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On January 6, 1520, during the Feast of the Epiphany, Pope Leo X (1513-21) assisted by his master of ceremonies Paride de Grassi, baptized Al-Hasan ibn Muhammed ibn Ahmad al-Wazzan at an ornate ceremony in St Peter. ¹The new convert, a Muslim faqih, entrepreneur, diplomat, trader, and scholar from Morocco had been captured by Christian pirates and brought to Rome. There, he acquired the name Joannes Leo, or Giovanni Leone de' Medici, from Africa. De Grassi explains:

For this matter, the Pope, after careful examination, decided to inquire about his motivation for embracing Christianity and throw away his errors. He answered that he did so because of the confusion of the Mahometan sect, but also because he had some doubts about a few things. He was then instructed by our masters . . . and the pope ordered an examination. We catechized him before the doors of the papal chapel at first, and from there he was introduced. But we reserved the baptism for the day of the epiphany, so that the pope himself would administer it. ²

Through Al-Wazzan's baptism, the pope sensed the triumph of Christianity over Islam. Leo had chosen three God fathers for the ceremony of baptism. ³ The three of them were famous for their struggle against Islam. First, the Spaniard Bernardino López de Carvajal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, a long supporter of Church reform, preaching that Islam brought ruin during the Conquest of Granada. Second, Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci, grand penitentiary who managed the revenue from the sale of papal indulgences. And third, Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, orator before the pope, emperor, and church council, but also general of the Augustinian order who preached a new golden age with the Turks crushed, and Jews, Muslims and Indians converted.

The pope was triumphant in the new basilica of St Peter. Leo clamored with pomp and solemnity, "we celebrate the arrival of the three Magi from Arabia to adore our Lord, what greater happiness could there be for us than to welcome into the bosom of Our Holy Church, a new Magian King, come from the furthest corners of Barbary to make his offering in the House of Peter!" to which Al-Wazzan retorted, for now only his thoughts, "none of the people

¹ Italians in the audience will be pleased to read that the famous *Description of Africa* by Leo the African was really a copy of an Italian manuscript by Gastaldi that Al-Wazzan found in the Vatican while he was a captive of Pope Leo. See Louis Massignon, *Le Maroc dans les premières années du XVIe siècle; tableau géographique d'après Léon l'Africain* (Alger : Jourdan, 1906).

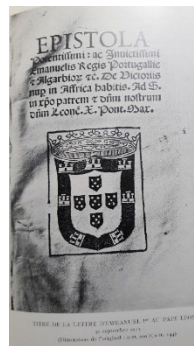
² Paride de Grassi, ff. 397 v. All translations are my own, hence not extremely proficient. "Pro qua re Papa, jussit it, instituto examine, inquireretur qua de causa vellet religionem christianam amplecti et suos errores abjicere. Qui respondit se id facere propter varietatem et confusionem sectae mahometanae, verum quia in aliquibus debitabat, fuit instructus a nostris doctoribus, et sic sacrista palatinus, et episcopus casertanus, et ego episcopus pisaurenses quibus Papa hoc examen commisit, cathechizavimus eum ante fores cappellae papalis primo, et inde introductus fuit factus cathecumenus, reservavimus autem in hac die epiphaniae baptismum, ut ipse Papal illud administraret, et Papa baptizavit illum, assistentibus tribus patrinis qui fuerunt cardinalis Sanctaecrucis, cardinalis sanctorum Quatuor, et cardinalis Aegidius ac castellanus qui episcopus est salutianus, pro quo ego suplevi ; nomen fuit Joannes Leo de Medicis."

³ See the magnificent biography of Al-Wazzan by Natalie Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

assembled in this place was unaware that the ‘Magian King’ had been captured on a summer night on a beach in Jerba, and brought to Rome as a slave.’⁴ Al-Wazzan’s baptism celebrated his entry into Christianity but especially the pope’s conquest over Islam, over false belief, over the perfidy of Muslims.

How does this famous story of piracy, conversion, and connection between Morocco and Italy fit into story of the link between Islam and Christianity in the premodern Mediterranean? The question that I am investigating this year at the Italian Academy deals with the temporal authority of the papacy in the sixteenth century conquest of the Maghrib. The emphasis that drives my research is the interaction between religion and empires in premodern times. This includes the use of religion to rule, the significance of creed for secular authorities, the role of religious rhetoric to colonize territories, the competition between secular and religious authorities over religious rituals, the use of religious adversaries to rebel against one’s hegemon, the display of religious fervor to blend into a new social landscape, or the demonstration of religious ethics to acculturate to foreign lands. In a nutshell, I study religion not for its spiritual appeal but as a tool to reach socio-political aims. As a scholar of Spanish Italy (c.1450-1650), I have been working on relations between the Spanish Habsburgs and various Italian states under significant Spanish influence such as Genoa, Naples, Sicily, Corsica, and Milan.

The genesis for this project materialized a few years ago, while I was consulting documents looking for a fresh approach concerning relations between the Italian and the Iberian Peninsula. I came across a document at the American Legation in Tangiers that caught my attention: a 1513 papal bull from Leo X to Portuguese King Manuel. While I was familiar with this event, I had always fathomed the papacy as a religious institution whose best stratagem was rhetoric and interdicts and never realized that popes, too, acted as a real political force. I knew about the papal armies, about its role in the carving of the Italian peninsula through mercenaries, about the diplomatic efforts of the papal *nunzi* across Europe, and about its intervention into the various states of the Italian Renaissance. But could the popes become my next link between Italy and Spain and my analysis of religion within the greater network of Mediterranean politics? I decided to use the institution that all associate with religion to test a new paradigm: was the sixteenth century papacy a crux of international relations in the premodern Mediterranean?



This is a book project, tentatively called *All the Kings of the Mediterranean*. I aim to write an imperial history of the Renaissance papacy focusing on the Maghrib, underscoring the pontiffs’ changing policies vis-a-vis non-coreligionists to achieve self-preservation and

⁴ Amin Maalouf, *Leo the African*, trans. by Peter Sluglett (New York: Quartet Books, 1986), 296.

expansion. I started researching about the role of the papacy in the African conquest, hoping to find if not books, at least articles, wiki mentions, footnotes; anything would have helped. To my dismay, I found little written on the subject. How come there has there been no scholarly attention on the involvement of papacy in this business? My intuition told me that there ought to be a link between Iberia, the Maghrib, and the papacy, however. But how could I formulate a cogent question regarding religion and empires? How could I prove that the popes played a significant part in mediterranean politics with few sources available? I have done research at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana and the Archivo da Torre do Tombo, but a lot still remains at the Archivio Segreto del Vaticano. We have abundant primary sources about the friction between local *shariffs* and the Portuguese and Spanish governors and their troops compiled in a multi-volume edition by Henry de Castries and Pierre de Cenival in *Les sources inédites du Maroc* in the 1950s. Yet none of these sources have brought scholarly traction. Worse still, scholars have suggested that while conquest could provide papal policy with a momentum, the papacy was really nothing more than a spectator relegated to the side lines when it came to the Portuguese and Spanish conquests of Africa, America, and Asia.⁵

At the heart of my research is the desire to revisit the passivity of the papacy to demonstrate that the papacy's intervention had great repercussions on Mediterranean politics. Some scholars have recently considered the possible proactivity of the papacy, always in passing, however.⁶ I decided to look at what may have been written from and to the popes about this conquest. We have no record of what the popes felt but we have a great deal about what they thought through their actions via numerous bulls, briefs, relations with ambassadors, apostolic *nunzi*, with the curia, interventions at councils, and their involvement in rituals and ceremonies. In 1513, the Portuguese successfully and officially conquered Azenmour (it had been a port of trade for over fifty years). Following the conquest, Pope Leo X conferred bulls granting the Portuguese Crown privileges such as land, right to erect churches, the sending of missionaries, the right to levy taxes, and most importantly the right to continue expanding and claiming all new territories for the profit of the Portuguese Crown.

This paper focuses on Pope Leo X, and how he was enmeshed in the early Portuguese conquest of Morocco. I want to tell a different story and to do so, I examine the reception of the conquest by both the Portuguese and the pope in rhetorical and in rituals, especially in the religious celebrations and the religious language surrounding the capture of Morocco. By focusing on the religious perception of the conquest, I am not trying to resurrect the papacy as a benevolent and magnanimous figure, but to show patterns of interaction. Assessing the role of the papacy provides a better grasp of how premodern empires worked through their larger pan-Mediterranean connections. I have chosen to examine the relation between Muslims and

⁵ Starting with Charles M. De Witte in « Les bulles pontificales et l'expansion portugaise au XV siècle » in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* (1958), XLVIII 683-718, XLIX 438-461, LI 413-453 and 809-835, LIII 5-46 and 403-471. De Witte has analyzed 100 bulls from 1418 to 1499 arguing that the Portuguese initiated not a crusade but a reconquest; there was no systematic politics of the pope and they merely intervened when needed.

⁶ See for instance Bernard Rosenberger, «Le Portugal, le Maroc, l'Océan, une histoire connectée » *Hespéris-Tamuda* vol. 55, n 1 (2020), 211-253, who mentions «il semble y avoir eu, à la fin du XIVe siècle, un projet de contournement de l'islam maghrébin inspiré par la papauté. Elle a encouragé et soutenu une exploration dans l'Atlantique par les bulles, qui mettent à contribution l'église portugaise.»

Christians through the religious rituals of conquest of Azenmour both in Lisbon and in Rome. My analysis underscores that there was a deliberate turn to antiquity not only to justify the conquest of Christians but also to give it more momentum. For the public witnessing these rituals, the weight of antiquity carried the weight of history, of empire, of memory. Seen as a period of splendor, of righteousness, of the heydays of civilizations in the Mediterranean, the turn to ancient Greek gods and Roman heroes was a judicious one. It left no one indifferent to the accomplishments of the Portuguese and by extension of the Catholic Church.

Before I move to the analysis of the rituals that surrounded the conquest, let me indulge a bit about my methodology. I have chosen the intellectual framework of Mediterranean Studies to develop my project. I was trained as a Renaissance micro-historian and studied with Carlo Ginzburg, among others, at UCLA in the tradition of the Annales School. Among the stars of the California firmament such as Saul Friedlander, Perry Anderson, and Lynn Hunt was also Anthony Pagden, celebrated for his work on imperial ideology. He became one of my mentors and academic models. Before UCLA, I was also trained as a World Historian under the guidance of Jerry Bentley at the University of Hawai'i. All these methodological strands have had an immense impact on my work: being "attuned" to the detail à la Wayne Wu while seeing the big picture or the historical context within an ever-present imperial imagination. At my current university in Boulder, I connected with scholars working on the Mediterranean (Religious Studies, Spanish and Portuguese, Jewish Studies, Classics, Art History) and we formed a network called the CU The Mediterranean Studies Group <http://www.mediterraneanseminar.org/cu-mediterranean-studies-group>, an offshoot of the Mediterranean Seminar <http://www.mediterraneanseminar.org/>, launched by Sharon Kinoshita and Brian Catlos who "abducted" me in their group during my post-doc 15 years ago. The methodology of Mediterranean Studies has enabled me to cultivate my micro-macro approach to historical work.

The main intellectual problem of this discipline is to capture both the unity and diversity of the Mediterranean. I, and the practitioners of Mediterranean history (like my fellow colleague Dana Katz) envision the region as a unique contact zone in which diverse groups of culture intersected and engaged. The sea formed a liminal space where religious, political, and ethnic identities were contested and negotiated. In studies of the Mediterranean, for instance, historical processes that otherwise appear to be anomalous are demonstrated to be normative, and interdisciplinary data-driven empirical approach challenges paradigms. Inspired by Fernand Braudel, S. D. Goitein, and more recently Horden and Purcell, David Abulafia, Dominique Valérian and Olivia Constable who have studied the Mediterranean to underscore the complex political landscape in which actors of the multi-confessional Mediterranean were enmeshed, I assess papal international diplomacy, a domain largely explored either by historians of religion or by studies of modern imperialism, showing that the relation between Muslims and Christians can be studied in a new way.

The intellectual drive to my inquiry is in the way people of different traditions interact and how boundaries shatter due to increased interaction with the other. Hence, the interest in Mediterranean Studies strives to think beyond ideas formulated by Samuel Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations* (1996). Reviewers have often commented on my overly positive depiction of Spanish officers in Italy, of Corsican rebels, of Genoese traders, for instance. This is precisely how the method of Mediterranean Studies comes in handy: constant interaction between local

and foreigners create friction but it also produces change on both side. The nature of this change is what captivates me. Moreover, my sources have constantly indicated that socio-political change emanated from the desire of foreign elements to acculturate to a new environment. On the receiving side, foreigners have most times brought new ideas, new techniques, new ways of seeing the world that have been nothing short of beneficial. As postulated by world historian William McNeill, the worst that can happen to a society is to become complacent, because he explains “vibrant societies are often the product of unexpected and jarring contradictions with strangers.” He elucidates that the societies that do not embrace cross-cultural fertilization eventually become brittle and complacent. I feel that at a time when discourse of racial, religious, national, and ethnic purity is once again rising across the globe, research linking hybridity to vibrancy is critical, and I am fortunate to have a research career that contributes in a small way to this laudable pursuit.

In the field of Mediterranean Studies, which postulates that cultural processes arose from a common tradition intensified by constant contact, my research centers on cross-cultural interactions by way of the imperial ambitions of religious and secular authorities. Some of the questions that I ask in my work are: how can we alter the established notion of Mediterranean religious division dominating the scholarly narrative? What if the state-imposed polarization between East and West trumped other factors? For instance, was the experience of people who ventured beyond their state parameters permeable? What if, rather than focusing on confrontational relationships, we embraced the Mediterranean as a bifurcated world? Would the distinction between people living on each side of the sea not get fuzzier and complex? If incorporating macro and microhistory, could scholars locate unity within diversity in cultural practices around the Mediterranean world?

I started pondering a hyperbolic religious division which did not render the daily reality of common people who traversed the sea. In fact, for the practitioners of Mediterranean Studies, the division between Christianity, Islam, and Judaism for actors who frequently traveled beyond their cultural boundaries is simplistic. I have developed the theory that cross-confessional relations is one of the ways, if not the keyway, to make sense of the Mediterranean world c. 800-1600. As bipartisanship on many important socio-cultural issues is dwindling in our country, my research demonstrates how cultural strength stems from the capacity to embrace diversity in language, customs, and beliefs.

And now to the meat of this paper.

On June 17, 1499, the pope intervened through bishop Joao and assigned him the dioceses of Azenmour, El-Mdina, and Mazagan.⁷ On September 30, 1513, King Manuel narrated to the Pope Leo X his victory in Muslim lands. With a fleet of 500 ships and 18,000 troops, he debarked in Mazagan and captured Azenmour, after which El-Mdina and Titi offered their submission. King Manuel was proud to announce to the pope another victory, won by his

⁷ Bull of Alexander VI, Archivo de Torre del Tombo, Bullas, Maço 16, numero 21, original parchemin. “Nos igitur eundem Johannem episcopum a quibusvis excommunicationis, suspensionis et interdicti, allisque ecclesiasticis sententiis, incuris et penis a jure vel ab homine quavis occasione vel causa latis, si quibus quomodolibet innodatus existit, ad effectum presentium dumtaxat consequendum, harum serie absolventes et absolutum fore censentes, hujusmodi supplicationibus inclinati, de Aazamor et Almedine ac Tifi et Maguazan loca, dicte civitati circumadjacentia, cum omnibus juribus et pertinentiis suis, predictae ecclesie pro diocese, auctoritate prefata, tenore presentium perpetuo assignamus, appropriamus et concedimus, non obstantibus constitutionibus et ordinationibus apostolicis, ceterisque contrariis quibuscunque.”

Muslim allies.⁸ After the enemies had managed to escape the city during the night assault, the Duke of Braganza solemnly entered the city of Azenmour the following day, where he listened to mass in the great mosque. The king hoped, with the help of God, to be able to conquer the entire Kingdom of Marrakesh. The Portuguese of the time imagined Marrakesh to be a religious capital, like a second Mecca. The pope responded by sending another bull of conquest.⁹

Luis Filipe Thomas has shown that these contest of Fez and Marrakesh inserted themselves in the imperial plan of destruction of Islam, maintained by the ideology of crusade nourished by the papacy.¹⁰ Manuel obtained a series of bulls of crusades from the Holy See, sanctifying the conquest that would allow them to easily finance the enterprise. In this context, the expedition against Azenmour is the example more paradigmatic. According to M. Augusta Lima Cruz, Azenmour was used as an instrument of political propaganda. The military campaigns carried out in Morocco obviously received the blessing of the Church, which granted bulls for the Portuguese enterprises. Aside from the assurance of spiritual benefits, the backing of the Church legitimized military action and provided sizeable financial support from ecclesiastical income taxation. It is important to note that Morocco was the only territory overseas in which the Portuguese monarchs commanded the conquests personally. King Manuel I's project was prominently imbued with 'crusade ideology' and had the support of a series of pontifical diplomas.

In March 1513, the king addressed letters to the archbishops, bishops, and grand masters of the military orders sharing his decision to go "overseas" via an expedition led by the Duke of Bragança (nephew of the king). The king was asking in his letters the financial contribution of these entities.¹¹ The expedition counted 20,000 men and 400 vessels. The departure of the fleet on August 17 stirred popular enthusiasm (mass, benediction, flags and celebrations).¹² On the eve of the departure, a tragicomedy "Exortação da guerra" by Gil Vicente, was given in Lisbon. The dramaturge was appealing to the anti-Muslim sentiment and presented the holy war against Islam as a vocation for the Portuguese. He referred to the further goals of the enterprise: the taking of Fez and the consecration of the mosque into a cathedral. Jocelyn Hendrickson has argued that Portugal's move into North Africa transferred the Iberian borderland society in which Muslims had long lived under Christian authority to the shores of the Maghrib.¹³

I will examine "Exortação da guerra" during the seminar on Wednesday but the tenor of the poem is that the Portuguese were not merely defeating Muslims and Africans; they were vanquishers of the past, they were the ancient gods, they were offering deliverance to Christians, they were Greek heroes faced with mortal dilemmas. The conquest of Africa would enable

⁸ Archivo de Torre del Tombo, Lisbon, mss, reservados numero 24 and 26.

⁹ The pope responded to this letter via a brief on 18 January 1514. Archivo de Torre del Tombo, coleção de Bullas, maço 29, n 8.

¹⁰ "L'idée imperiale Manueline" la *Découverte Portugaise et l'Europe, Actes du colloque*, Paris, 26-28 Mai, 1988 (Paris : Fondation Gulkenkian, 1990), pp. 35-103.

¹¹ A. BAIÃO, *Documentos do Corpo Chronológico relativos a Marrocos (1488 a 1514)*, Coimbra: Imprensa de Universidades, pp. 54-55.

¹² Lucette Valensi, *Fables de la Mémoire: La glorieuse bataille des Trois Rois (1578): Souvenir d'une grande tuerie chez les chrétiens, les juifs & les musulmans* (Paris, Chandeigne : 2009).

¹³ "Muslim Legal Responses to Portuguese Occupation in late Fifteenth-century North Africa" *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12, n. 3 (2011), 309-325.

continuity between the Christian past, the antique past, and the Christian present through the values of the ancient Mediterranean where Islam had no place. Rome was the center of Christianity, the center of ancient civilization, it was still and forever a model to emulate. It would radiate once again over the whole Mediterranean.

Avante avante senhores
Pois que com grandes favores
Todo e céu vos favorece
El rei de Fez Esmorece
E Marrocos dá clamores

forward, forward gentlemen
because with great favors,
all in heaven favors you
the king of Fez is dying
and Morocco cries out

Quando Roma a todas velas
Conquistava toda a terra
Todas donas e donzelas
Davam suas joias belas
Pera manter os da guerra

when Rome under full sail
conquered the whole land
All mistresses and maidens
gave their beautiful jewelry
hoping to keep us away from war

O pastores da igreja
Moura a seita de Mahoma
Ajudai a tal peleja
Que açoutados vos veja
Sem apelar per Roma

the pastors of the church
moors from the sect of Mohammed
help this fight
may i see you beaten
without appealing to Rome

And here Hannibal intervenes and tells Hector:

Que cousa tam escusada
É agora aqui Anibal
Que vossa corte é afamada
Per todo mundo em geral

what is no unnecessary
now that Hanibal is here
that your court is famous
for everyone in general

Nem Heitor nam faz mister
Deveis senhores esperar
Em Deos que vos há de dar
Toda África na vossa mão

not even Hector does anything
You must wait
in God who will give you
all of Africa in your hands

Dai a terça do que houverdes
Pera Africa conquistar
com mais prazer que puderdes
que quanto menos tiverdes
menos tereis que guardar

give a third of whatever you have
to conquer Africa
with as much pleasure as you can
that the less you have
the less you will have to save

Guerra guerra todo estado
Guerra guerra mui cruel
Que o gram rei Don Manuel
Contra mouros está irado

war war every state
very cruel war
may the grand king Manuel
be angry against the Moors

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sua Alteza determina | His highness determines |
| Por acrescentar a fé | for adding faith |
| Fazer da mesquita sé | make the mosque a cathedral |
| Em Fez por graça divina | in Fez for divine grace |
| Guerra, guerra mui continua | war, continuous war |
| È sua grande tençao | is your great tension |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Este rei tam excelente | this king is excellent |
| Muito bem afortunado | very fortunate |
| Tem o mundo rodeado | the world is surrounded |
| D'oriente ao ponente ¹⁴ | from east to west |

Though perceived as a farce, this poem suggests that the common Portuguese did not support the endeavor seen as the prolongation of the Crusades. This crusade dated back not to the period of Urban II but way far back, all the way to the Roman empire. The imagery used of Hector and Achilles, the heroes of ancient antiquity and the fight between East and West of the Mediterranean are explicit of the rhetoric to trace the origin of the disagreement between Muslims and Christians all the way back to ancient times. Even though there were no Muslims in ancient times, a systematic elimination of threats to the Roman empires ought to be enacted. Greek heroes battling, Romans battling, or Portuguese battling equated to the same message: to exclude outsiders. María Cruz de Carlos Varona has argued that the Maghrib was no longer just a stepping-stone to the Holy Land, but was conflated with Jerusalem itself, with the Moroccan sultan standing in as Pontius Pilate.¹⁵

The city of Azenmour was taken rapidly on September 3, 1513. The governor Sidi Mansour was killed that evening while the inhabitants flee in the interior. Frei João de Chaves, a Franciscan friar, started preaching in the mosque rapidly converted into a mosque. He exhorted Braganza to pursue the conquest onto Marrakesh, to which the duke replied that his mission was to take Azenmour, not to conquer Marrakesh. When King Manuel heard of the conquest, the news spread across the kingdom. Celebrations and processions followed along with actions of grace across Portugal. The success was celebrated in the *Cancioneiro Geral* by Garcia de Resende, a compilation of poetry, that came out in 1516. Among others, the poem of João Rodrigues de Sá which starts:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Cale-se um pouco, nom tanja Tritã, | Shut up a little, Triton |
| O deos das batalhas repousa algum tanto, | the gods of battle rest somewhat |
| Metam as armas seu medo e espanto | out away your fear and amazement |
| Aa seita maldita, oof also Alcorãao! ¹⁶ | As this damn sect & also the Qu'ran. |

Also, the “trovas” by Luís Henriques to the Duke of Bragança, where the poet established a relationship between the take of Azenmour, the politics of Manuel, and the certainty that the retake of Jerusalem was near. The ballads of Luis Henriques to the duke of Bragança linked the

¹⁴ Gil Vicente, “Exortação da guerra” in *Obras de Gil Vicente* (Porto : Lello & Irmão Editores, 1965), 215-216.

¹⁵ “Imágenese Rescatadas en la Europa Moderna : El caso de Jesús de Medinaceli” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12, n. 3 (2011), 327-354.

¹⁶ *Cancioneiro Geral de Garcia de Resende*, vol. 2 (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional: Casa de Moeda, 1990), 470-473.

conquest of the Moroccan city to the future triumphal entrance of his sovereign in the Holy Land, in a clear conformity with the Manueline imperial ideology. The victory was also the subject of artistic celebrations. One tapestry representing the conquest burned in an earthquake but a fresco in the Braganza palace remains at Vila Viçosa whose mural was painted by André Pérez.

Most importantly, Manuel spread the news to Europe. In his letter to Leo X, he sent what is called “cartas novas” presented as a real rapport of success. After a long narrative, mentioning all the details of the enterprise, he expresses his conviction that after a brief time he would be able to submit the whole kingdom of Morocco, and that way, inflict a moral wound to the religion of Mohammed. The Muslims, however, did not see that victory as ominous and the sultan of Cairo, for instance, threatened the pope to destroy the Holy Sepulcher if he did not stop the progress of the Portuguese.¹⁷

On January 3, the Holy See read the letter to the college of cardinals, followed by a mass at St Peter.¹⁸ On Sunday 8, the pope accompanied by cardinals and ambassadors, went to the Church of St Augustin, to participate in a second mass to celebrate, with Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, and to hear about the numerous conquests of the Kings of Portugal on the “infidels” and condemn the wars against Christians among them. Special masses were celebrated for King Manuel in honor of the victories “over the infidels in the parts of Africa called Morocco.”¹⁹ According to the witnesses, there were fireworks and for two days the city was illuminated so that it seemed that the city had caught on fire.

That same year, 1514, Manuel’s letter of on the take of Azenmour was published in Rome, in Latin translation under the title *Epistola de victoriis nuper in Affrica habitis*.^{20 21} We know the poem composed in Italian by an anonymous author entitled *La Victoria e le presa de Azomor*, probably printed in 1513 in Rome or the following year. The letter of Manuel was the source of the 32 strophes of the poem. It was a chronicle in rimes around the taking of Azenmour transformed into a popular version destined to be sung in the streets.²²

¹⁷ Vasco de Carvalho, *La Domination Portugaise au Maroc du XVe au XVIIIe siècle* (Lisbon: 1942), 30.

¹⁸ “Papa antequam ad missam veniret consultavit cardinales super Laetitia ostendenda pro Victoria regis Portugalliae contra infideles, et placuit omnibus manifesta signa dari.” De Grassi, *Diarium*, ff 85 v.

¹⁹ “Die dominica octava januari Papa equitavit ad ecclesiam S. Augustini gratias Deo acturus de victoria relata a rege Portugalliae contra infideles in partibus Africae, in loco qui dicitur Marochius. In praedicta Ecclesia r.p.d. Pompeius de Colonna celebravit missam de dominica cum secunda oratione de victoria et tertia de Epiphania. Expleta missa, quidam canonicus s. Petri dictus Capella, osculatus pedem Papae obtinuit indulgentiam plenarium et habuit elegantem sermonem. In fine Papa precinuit Hymnum “Te Deum Laudamus” eoque absoluto, cantavit preces et orationem, et impartibus est benedictionem.” De Grassi, *Diarium*, ff 86 r.

²⁰ Published in the *Sources Inédites*, vol 1, Portugal, pp. 434-437.

²¹ A few years prior to the conquest, public printing of a letter officially addressed to Pope Julius II. The most remarkable claim made by Manuel in this letter was that he was directly involved in persuading the Catholic monarchs of Spain Isabel of Castile and Fernando of Aragón to put an end to the toleration of Islam in Castile in 1501. See François Soyler, “Manuel I of Portugal and the End of the Toleration of Islam in Castile: Marriage Diplomacy, Propaganda, and Portuguese Imperialism in Renaissance Europe, 1495-1505” *Journal of early modern History* (June 2014), 331-336.

²² Luis de Matos, « La victoria contro Mori e la presa di Azimur » *Boletim Internacional de Bibliografia Luso-Brazileira*, vol 1, n 2 (April June 1960), 214-222.

Two months after the celebrations of January, a magnificent procession arrived in Rome from Portugal bringing to the pope gifts from Manuel's conquest. Trophy animals such as birds and beasts from "Lybia, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India" moved through the streets with the bejeweled Portuguese emissaries.²³ But the price for the spectators, cardinals, and the pope was the white elephant from India with a silver tower on its back, saluting the crowd with its trunk at the commands of its two Muslim attendants, a black "Moor" and a "Saracen." The link with ancient Rome was evident. In fact, the elephant was named Hanno. It reminded all Italians of the Conquest of Hannibal, of the taming of the Moroccans. There were hundreds of people splendidly dressed. The embassy was led by Tristan de Cunha, former governor of India, Diogo Pacheco, Joao de Faria, and the court poet Garcia de Resende.

March 1514: The pope directed the celebration of a public thanksgiving in Rome, which was observed in great pomp, and splendid processions to the Churches of Santa Maria del Popolo and San Agostino, in which the pontiff appeared in person, and by the propriety and decorum which always distinguished him on public occasions giving additional dignity to the ceremony.²⁴ At the same time, he ordered Camillo Portio to pronounce, in the pontifical chapel, a Latin oration in praise of the character and actions of the King of Portugal, who had communicated to him his success, and testified his dutiful obedience to the Roman court, and his personal attachment to the supreme pontiff.

This mutual interchange of civility and respect between the king of Portugal and the pontiff, was however, rendered much more conspicuous by a splendid embassy from the Portuguese monarch, which soon afterwards arrived at Rome, to the great delight and astonishment of the inhabitants. The chief ambassador on this occasion was the celebrated Tristano Cugna, who had himself held a principal command in the expedition to the east and had acquired great honor by his courage. He was accompanied by eminent professors of law, Jacopo Paceco and Giovanni Faria. Three sons of Cugna, with many other relatives and friends, accompanied the procession, which was met at the gate of the city by a select body of cardinals and prelates, who conducted the strangers to the palaces appointed for their residence.

But the respectability of the envoys was of less importance in the eyes of the populace than the magnificent presents for the pope. Hanno the elephant was of extraordinary size, two leopards, a panther, and other uncommon animals were part of this perambulating zoo. Several Persian horses, richly caparisoned, appeared also in the train, mounted by natives of the same country dressed in their local garments. To these was added a profusion of articles of inestimable value; pontifical vestments adorned with gold and jewels, vases and other implements for the

²³ Pope Leo X's master of ceremonies, Paride de Grassi documented the event. Grassi was bishop of Pesaro and his life centered on public events, liturgies, celebrations, and quarrels at the papal court, recording all these in the journal called *Diarium*. The version I am using is *Il diario di Leone X di Paride de Grassi: dai volumi manoscritti degli archivi vaticani della S. Sede* eds. Pio Delicati and Mariano Armellini (Rome: Cugiani, 1884). We are fortunate to have a real copy of the manuscript in Special Collections at the Butler Library called "De ingressu Svmmi Pont. Leonis X. Florentiam" call number 936G76.

²⁴ "S. Santatà questa mattina per buona consuetudine è state ad la Minerva, con tutti li cardinali cum grandissima pompa, et dove quella compagnia della Annunciata soleva al più maritare xx. Zitelle, con lo adiuto di S. Santità, erano questa mattina LV, o più; et dipoi la Messa, et ceremonie facte là, se ne tornò in castello, et li è stato tutto oggi, et questa sera per il Corridoro tornatosene al palazzo." Baltazare Da Pescia a Lorenzo de Medici, 16 march 1514. MSS Florence.

celebration of sacred rites, and a covering for the altar of most exquisite workmanship. A herald bearing the arms of the Portuguese sovereign led the procession. The rendition of this ceremony was left through the words of Paride de Grassi, Leo's master of ceremonies:

On Sunday, 12th of March, three of the king's orators arrival from Portugal, bringing with them rare and precious gift, that is to say an elephant, a lynx, more properly called a panther, and ecclesiastical vestments beautifully adorned with magnificent gems. These animals, who had initially entered the city clandestinely, remained in the house of the holy apostles, until on the said day, proceeding with a large apparatus, they entered through the gate of the Belvedere, that is, of the papal vineyard. In great pomp, with the sound of trumpets, one could see a herald dressed in a golden robe preceding the elephant who carried a container storing sacred and precious articles, covered on all sides by a golden mantle lowered to the ground. Now, all these gifts from that king to the pontiff had been sent as proof of his victories from the Indians and infidels. The pope, together with the cardinals, attended the spectacle of royal munificence from Castel Sant' Angelo.²⁵

On their arrival at the pontifical palace, at the sight of the pope, the elephant stopped, and knelt three times before his holiness as a gesture of reverence. At the signal of the Indian keeper, the elephant plunged his trunk into a bowl of scented water and sprayed it over the cardinals, the crowd, the windows, to the great entertainment of the pontiff.

Six days later, the ambassadors were admitted to a public audience, on which the occasion of the procession was repeated. The pope, surrounded by the cardinals and prelates of the church, and attended by the ambassadors of foreign states and all the officers of his court, was addressed in a Latin oration of Pacheco at the conclusion of which Leo replied to him in the same language, highly commenting the king for his devotion to the holy see. The pontiff recommended the maintenance of peace among the states of Europe, and the union of their arms against the Turks, expressing himself with such promptitude, seriousness, and elegance, as to obtain the unanimous admiration of the auditors.²⁶

On the following day, the presents from the king were brought into the conservatory of the gardens adjoining the pontifical palace, where on the introduction of animals proper for that

²⁵ "Dio Dominica duodecima, martii tres oratores regis Portugalliae advenerunt secum deferentes rara et pretiosa munera, videlicet elephantem indicum, et lincem seu vocabalo magis proprio pantheram, ac paramenta ecclesiastica gemmis et margaritis ornata. Qui cum antea veluti secreto in urbem fuissent, in aedibus apus sanctos Apostolos remanserunt, donec dicta die cum magno apparatu procedentes intrarunt per portam Belvidere idest vineae papalis. In ea pompa conspiciebatur araldus aurea veste indutus cum tubarum sonitu praecedere elephantem qui ferebat capsam undique coopertam aureo pallio ad terram usque demisso, in quo sacrae et pretiosae suppellectiles repositae erant. Missa autem fuerant omnia dona a rege illo ad Pontificem pro testimonio de suis victoriis contro indos et infideles relatis. Papa una cum cardinalibus munificentiae spectaculum vidit e castro S. Angelis." De Grassi, *Diarium*, ff 92 v.

²⁶ "questa mattina (25 marzo 1514) li ambasciatori Portoghesi, quali sono tre, in Consistorio publico hanno prestato la solita obedientia al N. Signore: et uno di loro ha facto una bellissima oratione, et N. Signore had facto una più bella risposta, con certe sante parole, che parevano proprio uscissero fora d'una bocca d'un santo, che concludevano lodando questo Re, che haveva facto tante cose per la fede, et exhortando li altri principi ad far pace infra se, et convertire quelle forze che si agitano uno contra l'altro, verso li infideli; et che suo desiderio non e' altro che ridurre questi principi alla pace."

purpose, the wild beast displayed their agility in taking, and their ferocity in devouring their prey; a spectacle which humanity would have spared, but which was probably highly gratifying to the pontiff, who was devoted to the pleasures of the chase. The Portuguese monarch had intended to have surprised the Roman people with the sight of another and yet rarer animal, which unfortunately perished in the transport to Italy, a beautiful white rhino.

In return for these public testimonies of consideration for the king of Portugal, Leo addressed him a public letter of acknowledgement and soon afterwards sent him a consecrated rose. Leo had hesitated whether he should present this precious gift to Manuel or to the emperor Maximilian. But it is Manuel who won the precious trophy. He also granted the 10th and 3rd of the clergy in his dominions to Manuel, if he carried on the war in Africa.²⁷ Together with the right of presentation in all countries discovered by him beyond the Cape of Good Hope. And these concessions were soon afterwards followed by a more ample donation of all kingdoms, countries, provinces, and islands which he might recover from the infidels, *in parts yet undiscovered and unknown even to the pontiff himself*. Many secular powers were in outcry about this prerogative of the papacy which exceeded his powers.

This was not the first time the papacy disposed of states newly conquered from infidels. Pope Alexander VI had granted a bull to Ferdinand of Spain to conquer the Moors on the pretext of the diffusion of the Christian faith. Overall, the procession, gift, and rituals surrounding the expedition were a good PR campaign and political message about the greatness of Portugal and the unconditional support of the papacy. By the same token, the papacy acquired an immense prestige for being part of such a formidable venture. The fight between Muslims and Christians had to potential to reinvigorate the secular power of the papacy across Christian lands.

²⁷ 20 april, Supplement Dumont, Coprs Diplomatique, vol II, part 1, page 26.