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POR SER HOMBRE PLATICO: FRANCESCO GASPARO AND THE 1569 SPANISH NEGOTIATION WITH THE OTTOMAN GOVERNOR OF ALGIERS*

Abstract
In the spring of 1568, Uluç Ali Pasha, a Christian convert to Islam born in the Spanish viceroyalty of Naples, became the new Ottoman governor of Algiers. Subsequently, Phillip II of Spain tried to establish a dialogue with him. To conquer the city without having to resort to a military expedition, the king of Spain sent Francesco Gasparo, a Corsican merchant, to Algiers. This article aims to shed light on the Spanish diplomatic practice used in the dialogue with the Ottoman Governors of Algiers during the sixteenth century. To do so, we have had to move away from the traditional focus on the study of agreements and opt for a more holistic approach of the diplomatic event. Diplomacy is no longer seen as a simple political relationship capable of establishing an agreement between two parties during a specific time, but as a permanent practice defined by a complex structure. Thus, the article focuses on the agents and practices used during the Spanish negotiation with Uluç Ali to assess the tenets underpinning this type of diplomatic interaction. Gasparo's mission enables us to reflect on the structure of Spanish diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean. The Corsican merchant's experience in Algiers reveals the presence of a specific dialogic pattern between the Iberian and Maghreb coasts and how it was consolidated during the

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sixteenth century. This article endeavours thus to analyse the characteristic elements and principles of what seems to be a specific diplomatic model.

Keywords: Cross-cultural diplomacy, Ottoman Empire, Algiers, Spanish Monarchy, Phillip II, gift-giving, conversion, memory, experience, familiarity

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1568, Uluç Ali Pasha, a Christian convert to Islam born in the Spanish viceroyalty of Naples, became the new Ottoman governor of Algiers.[1] Subsequently, Phillip II of Spain tried to establish a dialogue with him. To conquer the city without having to resort to a military expedition, the king of Spain sent Francesco Gasparo, a Corsican merchant, to Algiers. The purpose of this informal embassy was to gift Uluç Ali with a title of nobility, lands in southern Italy, and an annual income for him and his trusted men. In exchange, the Ottoman governor would have had to betray the Sublime Porte, hand the city over to the Spanish troops, and reconvert to Catholicism.[2] The conclusion of this audacious attempt would have changed the whole political balance of the Mediterranean arena. By taking possession of Algiers, Philip II would have achieved several strategic aims: first, he would have weakened the Ottoman naval force, which mainly relied on the support of the Algerian fleet; second, he would have eliminated the problem of the Algerian corsair raids against the Iberian and Italian coasts; and finally, he would have prevented Ottomans from providing military aid to the Moriscos in the Alpujarras, in southern Spain.[3] This type of negotiation between a 'champion of Christianity' such as Philip II and a Christian convert to Islam at the service of the Ottoman Sultan

[1] Emilio Sola, *Uchalí: el Calabrés Tiñoso, o el mito del corsario muladí en la frontera* (Barcelona: Ballaterra, 2010). Specifically, Uluç Ali was appointed by Sultan Selim II as the new general governor (*beylerbeyi*) of the Ottoman province of Algiers, also known in Ottoman-Turkish as *Cezayir-i Garb*: İdris Bostan, 'Kılıç Ali Paşa', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *THREE*, vol. IV, ed. by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 145–147.

[2] Archivo General de Simancas, Estado (hereafter cited as AGS, E), 487, doc. unnumbered, Letter from Philip II to Pedro Afán de Ribera, Madrid, 15 December 1568.

[3] Fernand Braudel, *El Mediterráneo y el mundo mediterráneo en la época de Felipe II*, vol. 1 (México: FCE, 2016), p. 231; Sola, *Uchalí*, pp. 147–50.

is actually unsurprising as such interactions were common in the early modern Mediterranean.[4]

Researchers have seen in those cross-cultural contacts the proof of an informal diplomacy used by contemporary pre-modern states to cross frontiers and overcome political and religious obstacles during the age of confessionalisation.[5] Regarding the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry in the Mediterranean, scholars have stressed how relationships between Christendom and Islamdom were managed by new agents, who did not fit the traditional humanistic figure of the ambassador. They have also emphasised how new practices and rituals structured these relations and shaped new forms of diplomatic encounters. Their investigations have been focused on the characteristics and the aims of these contacts, and most notably on the Habsburg diplomatic networks in the Mediterranean. And they have been useful for understanding how the political clash between the Ottoman Empire and the Spanish Monarchy was fought not only on a military level but also through information-gathering and secret diplomacy.[6]

This article aims to shed light on the Spanish diplomatic practice used in the dialogue with the Ottoman Governors of Algiers during the sixteenth century. To do so, we have had to move away from the traditional focus on the study of agreements and opt for a more holistic

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[4] Emilio Sola and Francesco de la Peña, *Cervantes y la Berbería: Cervantes, mundo turco-berberisco y servicios secretos en la época de Felipe II* (Mexico: FCE, 1996); Giovanni Ricci, *Appello al Turco: i confini infranti del Rinascimento* (Roma: Viella, 2011). In particular, on renegades see: Tobias Graf, 'Of Half-Lives and Double-Lives: "Renegades" in the Ottoman Empire and Their Pre-Conversion Ties, ca. 1580–1610', in *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, ed. by Tobias Graf, Christian Roth, Gülay Tulasoğlu and Pascal Firges (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 131–49.

[5] Tijana Krstić and Maartje van Gelder, 'Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19 (2015), 93–105.

[6] Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'My Money or Your Life: The Habsburg Hunt for Uluc Ali', *Studia Historica, Historia Moderna*, 36 (2014), 121–45; Natividad Planas, 'Diplomacy from Below or Cross-Confessional Loyalty? The "Christians of Algiers" between the Lord of Kuko and the King of Spain in the Early 1600s', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19 (2015), 153–73; Valentina Oldrati, 'Renegades and the Habsburg Secret Services in the Aftermath of Lepanto: Haci Murad and the Algerian Threat as a Case Study', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 24 (2018), 1–20.

approach of the diplomatic event.[7] Diplomacy is no longer seen as a simple political relationship capable of establishing an agreement between two parties during a specific time, but as a permanent practice defined by a complex structure.[8] Thus the article focuses on the agent and practices used during the Spanish negotiation with Uluç Ali to assess the tenets underpinning this type of diplomatic interaction. Gasparo's mission enables us to reflect on the structure of Spanish diplomacy in the early modern Mediterranean. The Corsican merchant's experience in Algiers reveals the presence of a specific dialogic pattern between the Iberian and Maghreb coasts and how it was consolidated during the sixteenth century. This article endeavours thus to analyse the characteristic elements and principles of what seems to be a specific diplomatic model.

After a contextual brief on the Spanish-Algerian diplomatic contacts throughout the sixteenth century, the article's second section analyses how the Spanish Monarchy organised Gasparo's mission, highlighting both the mechanism for recruiting an informal diplomatic envoy and the instructions given to him to undertake the negotiation. The last section examines the manners through which the encounter took place in the Maghreb. The study of Francesco Gasparo's account written at the end of his mission in 1569 shall allow us to emphasise the cultural practices that structured the diplomatic ceremonial in Algiers.

BETRAYING THE SULTAN, SERVING THE CATHOLIC FAITH: THE NATURE OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SPAIN AND OTTOMAN ALGIERS

The terms of the agreement between Philip II and Uluç Ali were clear: Uluç Ali was to receive an annual income of about 12,000 Spanish ducats, a title and land in the Kingdom of Naples in exchange for the surrender of Algiers. The deal could be sealed on one condition: Uluç Ali had to convert to the Catholic faith, thus saving his soul and atoning

[7] John Watkins, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38, no. 1 (2008), 1–14.

[8] Isabella Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict: Italian Diplomacy in the early Renaissance, 1350–1520* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

for the sin of apostasy. In such a deal, political and religious elements were mixed to create a perfect blend aiming to lead Uluç Ali to betray the Sublime Porte.

What drove Philip II to engage with Uluç Ali was the fear that the latter would have helped the Moriscos to revolt in the southern Iberian Peninsula. These were well-founded concerns: Uluç Ali had been instructed to take possession of the government in Algiers and to send weapons and men to Morisco communities in the Alpujarras.[9] Uluç Ali was a Calabrian renegade who had through the ranks of the naval squadron of the Turkish corsair Dragut and had recently joined the household of the new Ottoman Sultan Selim II thanks to his close relationships with some viziers of the Porte.[10] He knew very well the kind of proposals that the Spanish Monarchy had offered him. At the end of 1567, when he was in command of the Ottoman province of Tripoli, the Venetian Matteo Pozzo, a former Christian slave turned spy for the Viceroy of Sicily, tried to entice Murat Aga, Uluç Ali's right-hand man, into defecting to the Habsburgs and handing Tripoli over to the Spanish troops.[11]

Obtaining the surrender of the main Ottoman outposts in the Maghreb using informal diplomatic attempts was a recurring endeavour for the Habsburgs, especially in the Algerian case. Indeed, since the 1516 conquest of Algiers by Oruç and Hayreddin Barbarossa, two Greek corsairs who had turned the city into a province of the Ottoman Empire,[12] its repossession was a strategic necessity to limit the damage of Algerian corsair raids and ward off Ottoman expansion in the western

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[9] Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, 'El Imperio otomano y el Reino de Granada', in *La historia del reino de Granada a debate: viejos y nuevos temas*, ed. by Manuel Barrios Aguilera and Ángel Galán Sánchez (Madrid: Editorial Actas, 2004), pp. 65–76.

[10] On the Uluç Ali's political climbs in the Ottoman administration see: Francesco Caprioli, 'Las redes de poder del Kapudan Pasha Uluç Ali: cultura política y practicas diplomáticas en el Mediterráneo del siglo XVI' (unpublished PhD dissertation: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid–Università degli Studi di Milano, 2020).

[11] Romano Canosa and Isabella Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo: aspetti della guerra segreta turco-spagnola in Mediterraneo nel Cinquecento* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1991), pp. 80–81.

[12] Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, *Los Barbarroja: corsarios del Mediterráneo* (Madrid: Alderabán Ediciones, 2004).

Mediterranean.[13] Besides planning military operations against Algiers, the Spaniards also opted for a diplomatic response to the problems caused by the Ottomans in North Africa.

The Spanish Monarchy used two different strategies. The first one was to rely on a network of local alliances with Berber dynasties and tribes. These alliances with Muslim political entities dated back to the end of the fifteenth century. Indeed, after the downfall of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada in 1492, Spanish expansion towards North Africa coincided with an increase in diplomatic relations with local Muslim leaders.[14] A series of capitulations, vassal agreements, and treaties which many Berber sultans and tribal leaders signed with the kings of Spain allowed the Spanish Monarchy the opportunity to consolidate its presence along the North African coast.[15] Thanks to the influence of these relationships, especially with the dynasty of Tlemcen and the tribe of Koukou, the Spanish crown tried to curb the rise of Algerian military power in the Maghreb. In addition to supporting local military expeditions against Algiers and its domains, the Spanish attempted to stir a series of popular revolts against the Ottomans. At the beginning of the 1530s, the Sultan of Tlemcen encouraged the local marabouts to rise against Hayreddin Barbarossa.[16] And a few years later, in 1536, a Jewish spy, disguised as a merchant, was sent by the Spanish governor of Oran to Algiers to come up with a plan with the local rabbi to allow Spanish troops to conquer the city.[17] However, the political authority

[13] Beatriz Alonso Acero, 'Defensa del Mediterráneo: escenarios, objetivos y estrategias', in *Historia Militar de España*, vol. 3: *Ultramar y la Marina*, ed. by Hugo O'donnell, Enrique García Hernán, and José Blanco Nuñez (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2009), pp. 227–53.

[14] Roser Salicrú Lluch, 'Crossing Boundaries in Late Medieval Mediterranean Iberia: Historical Glimpses of Christian-Islamic Intercultural Dialogue', *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies*, 1 (2008), 33–51; Miguel Escribano Páez, 'Negotiating with "Infidel": Imperial Expansion and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in the Early Modern Maghreb (1492–1516)', *Itinerario*, 40, no. 2 (2016), 189–214.

[15] Beatriz Alonso Acero, *España y el norte de África en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2017).

[16] AGS, Guerra y Marina (hereafter cited as GM) 3, doc. 440, 'News from Barbary through an ambassador from Tremecén', 1532.

[17] AGS, E 463, doc. 8, Letter from Martín Alonso Fernández de Córdoba to Isabel of Portugal, Oran, January 1536.

of Hayreddin and his men in Algiers, supported by the military and economic aid from Istanbul, was too thoroughly established and the Spanish attempts failed.[18]

For that reason, a second strategy was implemented as soon as Algiers started its territorial expansion. The latter was a threat to the Spanish garrisons placed over the Maghreb coastline. The Spanish crown thus sought to establish a relationship with the Ottoman governor of Algiers and convince him to switch allegiance. The first of these attempts began in the 1530s with negotiations aimed to rally Hayreddin Barbarossa, then governor of Algiers and admiral in chief of the Ottoman Navy, to the Habsburgs' side. Charles V offered him the title of general governor of North Africa if he left the Ottoman side, banned Muslim piracy, and released all the Christian slaves in his custody.[19] The Spanish crown used similar vassal agreements they had with the Berber sultanates as an attempt to restrain their main political enemy in the Maghreb. Suppose he had accepted the deal, Hayreddin, even though still a Muslim, would have served the Christian side as a subject of the Habsburgs. Following the examples of the sultans of Tlemcen and Tunis, Hayreddin would have had to confirm that he was 'a friend of our friends and an enemy of our enemies', to quote Charles V's words.[20]

Although Hayreddin did not renounce his powerful position in the Ottoman Empire in the end, the Spanish Monarchy persevered with this diplomatic approach to gain control over Algiers. Since many Christians converts to Islam received political and military appointments in Ottoman Algiers thanks to the traditional Islamic patronage system,[21]

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[18] Svat Soucek, 'The Rise of the Barbarossas in North Africa', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 3 (1971), 238–50; Nicolas Vatin, 'Note sur l'entrée d'Alger sous la souveraineté ottomane (1519–1521)', *Turcica*, 44 (2012–2013), 131–66.

[19] Bunes Ibarra, *Los Barbarroja*, pp. 197–203.

[20] Biblioteca Nacional de España, Manuscritos 783, fols 3–6, Letter from Charles V to Andrea Doria and Ferrante Gonzaga, Ghent, 3 March 1540. On the analogies between that negotiation and the vassal agreements established by Charles V with the Berber sultans see the documents published in Primitivo Mariño, *Tratados internacionales de España*, vol. 2: *Carlos V. España y el Norte de África* (Madrid: CSIC, 1980).

[21] Francesco Caprioli, 'I Mühtedi di Algeri, ovvero l'altro volto dei rinnegati. Conversioni all'Islam nel Mediterraneo della prima età moderna', *Studi Storici*, 4 (2019), 939–64.

some aspects of the deal proposed to Hayreddin changed. Instead of offering them to stay in charge of the city as a vassal of the Spanish Monarchy, the new plans included two related stipulations: the conversion of the ruler to his former religion and the surrender of the Ottoman province as a symbol of his renewed loyalty to the Catholic faith. The Roman and Spanish Inquisitions' guidelines, aiming to bring converts to Islam to convert back to Christianity, offered the Habsburgs a substantial justification for setting up fruitful relationships with the renegades ruling Algiers.[22] Since they were guilty of having apostatised the Christian faith, the Spanish kings offered them the opportunity to make amends for that sin, but only if they entered Habsburg service. For instance, in 1544, Spanish Governor of Oran's instructions to Juan Martin, a merchant settled in North Africa, to begin a new negotiation with the ruler of Algiers, the Sardinian Hadım Hasan, included the religious issue as a primary motivation. Since Hasan had been Christian until he apostatised, the Spanish Monarchy wanted to reconvert him. The Sardinian renegade would not have lost his reputation; he would have earned 'the glory of God' and 'the glory of the whole world'.[23] Using the same religious rhetoric, the Franciscan Nicolas negotiated with the Corsican Hasan, the governor of Algiers in 1556,[24] and with the Albanian Mustafa Bey, the temporary ruler of that city in 1557.[25] Furthermore, the pardon for apostasy was combined with royal rewards and titles guaranteeing that Christian converts to Islam would retain some authority in the lands of the Spanish Monarchy. Captain Andrés Fernández de Truvia, sent to Algiers in 1573, offered the renegade Hasan, a local military official, an income of 5000 Spanish ducats, a title and land in the kingdom of Naples if he agreed to come back

[22] Valentina Oldrati, 'Inquisitorial Immunity and Other Tempting Offers. The Spanish Monarchy and the Renegade Cayto Ferrato (Tripoli, 1571–1579)', in *Eastern Europe, Safavid Persia and the Iberian World: Frontiers and Circulations at the Edge of Empire*, ed. by José Francesco Cutillas-Ferrer and Oscar Recio Morales (Valencia: Albatros, 2019), pp. 105–24.

[23] AGS, E 471, doc. unnumbered, 'Copy of the memorial that Juan Martyn took to Argel', Oran, 6 August 1544.

[24] AGS, E 483, docs 273–74, 'What the Captain Villandrando refers', 1557.

[25] AGS, E 483, doc. 259, Letter from Philip II to Mustafa Bey, London, 1557.

in the folds of Christendom and to help the Spanish to conquer the Ottoman city.[26]

Thus, Philip II planned to use similar strategies when he was warned of Uluç Ali's arrival in Algiers at the end of the 1560s. In a letter sent to the Viceroy of Naples on December 1568, Philip II expressed his desire to bring Uluç Ali back to Christendom, saying that it would be better for that renegade to become a Christian once again.[27]

We do not know what each renegade thought about the possibility to betray the Ottoman Sultan and serve the Spanish king, but some answers may lie in the letter that Hadım Hasan wrote to the governor of Oran in 1544.[28] In that document, the governor of Algiers expressed his absolute disinterest in a religious process of reconversion. Hadım Hasan was Muslim, he felt Muslim, and he wanted to die as Muslim. He also stressed the impossibility of surrendering Algiers, whatever estates the Habsburgs offered him. If the Spanish Monarchy had to reach an agreement, they would have had to negotiate as they had done with Hayreddin, giving the possibility for him to govern over the entire North African region.

Nevertheless, the intention of the governor of Algiers to preserve his religious identity and enlarge his authority in the Maghreb did not fit Philip II's defensive strategy of containment of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.[29] We should not overlook the fact that most diplomatic attempts happened in the period between 1540 and 1580 when the Spanish Monarchy quickly lost the main Maghrebi military garrisons and outposts due to the Ottoman expansionist policy in North Africa.[30]

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[26] AGS, E 487, doc. unnumbered, 'What you, Captain Andres Fernandez de Truvia, have to do', Naples, 25 April 1573.

[27] AGS 487, doc. unnumbered, Letter from Philip II to Pedro Afán de Ribera, Madrid, 15 December 1568.

[28] AGS, E 487, doc. unnumbered, 'What the King of Algiers answered', Algiers, 1544.

[29] Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, 'Felipe II y el Mediterráneo: la frontera olvidada y la frontera presente de la Monarquía Católica', in *Felipe II (1527–1598): Europa y la Monarquía Católica*, ed. by José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Editorial Parteluz, 1998), pp. 97–110.

[30] Beatriz Alonso Acero, 'El Norte de África en el ocaso del Emperador (1549–1558)', in *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530–1558)*, ed. by José

Hence, the Spanish king was trying to open a new channel of dialogue and communication with his local enemy to compensate for the loss of several strategic positions over the Barbary Coast.

However, none of these many attempts proved successful. In 1556 and 1557, both Hasan the Corsican and Mustafa the Albanian died in Algiers a few months after the beginning of the negotiations, while, in 1570, Uluç Ali decided to stay on the Ottoman side following his personal purposes in North Africa. However, in light of this brief reassessment of the Spanish-Algerian political relationships, further analysis on how Phillip II's negotiation with Uluç Ali was plan is required to show how this dialogue was structured, who participated in it and where it took place.

CHOOSING THE ENVOY AND PLANNING THE MISSION: SPANISH AGENCY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ULUÇ ALI

After reports from spies and crown agents in the Maghreb confirmed the possibility of starting negotiations with an Ottoman governor of Algiers,[31] the first action was to find an agent able to travel secretly to that city. Philip II wrote to Alonso Pimentel, Viceroy of Valencia, that the negotiation with Uluç Ali should be entrusted to the Corsican Francesco Gasparo, 'a very rich merchant who lived for many years in Algiers'.[32] That decision was well received by the Viceroy of Valencia, who replied that there was no better agent for that operation than Francesco Gasparo. The latter was described as 'so practical' (*tan platico*) and having good 'knowledge' (*inteligencia*) of the leading political figures of that city.[33]

Martínez Millán and Ignacio Javier Ezquerra Revilla (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001), pp. 387–414.

[31] On the relevance of these sources for the Mediterranean policy of the Spanish Monarchy in the sixteenth century see: Emilio Sola, *Los que van y vienen: información y fronteras en el Mediterráneo clásico del siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2005).

[32] AGS, E 487, doc. unnumbered, Letter from Philip II to Alonso Pimentel, Madrid, 22 December 1568.

[33] AGS, E 333, doc. 120, Letter from Alonso Pimentel to Philip II, Valencia, 29 January 1569.

Both words, *platico* and *inteligencia*, recurred in a letter to Phillip II by Ruy Gómez de Silva, Prince of Eboli and private adviser to the king, confirming that Francesco Gasparo had accepted the request to travel to Algiers.[34] These expressions disclose the nature of the Spanish diplomatic agency. First, as Gennaro Varriale pointed out in his studies on Habsburg Mediterranean spies, both terms defined a secret operation, a plot known only by a few officers of the Spanish crown, as well as by the king and the chosen agents.[35] Philip II, who repeated several times how this operation should be carried out in 'secret' and with 'dissimulation',[36] had entrusted its management to a few reliable people: Ruy Gómez de Silva and Alonso Pimentel mentioned above, and Pedro Afán de Ribera, Viceroy of Naples.[37] Second, they stress how prior experience of a specific environment, its culture and its inhabitants was an essential criterion to select an informal envoy. Francesco Gasparo's previous experiences in the Maghreb, as well as his familiarity with local customs and policymakers, stemmed from the role that the Gasparo family played in Western Mediterranean trade.[38] After spending several years in North Africa, where he had learned how to trade and negotiate with Muslim merchants and local authorities, Francesco settled in

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[34] AGS, E 333, doc. 118, Letter from Ruy Gómez de Silva to Philip II, Madrid, 16 January 1569.

[35] Gennaro Varriale, 'Lo spionaggio sulla frontiera mediterranea nel XVI secolo: la Sicilia contro il Sultano', *Mediterranea – ricerche storiche*, 38 (2016), 477–516.

[36] AGS, E 487, doc. unnumbered, Letter from Philip II to Alonso Pimentel, Madrid, 9 January 1569.

[37] The contact with the Viceroy of Naples had been established to provide for the search of an agent coming from the same village where Uluç Ali was born. The Viceroy of Naples found Juan Baptista Ganguzza, a friend of Uluç Ali's before his religious conversion. However, Ganguzza never left for Algiers, although he was instructed on how to start a negotiation with the Ottoman governor of Algiers in the same manner as Gasparo. On Ganguzza see: Braudel, *El Mediterráneo*, vol. 2, pp. 554–56; Sola, *Uchalí*, p. 148.

[38] On the presence and importance of commercial, political, and diplomatic networks intertwined by many Corsican families in the Early Modern Mediterranean, see in particular: Guillaume Calafat, 'Un réseau corse entre l'Afrique du Nord et l'Europe: commerce maritime, institutions et enrichissement au tournant des XVIe et XVIIe siècles', in *Reti marittime come fattore dell'integrazione europea*, ed. by Giampiero Nigro (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2019), 407–27.

Valencia. There he started to manage the commercial business of his brothers Andrea and Filippo, who permanently resided in Algiers.[39] His local contacts gave Francesco not only the opportunity to travel safely and secretly to Algiers, but also the ability to get in touch with the Ottoman governor, since his brother Andrea was a personal friend of Uluç Ali.[40] Moreover, Francesco could also count on another family member who was not involved in commercial affairs: the Corsican renegade Mami, Uluç Ali's private adviser, whom Francesco considered to be '[his] countryman and relative'.[41]

The importance of his Maghreb-related commercial experience and social networks was reaffirmed in the instructions given to Francesco regarding his diplomatic mission. After the choice of the agent, instructing the envoy was the second most crucial phase of the operation. The Viceroy of Valencia was tasked with instructing Gasparo about what to do and to say while in Algiers, and regarding his subsequent report to Philip II.[42] The analysis of the verbal instructions given to Francesco, as expressed through correspondence between the Viceroy of Valencia, Ruy Gómez de Silva and the Spanish king, sheds light on four significant fundamental patterns in instructions to a diplomatic agent. First, it was essential that Gasparo's journey to the Maghreb did not raise any suspicion. As a merchant possessing a right of safe-conduct for trade in Algiers, he was supposed to sail from the port of Valencia with some galleys loaded with goods to negotiate on the spot.[43] Second, great attention was paid to how to formalise the first contact with Uluç Ali: Francesco Gasparo was meant to exploit the friendship between his brother, Andrea, the Corsican renegade Mami, and the Ottoman

[39] Braudel, *El Mediterráneo*, vol. 1, pp. 52 and 209–10; María Antonia Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers: a Captive's Tale* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), pp. 89–90.

[40] AGS, E 487, doc. unnumbered, Letter from Philip II to Alonso Pimentel, Madrid, 22 December 1568.

[41] Sola, *Uchalí*, pp. 146–47.

[42] Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza de Toledo (hereafter cited as AHNOB), Osuna 419, doc. 97, Letter from Philip II to Alonso Pimentel, Madrid, 28 December 1568; ibid., doc. 303, Letter from Philip II to Alonso Pimentel, Madrid, January 1569.

[43] AGS, E 333, doc 121, Letter from Alonso Pimentel to Philip II, Valencia, 6 February 1569.

governor.[44] Third, the instructions featured that, having ascertained Uluç Ali's willingness to enter negotiations, the Spanish envoy should deliver a letter written by Philip II, the contents of which revealed the details of the agreement and how to proceed with such a diplomatic dialogue.[45] Fourth, pending verification of Uluç Ali's intentions, the instructions called on the envoy to use rhetoric to convince him to switch allegiance. Francesco Gasparo was instructed to lay particular stress on some intelligence circulating in the Mediterranean about a possible replacement of Uluç Ali as governor of Algiers and on the fact that the Spanish crown offer was a means for Uluç Ali not to lose his fame and power.[46]

The meticulousness in choosing the agent and instructing him to carry out the diplomatic mission reflects the importance that the negotiation with Uluç Ali had for Philip II and his officials in the period between 1568 and 1570. In only two months, Francesco Gasparo was contacted and informed about how to organise his mission to Algiers. On 21 February 1569, the Corsican merchant set sail from the port of Valencia loaded not only with goods but also with the Spanish king's many expectations.[47]

PUTTING EXPERIENCE AND FAMILIARITY INTO PRACTICE: GASPARO'S 1569 ALGERIAN MISSION

Francesco Gasparo's long report written in the summer of 1569 at the end of his Algerian mission, shows how the meetings with Uluç Ali took place, and what practices characterised those first encounters.[48] According to that report, the journey was long and hard. Gasparo faced difficulties leaving Valencia, as Algerian corsairs looted a ship his brothers had sent him from Barcelona. When the ship arrived in Valencia, he

[44] AGS, E 333, doc. 118, Letter from Ruy Gómez de Silva to Philip II, Madrid, 16 January 1569.

[45] Ibid.

[46] AHNOB, Osuna 419, doc. 142, Letter from Philip II to Alonso Pimentel, Madrid, 30 January 1569.

[47] Ibid.

[48] AGS, E 333, doc. 154, 'Report of what I, Francisco Gasparo, have done in pursuit of the business of Algiers', Valencia, 1569.

had to supply it with food and hire new sailors on top of loading the goods to sell in Algiers and the gifts intended to consolidate an amicable relationship with Uluç Ali. His local friendships helped him to reach the port of Algiers safely. In fact, although he came across another corsair galley during the last part of the journey, he escaped unscathed because he was well acquainted with the captain who commanded that vessel.[49]

Once news of his arrival in Algiers had spread in the Ottoman city, two emissaries of the local government arrived at the port and led Francesco to the *Janina*, the local governor's palace, and presented him to Uluç Ali and many other Algerian ministers. This action was not unusual, since it was the first part of the Ottoman ceremony to welcome a foreign agent and introduce him to the court.[50] Nicolas de Nicolay's account of the diplomatic mission of the French ambassador Gabriel de Luetz in Algiers (1551) gives us an example of that practice: once French galleys arrived in North Africa, a member of de Luetz delegation, Michel de Codignac, was transferred by a *çavuş* (messenger) to the governmental palace to be presented before the Ottoman court.[51] Similar evidence of this procedure can be found in the Franciscan Nicolas's report written after his mission to Algiers to negotiate with the Corsican renegade Hasan in 1556. In that case, however, it was the chief of the Algerian harbour who received the Spanish envoy and welcomed him, but without leading him directly before the court.[52]

As for Gasparo, on arriving at the palace of the Ottoman governor, he was granted permission to appear before the *divan* – the Ottoman city council – after kissing Uluç Ali's hand.[53] Kissing the hand of the local governor was a traditional part of the Ottoman diplomatic ceremonial.

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Maria Pia Pedani, 'The Sultan and the Venetian Bailo: Ceremonial Diplomatic Protocol in Istanbul', in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota, and Jan Paul Niederkorn (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), pp. 287–300.

[51] Nicolas de Nicolay, *Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et pérégrinations orientales* (Lyons: 1568), p. 13.

[52] AGS, E 483, docs 273–74, 'What the Captain Villandrando refers', 1557.

[53] AGS, E 333, doc. 154, 'Report of what I, Francesco Gasparo, have done in pursuit of the business of Algiers', 1569.

This gesture meant the recognition of the hierarchical difference between the parties: the apparent submission of the foreign agent to the holder of the Islamic and Ottoman authority and the establishment of a first physical relationship with the latter.[54] This act was particularly required from those agents who did not enjoy the status of *müste min* (protected foreigner) and wanted to be authorised to stay in an Ottoman city for a defined period.[55] Indeed, after kissing his hand, Francesco Gasparo was declared by Uluç Ali to be 'a welcomed man' in Algiers and had the opportunity to speak with the governor.[56] Since he found himself in front of all the prominent members of the Algerian court, Gasparo decided to keep the reason for his journey secret and presented himself as a simple merchant.

However, the terms of the negotiation could not be disclosed at that stage, and Francesco Gasparo had to wait to be received in the private room of Uluç Ali. He was granted this privilege thanks to the mediation of his relative Mami, Uluç Ali's adviser, and only after he had delivered several gifts to the governor. Gasparo's instructions indicate that the Spanish agent gave damasks, deep red clothes, and several kinds of jam to Uluç Ali.[57] Gift-giving was an important part of the diplomatic ceremonial in Islamic culture: it was intended to foster a personal relationship.[58] In the Ottoman tradition, gift-giving was a form of non-verbal communication to request a private audience with the Sultan or his Pasha. The acceptance of the gifts represented the

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[54] Palmira Brummett, 'A Kiss is Just a Kiss: Rituals of Submission along the East-West Divide', in *Cultural Encounters between East and West, 1453–1699*, ed. by Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2005), pp. 107–31.

[55] Gabor Kárman, 'Transylvanian envoys at Buda. Provinces and Tributaries in Ottoman International Society', in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, 1400–1800*, ed. by Tracey Sowerby and Jan Hennings (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 44–64.

[56] AGS, E 333, doc. 154, 'Report of what I, Francesco Gasparo, have done in pursuit of the business of Algiers', 1569.

[57] AGS, E 333, doc. 118, Letter from Ruy Gómez de Silva to Philip II, Madrid, 16 January 1569.

[58] Franz Rosenthal, 'Gifts and Bribes: the Muslim View', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 108, no. 2 (1964), 135–44.

receiving party's consent to the meeting.[59] As Francesco Gasparo wrote in his report, Uluç Ali thanked him for the gifts he had given and, in exchange for those presents, the Spanish envoy received a galley, some French slaves, and a safe-conduct to return to Valencia.[60]

During their meeting in Uluç Ali's room, Francesco Gasparo set out the plans for the secret agreement. And here we can identify the fourth element of the diplomatic encounter. After the acts of welcoming, hand-kissing and gift-giving, the language used by Uluç Ali to speak to Gasparo reveals the double dimension of their meeting. The language shifted from a formal tone, characterised by the use of Ottoman Turkish, to an informal tone marked by the use of *lingua franca*: a mix of Italian, Spanish and French language typical of the sixteenth-century Mediterranean context.[61] During the public encounter in front of members of the Algerian court, Uluç Ali and Francesco had talked with the help of a dragoman, who translated Ottoman Turkish into the language of the Spanish agent, most likely Italian, and *vice-versa*. But, during their private meeting in the rooms of Uluç Ali, they had spoken in *lingua franca*.[62] Therefore, it seems that a 'public' space, which was frequented by individuals who were not included in the negotiation, was characterised by the use of a formal language aimed at marking the areas of competence of each actor. In contrast, the 'private' space, whose access was restricted only to the governor's most loyal and trusted men, was marked by the use of an informal language that facilitated the development of diplomatic practice and mitigated the socio-political differences between the Ottoman authority and the Spanish agent.[63]

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[59] Maria Pia Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), pp. 100–09; Michael Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661–1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), pp. 105–40.

[60] AGS, E 333, doc. 154, 'Report of what I, Francesco Gasparo, have done in pursuit of the business of Algiers', 1569.

[61] Jocelyne Dakhlia, *Lingua franca. Histoire d'une langue métisse en Méditerranée* (Arles: Actes sud, 2008).

[62] AGS, E 333, docs 129–30, Letter from Francesco Gasparo to Alonso Pimentel, Valencia, 1569.

[63] On the use of public and private spaces during a diplomatic encounter see: Jan Hennings, 'The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue: Pomp and Circumstance in

Moreover, given that the context influenced the language, the language, in turn, influenced the contents of the discussion. This relationship is emphasised by the topics of the two conversations between Gasparo and Uluç Ali. For a start, they broached general matters relating to Mediterranean policy, especially Moriscos uprising in the Alpujarras. Then the conversation was moved to the governor's room and focused on the Spanish perception and consideration of Uluç Ali as a powerful political leader. If the first encounter offered Francesco the chance to hide his real intentions and gain the trust of the Algerian elite, the second meeting gave him a considerable opportunity to implement the instructions he had received from Philip II and to persuade Uluç Ali to change political and religious sides.

MEMORY, EXPERIENCE, AND FAMILIARITY: SOME CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE SPANISH-ALGERIAN DIPLOMATIC MODEL

Despite this first attempt made by Francesco Gasparo, the Spanish agent did not fulfil the purpose of his mission to Algiers. While Francesco was forced to leave the city due to a military uprising in the spring of 1569, Uluç Ali decided to stay on the Ottoman side, since a merchant from Marseille warned him that the king of France had discovered the negotiation.[64] After that, Uluç Ali conquered Tunis in 1570 and, following the battle of Lepanto (1571), he was appointed admiral in chief of the Ottoman fleet, becoming a new target of the Spanish intelligence networks in Istanbul.[65]

However, Francesco Gasparo's report includes interesting clues leading us to reflect, in the manner of conclusion, on the Spanish diplomatic practice when dealing with Ottoman power in Algiers. During a conversation with the renegade Mami, Gasparo emphasised the opportunity that Philip II was offering to Uluç Ali, since he remembered very well how the Ottoman sultans had previously mistreated some governors of Algiers:

Tsar Peter I's Visit to Vienna in 1698', *International History Review*, 30, no. 3 (2008), 515–44.

[64] AGS, E 333, doc. 156, 'Relation of Andrea Gasparo', Algiers, 4 October 1569.

[65] Gürkan, 'My Money or your Life', pp. 134–40.

> There is not in the world a prince so benign and who bestows so much mercy and good as His Majesty [*Philip II*], and you should not think that he was like the Grand Turk who today gives grants to his servants and vassals and tomorrow takes away their properties [...]; to the governors of this land who I have met, as the Corsican Asan, Asan Arayz, Ali the Sardinian, Bachi Mamet, the Corsican Tuerto and others, who were all very rich people and commanded all this kingdom, they [*the Ottomans*] had killed them impaling them or hanging them from a hook, taking away all their estates.[66]

This quote shows how Francesco Gasparo was using his episodic memories to convince Uluç Ali's private adviser of the merits of negotiating with the Spanish Monarchy. Furthermore, it also stresses the fundamental role of personal memory (whether it relates to practical experience or knowledge) in trans-cultural encounters. This argument is supported by the accounts of the main diplomatic missions to Algiers that preceded that of Francesco Gasparo, which all focused on the envoys' memory and practical experience. Although the main objective of Spanish engagement with Ottoman Algiers remained the same, i.e. to turn the city from an outpost of their Ottoman rival to a defensive centre of the Spanish Monarchy in the Maghreb, the profiles of the agents chosen to carry out these attempts are heterogeneous. They were military officials, merchants, Franciscan friars acting as redeemers, and former Christian slaves. All of them had prior knowledge of the other side of the Mediterranean. Hence, when they sent reports to the Spanish authorities from Algiers or other North African cities, their experiences turned into episodic memories about a wide range of socio-political events and situations.[67] This kind of empirical knowledge was what the Spanish Monarchy was looking for when ministers and viceroys were choosing the right agent to carry out a relationship with Algiers.

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[66] AGS, E 333, doc. 154, 'Report of what I, Francesco Gasparo, have done in pursuit of the business of Algiers', 1569.

[67] See Timothy Hampton's discussion on Guicciardini's *Ricordi* in *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 28. On memory as an encoding of past experiences: Ken A. Paller and Anthony D. Wagner, 'Observing the Transformation of Experience into Memory', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 6, no. 2 (2002), 93–102.

When captain Juan de Vergara was sent to Algiers in the summer of 1540, he was chosen because he was 'well informed about that business'.[68] Vergara had travelled to Istanbul where he stayed with Hayreddin Barbarossa for several weeks. There, he had learned different Ottoman habits and rituals, as indicated in the report about his meetings with Barbarossa.[69] In 1542, Juan de Aragón was selected for a similar mission for the simple reason that he had been a slave of Barbarossa,[70] and because he already knew how to converse with the Ottoman admiral.[71] His previous experiences in Istanbul, both as a slave and as an informal agent, had enabled him to gather useful information so that the Habsburgs could continue their negotiations with Barbarossa.[72] The following missions of the Franciscan Nicolas in Algiers during the 1550s confirmed the importance of episodic memory as an accurate indication of consolidated experience in negotiating with the Ottoman authorities. Philip II chose the Franciscan because he wrote to the king attesting his previous skills in dealing with part of the Algerian elite: 'I know this [business] well because I have been dealing with them for 15 years and I know their intentions'.[73]

Therefore, it seems that the Spanish Monarchy was exploiting the memory of its agents in North Africa to shape a specific method for establishing a dialogue with the governor of Algiers.[74] At the beginning of the 1570s, the Valencian merchant Juan Pexon and the priest Francisco Nuñez were commissioned to negotiate a possible truce between the Ottoman Empire and the Spanish Monarchy with the successor of Uluç Ali in Algiers, Arab Ahmed Pasha.[75] Francisco Nuñez was advised to

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[68] AGS, E 1114, doc. 105, Letter from Andrea Doria to Charles V, Messina, 3 August 1540.

[69] AGS, E 468, doc. 136, 'Report of what the Captain Juan de Vergara did with Barbarossa in Constantinople', 1540.

[70] AGS, E 1115, doc. 24, 'Relation of Juan de Aragón', 1541.

[71] AGS, E 1115, doc. 49, Letter from Ferrante Gonzaga to Charles V, Palermo, 31 December 1541.

[72] AGS, E 1115, doc. 24, 'Relation of Juan de Aragón', 1541.

[73] AGS, GM 58, doc. 176, 'What Fray Nicolas the Sardinian says', London, 1557.

[74] Filippo de Vivo, 'Archives of Speech: Recording Diplomatic Negotiation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy', *European History Quarterly*, 46, no. 3 (2016), 519–44.

[75] Oldrati, 'Renegades and the Habsburg Secret Services', pp. 6–11.

offer lavish gifts to Arab Ahmed and his trusted men to consolidate his relationships and familiarity with them.[76] Meanwhile, Juan Pexon was given total freedom of action as he was 'a practical man', who 'would already know how to understand the things of that city with dissimulation'.[77]

The repetition of these two characteristic elements – the use of practical agents with some expertise and the creation of several kind of local relationships – enables us to sum up the Spanish diplomatic model with Ottoman governors of Algiers in two tenets: practice and familiarity. In fact, as shown by the case of Francesco Gasparo, the more an individual fitted into a social space in which he learned certain cultural practices and consolidated a wide network of contacts, the more the possibilities of establishing a political dialogue and a diplomatic negotiation between apparently conflicting policies increase.[78]

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[76] AGS, E 487, doc. unnumbered, 'Second relation given by Francesco Nuñez', 1573.

[77] Ibid., Letter from Philip II to Carlos de Borja y Aragón, Madrid, 27 May 1573.

[78] Christian Windler, 'Diplomatie et interculturalité: les consuls français à Tunis, 1700-1840', *Revue d'histoire modern et contemporaine*, 50, no. 4 (2003), 63–91; Guillaume Calafat, 'A Nest of Pirates?: Consuls and Diplomatic Intermediaries in Algiers during the 1670s', *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, 84, no. 2 (2018), 529–47; David Do Paço, 'Patronage and Expertise: the Creation of Trans-Imperial Knowledge, 1719–1848', in *Transnational Cultures of Expertise: Circulating State-Related Knowledge in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, ed. by Lothar Schilling and Jakob Vogel (Wien: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), pp. 48–61.

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