymous poet draws parallels between Hannibal and Rome, and Sultan Süleyman and Christendom. The poet hopes for a “Christien Camillus, / Or Scipio Africanus” to defeat “this bloodye Turkysh Annibal”.²⁶ The English translator’s addition of these²⁷ references to Scipio Africanus and the Carthaginian Hannibal was clearly not a coincidence. Given Charles V’s victory in Tunis, the poem must postdate 1535. The author is likely to have simply aspired to create the impression of a prophetic poem, in which case he assisted Charles V retrospectively to meet Jovius’s rather audacious directive. The Italian historian’s insistence that Charles should be Caesar not only in name but “in dede” highlighted the sense in which, despite having been elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 and inaugurated in 1530 as Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V had not yet in effect earned his title. Charles’s propaganda machine sought to present Süleyman’s 1529 unsuccessful siege of Vienna as the emperor’s personal victory over the Ottoman sultan, which later took its place as the third victory among Charles’s *Chief Victories*. However, contrary to imperial propaganda whereby “[The] Caesar, free[ing] Vienna from a cruel siege, defeat[ed] the fiercely raging Turk in Pannonia” (fig. 3),²⁸ Charles V did not take part in the defence of Vienna. In fact, his Italian campaigns prevented him from offering his brother Ferdinand I, Archduke of Austria any substantial assistance. Consequently, Jovius’s words were not just a directive but also a warning that the imperial propaganda was insufficiently convincing, especially when it so obviously denied the facts.

In 1532, writing from Regensburg, Charles outlined for his wife Isabel a scenario that would delay his return to Spain:

In view of my obligation to defend the faith and the Christian religion, and finding myself here [in Germany], I have decided that if the Turk [Süleyman] comes in person, which he can only do at the head of a great force, I will go forth with all the forces I can find to resist him.²⁹

However, Charles’s ill fortune led him to fall short of his promise. When in the same year he was ready to confront Süleyman’s army on its second campaign aiming for Vienna at Kőszeg (Güns), the emperor took command of his war flotilla and headed for Hungary, only to find that the Sultan’s army had already withdrawn.³⁰ In 1535, then, when the Hayreddin had occupied Tunis, the time had come for Charles to restore his tarnished ‘honour and reputation’ and at last lead a successful campaign against the ‘Turks’.

²⁶ Giovio, *A Shorte treatise*, fol. 2v.

²⁷ The poem is an addition to the original Jovius text.

²⁸ The title’s Latin original in Heemskerck’s work quotes “PANNONIA TVRCAM, CAESAR, CRUDELE FVRENTEM PROFLIGAT, SOLVENS DVRA OBSIDIONE VIENNAM.”

²⁹ Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 36-37.

³⁰ Halil Inalci, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), 36.



Fig. 3: D.V. Coornhert after Martin van Heemskerck: *The Relief of Vienna* (1555-56); source: Bart Rosier, "The Victories of Charles V: A Series of Prints by Maarten van Heemskerck, 1555-56," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 1 (1990-91), 24-38 (29)

The propagandization of Charles V's war against Tunis, similarly to that of the emperor's 1529 'victory' at Vienna, manipulated the facts about the campaign to a point where fabricated imagery lost touch with history. In consequence, in contemporary narrative accounts throughout Europe, even the simplest matter of whom Charles fought against at Tunis became an arbitrary issue. Nevertheless, the varying interpretations of the identity of Charles's enemy at Tunis were made possible by the ambivalent position of Tunis with the Ottoman Empire. As will be discussed later, for Charles's contemporaries Tunis's association with the Ottoman Empire, the Barbary pirates or the North African Arabs was a matter of interpretation: Tunis's position, after Hayreddin's occupation, in the context of Habsburg-Ottoman inter-imperial struggles was hard if not impossible to identify. In his *Annals of the Emperor Charles V*, completed in a diarial manner in or about 1566, the Spanish historian and bibliographer of the emperor, Lopez de Gómara gives a disappointingly short record of the Tunis war:

The Year 1535: The war against the Turks waged by the Emperor. [...]

The Pope treats with all the Princes of Christendom against the Turk, but does not accomplish anything with King Francis, because the latter demands Naples and Milan.³¹

Gómara's entry makes an important remark: In 1535 the emperor waged war on the 'Turks', a message that confirmed Charles in his role as the 'Protector of Christendom'. Also, he fought in alliance with the Pope, without the assistance

³¹ *Annals of the Emperor Charles V* by Francisco López de Gómara, ed. Roger Bigelow Merriman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), 99-100.

of the King of France, who did not join any kind of anti-Ottoman alliance not only because Francis I had an ongoing debate with Charles over the Italian duchies, but because he was in the process of arranging a treaty with the Sultan. Francis I of Valois, who had lost the race for the imperial throne to Charles, and thus found his country encircled by Habsburg dominions, had no other choice in securing his borders than to resort to the formation of an anti-Habsburg alliance on the eastern front. France's diplomatic negotiations eventually resulted in a Franco-Hungarian (1528) and a Franco-Ottoman alliance,³² which manifested in the corresponding *ahdname* or 'capitulation' signed in 1536.³³ Gómara's entry for the year 1535 a few lines later speaks of Francis's declaration of being in negotiations with the Porte. Upon being informed about Charles's war preparations in April, Francis dispatched his envoy to Süleyman to negotiate for an agreement.³⁴

King Francis addresses a letter to all the Germans, maliciously throwing the blame for the Lutheran heresies and the Turkish wars on the Emperor, and on his [Charles's] brother, a King of the Romans, and saying that he (Francis) was arranging a universal peace for all Christendom with the Turk.³⁵

Gómara's remark that Francis was *maliciously* throwing blames on Charles for the 'Turkish wars' is a rather discordant assertion in the light of the Tunis campaign, which *was* initiated by the emperor, and as Gómara has claimed earlier, was aimed at the 'Turks'. Gómara thus allows for no alternative interpretation but one which identifies Charles as an emperor in arms against the Ottomans—a 'reading' that would eventually erase the North African corsairs from the unfolding imperial narrative.

It goes without saying that Gómara was a faithful servant of Charles's court. He joined the failed 1541 imperial expedition to Algiers, during which campaign Gómara met Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, whose chaplain, apologist and friend he later became, and in whose service he worked until Cortés's death.³⁶ It follows that Gómara's apologetic entry for 1535, however abbreviated on the Tunis war, will have reflected Charles's wish to make up for his failures at attacking the Ottoman Empire to be the '*Christianissimo*' king and apt heir of his Roman forebears.

In contrast, Prudencio de Sandoval, a biographer of Charles and his son, Philip II, almost seven decades after Tunis, in his 1606 *History of Charles Vth*,

³² The Franco-Hungarian alliance in fact related only to the Sublime Porte's tributary John Zápolya's Eastern Hungary and Transylvania: De Lamar Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 16 (1985): 451-70 (452-53).

³³ On the treaty see: William E. Watson, *Tricolor and Crescent – France and the Islamic World* (Oxford: Greenwood, 2003), 10-11.

³⁴ Jensen, "The Ottoman Turks," 454.

³⁵ Merriman, *Annals of the Emperor Charles V*, 101.

³⁶ Joseph Morgan, *Complete History of Algiers*, 2 vols. (London: J. Bettenham, 1728), I, 277.

Emperor and King of Spain, is not so convinced about the target of Charles's offensive. Sandoval, who inevitably reflects his time's confusion about Tunis's position in the context of inter-imperial contestation, points out that the Emperor was not in fact fighting the Ottoman Empire, but the new 'King' of Tunis, in the person of Barbarossa (Hayreddin), without denying Tunis's association with the Ottoman Empire:

Muley Hazzan perceiving all was lost, narrowly made his escape with his Horse. The next day the Inhabitants thus forsaken and weakened submitted, and swore fidelity to Solyman, and Barbarussa as his Bassa. Thus the Pyrate made himself King of Tunez, and having settled the Government of that City, sent out his under Officers, who reduced all the Country about [...]³⁷

Further, the aforementioned Spanish historian, Diego de Haedo, who drew his information from Charles's admirer Jovius's *Historiarum sui temporis* for his writing in 1550-52, claims that in 1534 Hayreddin paid Süleyman a visit in Istanbul not to be appointed commander of the Ottoman fleet, but to solicit assistance to enable him to leave Algiers, conquest the whole of western North Africa and annex it to the Ottoman Empire.³⁸ Gómara, Haedo and Jovius unanimously stress that by the time Charles launched his campaign, Tunis had been added to the Ottoman Empire, and consequently the offensive did venture into Ottoman territory. A league of other sources, however, claims that in fact Charles, in his Tunis campaign, did not wage war on the Ottomans. In his 1603 *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* Richard Knolles describes Charles's *casus belli* as follows:

To repress this his [Hayreddin's] barbarous insolencie, and to worke the safetie of the frontiers of the Christian kingdomes (much subject to the rapines of the Turkish pyrats) Charles the emperour resolved in person himselfe with a puissant armie to passe ouer into AFFRICKE, whilst Solyman was yet busied in the Persian wars, and by force of armes to dispossesse the pyrat of his new gotten kingdome in TVNES.³⁹

In other words, the emperor, to protect the safety of his shores against Hayreddin, ruler of Tunis, waged war on the corsair while Süleyman was occupied in Persia and, consequently, could not effectively support the latter. Knolles relied heavily on Jean-Jacques Boissard's *Vitae et Icones Sultanorum Turcicorum...* (1597) and Jovius's *Commentario* – two works representing very different views. While Jovius was Charles's apologist, his *Commentario* was written four years prior to Tunis and so could not be the source for this episode.

³⁷ D.F. Prudencio de Sandoval: *The History of Charles the Vth Emperor and King of Spain, the Great Hero of the House of Austria*, trans. John Stevens (London: Angel and Bible, 1703), 289.

³⁸ Morgan, *Complete History*, I, x.

³⁹ Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes from the first beginning of that Nation to the rising of the Othoman Familie ...* (London: A. Islip, 1603), 654.

Boissard, the French exiled Protestant, as claims Knolles, honoured this “so famous a man” Barbarossa, as one “with sterne, but liuely countenance”.⁴⁰ Although Knolles’s account is a witness to a balanced handling of sources that contradict each other, the over-all implication of Knolles’ account is that not only did Charles V not wage war on the Ottomans in 1535, but that in fact he chose the moment when he had the least chance of encountering them.

In sum then, Charles personally sought to save his ‘honour and reputation’, damaged by his failure to meet the Ottomans in battle and thus to earn his title as ‘Protector of Christendom’. At the same time, the Habsburg propaganda machine constituted by a loose network of imperial advisers, biographers, chroniclers and commissioned artists required a campaign susceptible to the generation of a powerful and all-encompassing imperial ideology. As Jovius’s *Commentario* suggested, Charles’ earlier attempts to augment his reputation had proved to be ineffectual. Thus the Tunis campaign, in its representation needed to be powerful enough to avoid further doubts. An important part of this representation was colouring the campaign as a war waged against the Ottomans, which was made possible by the general confusion about Tunis’s position in Habsburg-Ottoman contestation after it had lost its position as a no-man’s-land in its occupation by Hayreddin.

In spite of Habsburg propaganda, in his Tunis campaign Charles followed the line of least resistance. The pressure was high on him to meet the expectations set for the successor of Roman emperors and the Protector of Christendom, and Tunis was definitely the easiest target for a crusade, not only in terms of its relative proximity to Spain but also in its lack of protection from Istanbul. Further, the occupation of Tunis required fewer resources than an alternative campaign against the Ottoman army. It is impossible to tell whether it had been planned so pragmatically in advance, but the Christian army needed only to take the fort of La Goletta at the entrance of the Bay of Tunis, on the opposite shore of which lay Tunis itself. According to the Spanish chronicler Gonzalo de Illescas, upon the Christian army’s occupation of La Goletta, as confirmed by Knolles,⁴¹ the Christian slaves of Tunis revolted and took over the city. The campaign lasted for only 21 days.⁴²

While the Habsburgs were at pains to represent his campaign as one against the Ottoman Empire, at the other end of the Mediterranean, the Ottomans do not seem to have recognised that there was a war being carried out in Tunis at their expense. Muradi, in his *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa (The Holy Wars of Hayreddin Pasha)*, elucidates his patron Hayreddin’s understanding of the reasons for the Tunis war:

⁴⁰ Ibidem, 639.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 666.

⁴² Marteen van Heemskerck, *The Chief Victories of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*, ed. William Stirling-Maxwell (London and Edinburgh: the editor, 1870), 28.

[...] [T]he infidels came up with a new idea: ‘Instead of attacking the Turks, it is more feasible a decision for us to attack Tunis. This is because we have no greater enemy in the land of the Christian God than Barbarossa. [...]’⁴³

This glorification of Hayreddin as the West’s greatest threat was an exaggeration in favour of the *gazavatname*’s commissioner, but not overall groundless. Although the Ottoman Empire was often polemically identified as Christendom’s arch enemy, it had so far predominantly favoured territorial over naval conquests, and Charles had other issues which were simultaneously just as serious as Hayreddin’s proximity to Spain. Charles’s continuous conflicts with King Francis I over the Italian states (the 1521-25 Four Years’ War, the 1526-30 war against the League of Cognac, and the escalating conflict over the Duchy of Milan, which led to the 1536-38 wars) were momentarily more engaging than Hayreddin’s presence in Tunis. So was the Ottoman presence on the eastern frontier, especially in Hungary, where the country’s division into Habsburg, Ottoman and Hungarian rule and the Habsburg-Hungarian dispute over the Hungarian crown had allowed the Ottomans free passage to Vienna in 1529 and 1532. However, after the appointment of Hayreddin as the Ottoman Empire’s *kapudan-ı derya*, in the person of Hayreddin the Porte was represented in the western Mediterranean, which now meant serious threat to Charles’s dominions in southwestern Europe.

After the Battle of Güns in late 1532, the Sultan’s army retreated to Belgrade and the winter prevented them from launching another attack on Vienna. The consequent 1533 truce between Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and Süleyman temporarily secured peace on the eastern front. Thus the Imperial navy’s attack on Coron in the Morea, which lay in dangerous proximity to the Ottoman heartland, was a strategic counter strike for 1529 and 1532. At this stage Charles had the upper hand over Süleyman, of which he was fully aware: “[...] [A]t this moment there was nothing more to be done against the Turk [...]”.⁴⁴ The territorial integrity of the Holy Roman Empire was temporarily safe from further Ottoman expansion, even though the truce disallowed full Habsburg control over Hungary and prolonged the Ottoman presence in the empire’s backyard. However, while the situation seemed to stabilize on land, the growing military potential of the Ottomans by sea allowed for much less tranquillity. Rodrigo Niño, Charles’s ambassador in Venice, when trying to persuade the Doge to ally with the Emperor against the Ottomans, received the answer that it was important not to provoke the Ottomans just then, “because if they [the Ottomans] were to send their armada, it would be in order to destroy

⁴³ Mustafa Yıldız, *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa* (Aachen: Shaker, 1993), 208.

⁴⁴ *The Autobiography of the Emperor Charles V*, trans. Leonard Francis Simpson (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1862), 23.

the world”.⁴⁵ Although Charles was momentarily left with a short breathing space, European fear of the prospect of an Ottoman campaign for world domination, owing partly to well-executed Ottoman propaganda, continued unchecked: The 1532 Ottoman offensive against Vienna had been regarded as the beginning of a simultaneous territorial and naval offensive on Christendom. The Papal State believed that the Ottoman advance in Hungary would be accompanied by a synchronized naval offensive against Italy and Rome.⁴⁶ Francis I, at the same time, warned the Venetian ambassador at his court that “the Turk will make some naval expedition [...] going perhaps as far as Rome, for Sultan Süleyman always says ‘to Rome, to Rome!’ and detests the emperor and his title of Caesar”.⁴⁷ The Ottoman navy’s military capacity was indisputable but lacking behind Spain’s naval force. Furthermore, the Ottoman navy also lacked an admiral (*kapudan-i derya*) whose talent could match the armada’s capacity. When the Ottoman navy’s admiral at Coron, Kemankeş Ahmed, was replaced by Hayreddin, and thus Ottoman maritime infrastructure and apt leadership were combined, the corsair suddenly became one of the Habsburgs’ pressing concerns.

The new admiral lived up to the West’s fears. The Hungarian Transylvanian poet András Valkai’s *Cronica avagy, Szép historiás Enec...* (*Chronicle or a Fine Historical Song...*), dating from 1573, tells the story of Hayreddin Barbarossa with one of the chronicles dedicated to the 1535 Tunis war. Valkai in his first chronicle claims that in his first mission as Admiral, Barbarossa first headed for Italy, where he started looting and besieged Tarracina.

The Romans were in fear upon hearing the news; The people of the Italian states were frightened because they had no armies prepared, but neither did Saint Clement, who had just been elected on Tuesday.

[...]

If Barbarossa had gone there, Rome would have been seized by him; The gates of Italy would have opened before him; But the plan of the Pagans was different.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 18.

⁴⁶ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di M. Sanuto*, ed. R. Fulin et. al., 58 vols. (Venice, 1879-1903) LIII, 134.

⁴⁷ *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, ed. Rawdon Brown, 38 vols (London, 1873), V, 619-20.

⁴⁸ András Valkai, *Cronica avagy, Szép historiás Enec, Miképpen Hariadenus, Tengeri toluay, Barbarossa, és Bassáua löt, Es miképpen ez által Suliman Czábar à Tengert birta, és meg haborította à Tengert, soc földeket, várakat, és városokat, Es meg vötte Tunetum Királyi Birodalmat, Midön az országbeliec egyenetlenségéből veßédnének egymással* (Kolozsvár, 1573), p. Ciii. 2.

And so it was. Hayreddin, after a brief attack on Italy headed for Tunis. While the *Gazavat-i Hayreddin* reports that Barbarossa conquered Tunis almost absent-mindedly,⁴⁹ Sandoval claims that his first mission as *kapudan-i derya* was “to invade Italy, and particularly to conquer Genoa for the King of France, and then to reduce Tunez.” Although Sandoval’s reference to the Franco-Ottoman negotiations to conquer Genoa was correct,⁵⁰ the implication of an overwhelming invasion, in light of the events, seems to have been an exaggeration: Any rumour in Christendom suggesting an overwhelming Ottoman invasion in 1534-35 was certainly false due to the Ottoman army being occupied in Süleyman’s Persian campaign. One of Charles’s letters to Lope de Soria, the Emperor’s ambassador in Venice, explains that Hayreddin’s actions at sea, using Tunis as a base, were the *casus belli*: “I came to this empire with the intention to replace Barbarossa and his corsairs for the harms they have done on Our kingdoms and on Christendom, most of which were carried out on the galleys and galleons and fustas which were kept in La Goleta.”⁵¹ Valkai’s relevant song in his *Chronicle or Fine Historical Song...*, begins with an exaggerated description of the war’s precursors:

I shall hereby speak of the fifth Roman Caesar, Charles, his fine army,
 their launch against Barbarossa and the liberation of the country of Tunis,
 I shall speak of the battles at Culeta, its conquest and the attacks launched
 there and also speak of the clash between the Christian and the Turkish
 armies and the ashamed army of Süleyman,
 I shall speak of the conquest of the vast country of Tunis, the shame of
 Barbarossa, the King of Tunis Muleasses, and Charles’s leniency toward
 him [...] ⁵²

Süleyman’s army clearly was not ashamed in Tunis as it was nowhere near the western Mediterranean. Tunis was not “liberated” and neither was it a “vast country”. However, for obvious reasons, Valkai’s account was meant to be biased by default: As the *Cronica*’s colophon proves, Valkai was a Hungarian in

⁴⁹ “He left Temaşalık with 40 ships, and with the aim of ruining your countries headed for the Gulf of Gibraltar. But at Sardinia he got into a rainstorm which led him toward Bizerta and so he took Bizerta. From there he came to Tunis. He conquered Tunis with a single strike of hand [...]” in Yıldız, *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*, 208.

⁵⁰ Jensen, “The Ottoman Turks,” 455.

⁵¹ “[...] fué mi venida a esta empresa con intención de deshazer a Barbarossa y a los corsarios que con él estauan, por los danos que hauían hecho y hizieron en nuestros Reynos y en la Christiandad y que por la mayor parte esto se hauia conseguido por las galeras y galeotas y fustas que se les tomaron en La Goleta.” in *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, ed. Manuel Fernández Álvarez, 4 vols. (Salamanca, 1973), I (1516-1539), 438.

⁵² “Az ötted Romai Károlyly Czaßárrol, Leßé beßédem most ö Bép hadárol, Barbarossa ellén indulassárol, Tunnis orßágnac Babadulasárol. / Culeta allat löt nagy hartzokrol, Meg vételéröl, ot löt ostromokról, Kereßtyén s’ Töröc had meg viuasárol, Soliman hada Bégyen vallasárol. / Nagy Tunetum orßág meg vételéröl, Töröc Barbarossánac Bégyenéröl, Tunnis Királyrol, az Muleassesröl, Es ehöz Karoly kegyelmesegeröl.” in Valkai, *Cronica avagy*, p. E iii. 2.

Transylvania, which, since the reign of János Zápolya had been a tributary of the Ottoman Empire, and an admirer of the pro-Caroline Jovius: “He who wrote these down in verse, read Jovius for a pastime; He who wants to read about them in details should read his [Jovius’s] thirty and fourth book.” Valkai here refers to Jovius’s *Historiarum sui temporis*, which the Italian master wrote contemporaneously with the happenings of his lifetime. Jovius was particularly interested in the preparations of the Tunis campaign while his admiration for the crusader-emperor was at its height. Following the emperor’s military success in North Africa and his subsequent triumphal procession through Italy, Jovius at the end of 1535 exclaims: “His Majesty is even more gallant than one can imagine.”⁵³ And Jovius’s admiration and participation in the spreading of imperial propaganda did not go unnoticed at the imperial court. The historian was permitted to meet Charles in person at the end of 1535, on which occasion Jovius reports:

His Majesty recounted, and partly at my interrogation, many fine things about Goletta that were relevant to the story, and I have persuaded myself that the history will please him, which I have already shown to Granvelle [Nicolas Perrenot de Gravelle, imperial councillor] and other savants [...]⁵⁴

The Italian historian, it follows, not only spread a story favourable for the emperor, but also relied on the emperor’s own interpretation of his own deeds in the writing of his contemporary history. Nevertheless, Jovius’s glorification of Charles and his military victory was not without self-interest. After his meeting with the Emperor, Jovius in his false modesty writes: “I expect for myself a lame mule [a gift], but even without it I wish to be his servitor in my heart and with a pen in my hand, gratis.”⁵⁵ And however much of Charles’s servitor Jovius was, he was not blinded by the imperial propaganda (that is Charles’s glorious clash with the Ottoman Empire at Tunis) he himself was transmitting. Just as in his *Commentario de le cose de Turchi*, at the end of the *Historiarum* he passes heavy criticism on Charles, and this time it seems to connote total disillusionment. Jovius, only four years after his excitement about Tunis, allows himself to claim that Charles’s public utterances in favour of concord, consensus, and crusade were merely veils for a “secret plan to increase his greatness”.⁵⁶

Valkai, similarly to pro-imperial authors, claims that Charles beat the ‘Turks’ and ‘shamed’ Süleyman’s army at Tunis. However, Tunis was not part of the Ottoman Empire in 1535 and only became attached to it in 1574, when it

⁵³ T.C. Price Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton and Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1995), 144.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 143.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 144.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 172.

was declared as a *hukûmet* or vassal state.⁵⁷ Both Knolles and Muradi were aware of the fact that Charles's Tunis campaign was directed against Hayreddin, and not the Ottoman Empire *per se*: "The infidels' preparation of a navy may be intended toward Algiers or this land [Tunis], but in any case, they are coming for me [Hayreddin]."⁵⁸ Algiers, however, which had been under the rule of the Barbarossa brothers and later in 1517 offered to Sultan Selim I, was announced as a *sanjak* of the Ottoman Empire under the governorship of Hayreddin. Algiers was the Ottomans' weapon in their bid for control of the western Mediterranean, from where, only to mention the two most notable Ottoman offensives, Otranto (1537) and Milan (1543) were besieged. However, unlike Algiers, in the context of Habsburg-Ottoman contestation in the Mediterranean, Tunis's position in 1535 was the arbitrary one—territorial possession of a high-ranked Ottoman officer. But this Ottoman potentate was the current manifestation of Europe's fears that if the Ottomans could not reach Western Europe by land, they would by sea. Hayreddin, by filling the vacuum of power that Tunis represented prior to its occupation, violated the status of Tunis as a buffer zone between the two empires. But in fact it was this vacuum of power, which made Tunis desirable for Hayreddin as a base for piracy and so threatening for Charles in the first place.⁵⁹

In his account of the Tunis war, Muradi further stresses that Charles's campaign was not aimed at the Ottomans. The Emperor's supposed reply to Mulay Hasan's letter repeats that "our aim was to go to the land of the Turks, but as this misfortune [i.e. Hayreddin's overthrow of the King of Tunis] came to your head, in the spring you will see us in Tunis". In the *Gazavat-i Hayreddin* the Holy Roman emperor declares war on Tunis as a preventive measure against the attacks of Hayreddin on Charles's Mediterranean possessions. At the same time, however, Muradi puts words into Charles's mouth that allude to a territorial claim: "If the hopes of the beg of Tunis come true and if he does not forget our kindness, we will get Tunis into our hands". In fact, Charles's military offensive in Tunis was not intended to establish new territories. The emperor did not plan on rebuilding this old and highly civilised part of North Africa as an outpost of an expanding Christendom. Instead, in August 1535 he reinstated the Hafsid ruler Mulay Hasan, rigidly segregated the Christian garrison at La Goletta from its Muslim environs, and left North Africa.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 106-7.

⁵⁸ "Bu karfirlerün tedarük üzere olub donanma hazırlamadan maksudı ya Cezayiredür yahud bu tarafadur, amma mutlak banadur." in Yıldız, *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*, 209.

⁵⁹ Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades 1274-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 308.

⁶⁰ Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 73.



Fig. 4: Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen (?), *Charles V as Santiago Matamoros* (Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA); source: Jan van Herwaarden, “The Emperor Charles V as Santiago Matamoros,” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture* 3 (2012), 83-106 (84)

Charles V's war against Tunis was an arbitrary issue in the context of religious oppositions too. Both western sources and Muradi's account were at pains tendentiously to interpret Charles's alliance with the Muslim ruler of Tunis against the also Muslim Hayreddin, for improved ideological effect. By lending his war a fabricated context, Charles's propaganda contradicted historical facts which consequently needed to be obscured behind further propagandistic interpretations. The emperor, drawing on his Spanish nobles' retrograde *reconquistador* fantasies, moulded the image of St. James the Minor into his complex imperial-mythological character. St. James or Santiago, the patron saint of Spain since the years of the *reconquista*, bore the cognomen *Matamoros* or Moor slayer. The painting *Charles V as Saint James of Compostela 'Matamoro'* (fig. 4), credited by some art historians to Vermeyen,⁶¹

⁶¹ In the Worcester Museum (Massachusetts). For a concise account on the painting's origin, its supposed painters and iconography see: J. van Herwaarden and Wendie Shaffer, *Between Saint James and Erasmus: Studies in Late-Medieval Religious Life: Devotions and Pilgrimages in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 493-500.

shows the mounted Charles, whose white steed is trampling on a Muslim figure. The painting was commissioned by Charles to commemorate his repulse of the Muslims in North Africa.⁶² Charles's association with Santiago at Tunis is further confirmed by the fact that the *Charles V as Saint James* has been suggested to be a copy of the banner of Santiago carried during the expedition,⁶³ although any resemblance between painting and banner would be inevitable in light of the traditional representation of the *Matamoros*, by which any warrior seated on a white horse craning over a prostrate Muslim will be identified as Santiago. The 'Moor' in the picture looks conspicuously familiar from one of Vermeyen's engravings, *King Mulay Hasan and His Retinue at a Repast in Tunis* (ca. 1535) (fig. 5).



Fig. 5: Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, *King Mulay Hasan and His Retinue at a Repast in Tunis* (c. 1535) (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris); source: <http://www.wga.hu/support/viewer/z.html>

Although it is not clear how Mulay Hasan's figure was relocated into the propaganda in spite of his collaboration with Charles in his Tunis campaign, it is noticeable that even Heemskerck's woodcut title "[T]he African yields at once and is put to flight" calls for a complex interpretation which assumes that while Charles was fighting against the 'Turks' in alliance with Mulay Hasan, the two Muslim figures – ally and enemy – were consciously (or unconsciously) merged together or confused. Also, while the Habsburgs were at pains to represent the Tunis campaign as a war waged on the Ottoman Empire, there seems to have

⁶² Yona Pinson: 'Imperial Ideology in the Triumphal Entry into Lille of Charles V and the Crown Prince (1549)' *Assaph: Studies in Art History* 6, (2001): 205-32 (212).

⁶³ Herwaarden and Shaffer, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*, 496.

been another, simultaneous agenda at work confirming the Spaniards' belief that the campaign was the continuation of the *reconquista*,⁶⁴ which is traditionally associated with anti-Arab sentiments. However, the ideological differences were huge, and thus the fifteenth-century *reconquistador* mindset and the anti-Ottoman sentiments of the sixteen-century were incompatible even in Charles's time, except for their anti-Muslim connotations. While Charles's Tunis campaign was represented as a crusade, and thus called for anti-Ottoman associations (the new Pope, Paul III permitted the crusade to be preached for Charles's campaign, granted crusade taxes for it, and supplied six galleys, in the tradition of fourteen-century popes),⁶⁵ there seem to have been no attempt to resolve its incompatibility with the war's parallel 'reading' as a continuation of the *Matamoros* tradition. Valkai suggests the undeniable commonplace that the worst time of the year to launch an attack on North Africa was July, when the heavy armour of the imperial forces would be most unsuitable to the scorching African heat. However, there was a very good reason for Charles to attack Tunis in the heat of the African summer: 1535 was the year of Santiago, when St. James' Day fell on a Sunday. The campaign was thus carried out in such a way that Charles could celebrate the day of Santiago in Tunis: "21 julio: Toma de Túnez. [...] S.M. entró en Túnez, Domingo 25 julio: Día de Santiago S.M. oyó misa en un pequeno convento de Franciscanos, sito en los arrabales de Túnez."⁶⁶ That is, four days after his victory, Charles attended a mass in the *Matamoro*'s memory in a Franciscan convent in Tunis. Although celebrating St. James' Day in the newly conquered Tunis was perhaps the most powerful element of this line of Habsburg propaganda, Charles exploited the associable imagery to its fullest: He wore armour decorated with the image of Santiago,⁶⁷ fought under the banner of St. James, and his triumphal processions through Italy after the war were arranged to compare the emperor to antique Roman Caesars and warriors. Charles even had armour made for the occasion of his triumphal entry in Naples with the image of Scipio Africanus on it and the inscription 'CARTHAGINE'.⁶⁸

However, the apparent semantic contradictions in the 'staging' of the war seem to have had little effect on the success of the campaign, and the British Library's King's MS 165 bears witness to this. Containing Gómar's *Annals* in the Spanish, the manuscript is bound together with a text from the pen of an anonymous author, entitled *Commentarios de un Cauallo y Soldado biejo*... The

⁶⁴ Sean T. Perrone: *Spanish Opposition to Charles V's Foreign Policy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), p. 70.

⁶⁵ Norman Housley: *The Later Crusades 1274-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 132.

⁶⁶ *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, ed. Mauén Fernández Álvarez, vol. I. (1516-1539) (Salamanca, 1973), 438.

⁶⁷ Braden K. Freider, *Chivalry & the Perfect Prince: Tournaments, Art, and Armor at the Spanish Habsburg Court* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 83.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 84-85.

manuscript sets out the goal in its title to narrate the “happenings of the year 1535”. The unidentified soldier-writer (*soldado biejo*), an eye-witness to the Tunis war, similarly to Muradi, points out that Hayreddin’s corsairs were pillaging Charles’s dominions (Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Calabria) and that

[...] the King of Tunis sent ambassadors to ask him [Charles V] a favour. His wish was to destroy Barbarossa and his people and armadas. Charles sent his letters to Muley Hacen, King of Tunis assuring him of his willingness to go to Africa hoping that God would reinstate him into his Kingdom and [earlier] status [...] ⁶⁹

Here, Charles’s ‘Old Soldier’ (anachronistically) claims that the reasons for the Tunis war, among which Mulay Hasan’s letter to the Emperor was only the last drop in the cup, were the attacks of Hayreddin on Charles’s dominion and King Francis I’s alliance with the Ottoman Empire, as a result of which Ottoman galleys were stationed in the French ports – causing a severe threat to the western Mediterranean. What follows is a collision of religious oppositions suggested by propaganda, and an unfitting political pragmatism for the rest of the *Comentarios*. After an adventurous but failed mission of embassy from Charles to Mulay Hasan,

The Viceroy [of Sicily] [...] sent another ambassador on the same mission of embassy. This ambassador went to Constantina, where the King Muley Hacen was staying. When King Muley Hacen saw the Emperor’s ambassador, he was happy and he offered his submission to the Emperor voluntarily. This ambassador went to Spain quickly to give the Emperor the answer, who received it with delight. The Emperor, having received the answer of Muley Hacen, hastily gave out an order that all should be collected that he would need for his campaign in Africa. ⁷⁰

The two sovereigns’ amicable correspondence and their joining forces was a reflection of mutual *realpolitik*, which one would expect to be hardly reconcilable with the tide of anti-Arab ideology showcased on the battleground. Yet, the soldier-writer does not give any sign of being affected by the obvious contradictions between ideology and reality. He describes the mass lead by the Papal prelate, whereby

This venerable priest was carrying in his hands a crucifix on a cross, on which there was a flag depicting the glorious Saint James. This delegate of the Pope gave us general benediction and absolution to all those who

⁶⁹ BL King’s MS 165, fol. 122v.

⁷⁰ “El Visorey [...] asi manda otro Embaxador un la misma embaxada. El qual fue a Constantina donde el Rey Muley Hacen estauía . Viendo el Rey Muley Hacen la embaxada del Emperador fue muy contento y con entera voluntad sometiendo a la voluntad del Emperador. El qual Embaxador tornó en breúe tiempo a España a dar sú respúesta al emperador, el qual con los soleado gozo lo reciuió y viendo la respuesta del Rey Múley Hacen con gran breuedad manda adreacar las cosas que conúenian a sú passada en Africa.” In *ibidem*, fol. 125r.

would die in this sacred duty; he also filled us up with the Catholic [sic] Holy Spirit...⁷¹

And despite all the crusader and *reconquistador* symbolism deployed, the ‘Old Soldier’ seems content with fighting in alliance with Mulay Hasan’s soldiers, which probably shows that in fact reality and ideology did not necessarily need harmonizing for the latter to work to its fullest potential.

Conclusively, Charles’s campaign at its very essence was the re-enactment of antique and medieval events, allegories and personalities, and the time’s legitimate intellectual, political and military concerns were deployed in the propagandistic representation of the enterprise. Charles’s Spanish subjects could see the continuation of the *reconquista* in the Tunis campaign, even if the deployment of *Matamoros* symbolism clashed with the reality of alliances and co-operation with the local Muslims on the battlefield. Charles’s imperial subjects elsewhere on the continent, who wanted to see parallels of Charles with the Roman emperors, could see the campaign as befitting an antique hero. And the whole style of the war and subsequent triumph fulfilled the patterns of medieval chivalry and the crusade, much in line with Charles’s upbringing and self-image. Charles’s ability to attend to all three of these requirements inevitably speaks of a careful planning and execution of the communication of the Tunis war, and perhaps more importantly, of the fact that in the context of Habsburg-Ottoman imperial contestation, by the 1530s a war’s propaganda potential was just as important as winning a war on site even if it required representations that contradicted the facts to the point of historical fantasy.

⁷¹ “Este R.do Padre lleuaua en sus manos un Crucifixo en una Cruz en la qual lleúaua un estandarte do iua figurado el glorio Sant Iago. Este Delegado del Papa nos dió una general bendicion y absolucion a todos aquellos aquellos que múriessen en aquella santa demanda y aumento de la S.ta Fee Catholica.” In *ibidem*, fol. 138 r.

Anschriften der Autoren

Michaela Antonín Malaníková, Department of History, Philosophical Faculty,
Palacký University Olomouc, Na Hradě 5, 771 80 Olomouc, Czech Republic
(michaela.malanikova@upol.cz)

Andrea Kiss, Technische Universität Wien, Institut für Wasserbau und
Ingenieurhydrologie, Karlsplatz 13, 1040 Wien, Austria
(kiss@hydro.tuwien.ac.at)

Tamás Kiss, Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University,
Nádor utca 9, 1051 Budapest, Hungary
(tamas.mail@gmail.com)

MEDIUM AEVUM
QUOTIDIANUM

68

KREMS 2014

HERAUSGEGEBEN
VON GERHARD JARITZ

GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER KULTURABTEILUNG
DES AMTES DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

niederösterreich kultur

Titelgraphik: Stephan J. Tramèr

ISSN 1029-0737

Herausgeber: Medium Aevum Quotidianum. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Körnermarkt 13, 3500 Krems, Österreich. Für den Inhalt verantwortlich zeichnen die Autoren, ohne deren ausdrückliche Zustimmung jeglicher Nachdruck, auch in Auszügen, nicht gestattet ist. – Druck: Grafisches Zentrum an der Technischen Universität Wien, Wiedner Hauptstraße 8-10, 1040 Wien, Österreich.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Vorwort	4
Andrea Kiss, Weather and Weather-Related Natural Hazards in Medieval Hungary II: Documentary Evidence on the 13 th Century ..	5
Michaela Antonín Malaníková, “Mein tachter sol man zu pett und zu tisch aufseczen als eines reichen mannes tachter”: Childhood and Adolescence in Moravian Towns in the Late Middle Ages from the Perspective of Gender	47
Tamás Kiss, “Instead of attacking the Turks...”: The 1535 War of Tunis in Habsburg Imperial Propaganda	66
Anschriften der Autoren	89

Vorwort

Medium Aevum Quotidianum 68 widmet sich neuen Analyseergebnissen aus der ungarischen und tschechischen historischen Forschung, die wichtige Bereiche des mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Alltags betreffen. Die Fortsetzung der Studie zu den Wetterverhältnissen im mittelalterlichen Ungarn durch Andrea Kiss behandelt im vorliegenden Heft nun den Zeitraum des 13. Jahrhunderts.¹ Eine weitere Fortsetzung zum 14. Jahrhundert ist für Heft 70 (2015) geplant.

Michaela Antonín Malaníková analysiert spätmittelalterliche Testamente aus der südmährischen Stadt Znojmo in Bezug auf ihre Aussagen zu Kindheit und Jugend aus genderspezifischer Perspektive. Sie präsentiert dabei Ergebnisse, die auch für die internationale Forschung zu letztwilligen Verfügungen und ihrem Aussagegehalt von besonderer Relevanz erscheinen.

Tamás Kiss behandelt ein Phänomen, das natürlich starke politikgeschichtliche Bezüge aufweist, jedoch auch besonders alltagsbeeinflussend wirken konnte: die Kriegspropaganda, hier bezogen auf den Tuniskrieg Kaiser Karls V. von 1535. Er kann dabei feststellen, dass das Propagandapotential des Krieges genauso wichtig war wie den Krieg letztendlich zu gewinnen.

Gerhard Jaritz

¹ Vgl. Andrea Kiss, Weather and Weather-Related Natural Hazards in Medieval Hungary I: Documentary Evidence on the 11th and 12th Century, *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 66 (2013): 5-37.