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In early January of 1516, the Aragonese King Ferdinand “the Catholic,” widower of Isabella of Castile, was in the region of Extremadura, in southwestern Spain. The sixty-four-year-old king was ill, and many feared this illness would be his last. In anticipation of this possibility, Ferdinand had recently drawn up his last will and testament, and in Extremadura he was to meet with ambassadors of Charles of Ghent, the king’s grandson and appointed heir.

The chronicler and member of the royal council, Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, upon whose version of this narrative I am drawing here, relates that, while in the town of Madrigalejo, royal councilors informed the king that he stood at death’s door, and urged him to confess and to receive the sacraments.¹ Ferdinand, however, turned away his confessor, Juan de Matienzo, and suggested that the friar was more interested in negotiating with the king for gifts and privileges than in helping him to unburden his conscience. Ferdinand insisted he was not dying. Apparently a few weeks earlier, while the King was in Plasencia, a member of his Council had come from the nearby town of El

¹ Throughout this anecdote, I draw on Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal’s *Memorial o Registro Breve de los Reyes Católicos* (Edición Facsimil), ed. Juan Carretero Zamora (Segovia: Patronato del Alcázar, 1992). Chronicles by other chroniclers, including Alonso de Santa Cruz, include a version of this anecdote nearly identical except in a few minor details.

Barco de Ávila, bringing word from a local *beata* (a holy woman reputed to possess powers of prophecy). This particular *beata* had been an intermittent presence at Ferdinand’s court for at least seven years, and our source tells us that she had prophesied that King Ferdinand would not die until he had conquered Jerusalem.² Eventually members of the royal entourage concerned for the salvation of Ferdinand’s soul prevailed on the king to accept last rites. Ferdinand called back his confessor, who administered the sacraments. On the afternoon of January 22, Ferdinand received extreme unction, and on January 23 he died wearing the habit of the Dominican order.

Galíndez de Carvajal recorded that the cause of death was edema combined with heart disease. He wrote that some, however, had a different explanation for the king’s demise. Citing the fact that Ferdinand’s jaw drooped at the end of his life, some believed he had died from ingesting a concoction of harmful herbs. Galíndez de Carvajal asserted that nothing certain was known of this allegation, but that the theory was that Ferdinand had been given an herbal potion designed to arouse his desire for the Queen, his second wife, Germana de Foix, because he hoped to conceive with her an heir for his realms of Aragon and Naples.

At this point it is worth pausing to take stock of a few salient points that are conveyed by this anecdote. When we imagine the early modern Spanish empire, we

² “A lo qual dio causa que estando el Rey en Plasencia vno del Consejo que venia de la beata del Varco, le dixo, que la beata le hacia saber de parte de Dios, que no hauia de morir, hasta que ganasse a Hierusalem. Y por esto no queria ver, ni llamar a fray Joan de Matienço de la Orden de Predicadores, su confessor, puesto que algunas veces el confessor lo procurò. Pero el Rey le echaua de si: diciendo, que venia mas con fin de negociar memoriales, que entender en el descargo de su consciencia.” Galíndez de Carvajal’s *Memorial o Registro Breve de los Reyes Católicos*, Año de 1516, Capítulo Segundo. [The Beata was a Dominican, according to Peter Martyr. See his letter #489 in Vol. XI of his *Epistolario* (pp. 40-2), cited in n. 386, p. 220, of my dissertation. This Dominican status seems to have protected her, and is reflected in Ferdinand’s choice of burial habit. Cisneros, on the other hand, was a Franciscan]

reflexively think of the establishment of colonies in the Caribbean and on the American mainland, an empire decidedly Atlantic in its orientation. Less noted is the fact that, concurrent with this moment of Atlantic expansion, Spain embarked on an ambitious course of Mediterranean conquest. Between 1497 and 1510, the Crowns of Aragon and Castile won control of the southern half of the Italian Peninsula and established a string of outposts and presidios along a 2500-mile stretch of the North African coastline, thereby making Spain the dominant power in the western Mediterranean. King Ferdinand of Aragon intended to use his newly acquired territories as forward bases from which to extend his conquests into the eastern Mediterranean and beyond. The monarch and many of his advisors harbored plans to conquer Egypt, Greece, Anatolia, Palestine, and a vaguely defined swath of Asia. If we are to believe Galíndez de Carvajal, then even in his final days Ferdinand remained focused on his Mediterranean interests.

Moreover, this anecdote contests the traditional teleological interpretation of Spanish history that has tended to present the union of the crowns of Aragon and Castile (through the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1469) as the starting point of the inexorable rise of the early modern Spanish empire. Ferdinand was attempting right up to the end to produce a male heir who would inherit his patrimonial lands of the Crown of Aragon, which included eastern Iberia as well as the Italian possessions of Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples, but did not include Castile. Galíndez de Carvajal’s account illustrates that the ultimate union of Aragon and Castile was in fact an accident that occurred only because the aging king, in spite of his consumption of aphrodisiacs, was unable to produce an heir with his second wife Germana de Foix.

Galíndez de Carvajal occupied numerous important positions at Ferdinand’s court, including posts on the Council of Castile and as official chronicler. In this capacity, he spent a great deal of time in the king’s presence, a fact that suggests that he knew Ferdinand’s mind or, at the very least, understood the capacity of the written word to serve as vehicle for the projection of the sort of royal image Ferdinand desired to see propagated. In this light, it is tempting to read the anecdote about the conquest of Jerusalem as the chronicler’s attempt to portray the king in as pious a light as possible. And yet, the Mediterranean orientation of Ferdinand’s reign was quite real. As king of Aragon, Ferdinand inherited a Mediterranean political outlook that shaped his priorities. These Mediterranean interests entangled the Spanish realms of Aragon and Castile in conflicts with Portugal, France, the Ottoman Empire, and sundry North African states. These Mediterranean wars required legal justification. What the eminent historian of Latin America, Lewis Hanke, termed the “the Spanish struggle for justice in the conquest of America” is a well known historical topic, one that embroiled the likes of Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and Francisco de Vitoria in debates over the possibility for non-Christian peoples to exercise *dominium*, or to enjoy sovereignty. Less noted is the fact that Spanish wars and conquests in the Mediterranean, whether in Catholic Italy or Muslim North Africa, also demanded legal and moral justification. Galíndez de Carvajal’s reference to Ferdinand’s interest in effecting a Christian recovery of Jerusalem is related to these legal arguments.

Early modern Spaniards themselves, however, conceived of the Mediterranean as a sphere of imperial expansion and competition every bit as much as they did the

Atlantic. Moreover, they held a well-developed set of ideologies concerning the inner sea that conditioned their policies there and their relations with other powers that vied for Mediterranean hegemony. Spanish ideologies of empire in the Mediterranean differed from those in the Atlantic, but the two were not totally divorced either.

To early modern Spaniards, the Mediterranean represented a space of trade, exchange, and communication. It was also a space of war, sometimes articulated according to the terms of crusade or jihad (**vs. Angevins, vs. Muslims of North Africa, and later vs. the Ottomans and French**). Finally, the sea was a site of imperial competition: the history of the Mediterranean since Antiquity determined that expansionary ventures were invariably represented and understood in terms of the construction of empire.

Early modern Spaniards’ vision of the Mediterranean encompassed all of these facets: they certainly perceived the material opportunities that Mediterranean trade afforded. Numerous ports, from Naples to Bougie to Alexandria, served as loci of commerce, and Spanish monarchs sought to control this trade in hopes of benefitting the merchants of Barcelona and Valencia. The eastern Mediterranean region of Alexandria, the Lower Nile, and Sinai was the fulcrum between the commercial networks of the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean.³ King Ferdinand re-established the Catalan consul at Alexandria in 1485 and then, during the first two decades of the sixteenth century, entertained proposals to conquer the Egyptian city, in order to bring it under

³ Abbas Hamdani, “Columbus and the Recovery of Jerusalem,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 99, no. 1 (Jan-Mar, 1979): 39-48. Hamdani notes that, “The Muslim regime of the Mamluks lay astride the international East-West trade route by virtue of their holding the areas bordering on the Red Sea.” *ibid.*, p. 40.

Spanish sovereignty. This was part of a protracted effort to tap into trade from the Indian Ocean region, in particular the lucrative spice trade. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spaniards understood that a Mediterranean route accessing the eastern trade was more practical than both the trans-Atlantic route to the Indies sought by Columbus and the circumnavigation of Africa pursued by the Portuguese.

In addition to these economic considerations, Spanish interests in the Mediterranean were strongly ideological. They were predicated on an understanding of the Mediterranean as the center of the world and the locus in which the Spanish hoped to establish a universal Christian empire, a form of political organization deeply indebted to medieval political theory as elaborated by writers such as Dante, in his tract *On Monarchy*. Indeed, the Mediterranean in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople was a region dominated by appeals to universalist ideologies, both Christian and Islamic. Polities including Valois France, Trastámara Spain, Mamluk Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire all employed various articulations of universal sovereignty to cement their political legitimacy. In each of these cases, control over particular holy sites served as the foundation for such claims. Somewhat counter-intuitively, Christopher Columbus’ interest in effecting a Christian “recovery” of Jerusalem was one of the factors that spurred his interest in sailing west across the Atlantic.

In late 1500 Columbus presented to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain a memorandum advocating the conquest of Jerusalem. The document was vague and short on specifics, although it did suggest that by traversing the Atlantic to reach Asia, the

Spaniards would be able to approach Jerusalem from the East rather than the West. Columbus’ crusading ambition is a facet of the navigator’s thought that has garnered a fair amount of scholarly attention in recent years. Decades ago, historians tended to dismiss his crusading objectives as the febrile ramblings of a man coming unhinged. More recently, scholars have taken Columbus’ religiosity more seriously as representative of widespread currents of fifteenth-century thought, but they have not sufficiently contextualized his religious and political ideology against that of his contemporaries.⁴

Just over five years following Columbus’ memorandum, the Spanish naval commander Count Pedro Navarro composed a *Memorial* to Ferdinand exhorting the King to subjugate the Ottoman Empire and to conquer Jerusalem. The contrast with Columbus’ memorandum is striking: Navarro’s text is detailed, practical, and concrete. Not only does it offer a precise strategy for an attack on Ottoman Greece and Turkey, it elaborates a coherent vision of a Spanish Mediterranean Empire while presenting a “political theology” of Spanish kingship and its proper relationship to other Mediterranean powers.

While scholars have pored over Columbus’ writings, translating and publishing many of them in the process, Navarro’s *Memorial* remains unpublished and little known to modern historians. I use this comparison here because I feel that it is emblematic of the discrepancy in modern scholarship on early modern Spain’s imperial ventures in the

⁴ *vid.* Alain Milhou, *Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista* (Valladolid, 1983); Pauline Moffit Watts, “Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus’ ‘Enterprise of the Indies’,” *American Historical Review* 90, 1985; 73-102. Carol Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

Atlantic and Mediterranean basins. The sixteenth-century development of a vast territorial empire in the Americas, when viewed against the more modest array of Spanish imperial possessions in the Mediterranean, has determined that (until quite recently) modern scholars have devoted relatively little attention to early modern Spain’s Old World empire.⁵

In this study I examine documentation generated by the Castilian naval commander Count Pedro Navarro (ca. 1460-1528), King Ferdinand of Aragon (r. 1479-1516), King Emmanuel I of Portugal (r. 1495-1521), and others, as these figures corresponded regarding aspirations to conquer significant portions eastern Mediterranean in a bid to establish hegemony over the inner sea. The principal subject of my analysis is an official *Memorial* composed by Pedro Navarro in 1506 and intended for King Ferdinand of Aragon.⁶ Navarro’s service to the crown came primarily in the form of martial actions. He was a military engineer and a commander of Spanish naval forces in the war against France for control of the Kingdom of Naples. The contents of his *Memorial*, however, demonstrate a rather wide-ranging and eclectic education.⁷

⁵ This discrepancy is also due to a dominant strain in Spanish historiography, particularly during the Franco years, that tended to privilege Castilian history over Aragonese, at least during the early modern era.

⁶ Pedro Navarro, *Memorial para la Magestad en orden a la Conquista de Jerusalem*. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Mss./19699, caja 60. The *Memorial* exists in a single manuscript copy in Spain’s National Library in Madrid. The document has never been published and only rarely has it been examined by scholars.

⁷ Navarro was made Count of Oliveto in 1505 for his service in the war against France for control of the southern Italian Kingdom of Naples. On this, and other aspects of his life, see: *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, tomo 25 (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de Calero, 1854; reprinted in Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1966): *Historia del Conde Pedro Navarro, General de Infantería, Marina e Ingeniero, en los Reinados de Fernando e Isabel, y de doña Juana y su hijo don Carlos*, por don Martín de los Heros. Document #3: *Título de Conde de Oliveto á favor de Pedro Navarro* (pp. 407-12); given in Segovia, 1 June 1505 (“Datum in civitate Segoviae die prima mensis junii octavae inditionis anno à nativitate domini millesimo quingentesimo quinto: Regnorum vero nostrorum videlicet Siciliae ultra Farum anno tricesimo octavo; Aragonum et aliorum vicesimo septimo; Siciliae autem citra Farum et Hierusalem tertio.” This document grants Navarro the title of “Count” for his service in winning back “our

This *Memorial* is best described as a formal, eight-page political-theological brief, outlining in detail Navarro’s plan for the effective conquest of Greece, Turkey, and the Holy Land. It was composed in Italy, and at numerous points throughout the *Memorial* Navarro explains that he will go into greater detail when he meets face-to-face with King Ferdinand. Presumably, this anticipates Ferdinand’s visit to his newly acquired Neapolitan realm in the fall of 1506.⁸

The military plan proposed by Navarro charted a course through the Muslim-ruled lands of Greece and Turkey that were formerly Christian and to which Ferdinand held symbolic title. In 1502 he had obtained the rights to the Byzantine Empire from the last Greek claimant, Andrew Paleologus. Through his recent conquest of Naples, Ferdinand had acquired the title to the defunct crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, a crown that was linked to that of Naples.⁹ Navarro’s exhortation to action, however, was not merely a military project. The *Memorial* is a deeply religiously infused text, and one of the principle objectives that Navarro lists is the ending of the Christian schism and the restoration of the Orthodox Christians to obedience to Rome.¹⁰ Navarro had no formal training as a theologian, but his text bears the imprint of one of the themes that most

kingdom” of Sicily “*citra Farum*,” the most common name designating the Kingdom of Naples (p. 408). In 1504 the Treaty of Lyon had secured a three-year peace between Spain and France, rendering official the Aragonese control of the Kingdom of Naples that had been won in the Battle of Garigliano (concluded 28 December 1503). Although Ferdinand of Aragon did not obtain the papal investiture of the Kingdom of Naples until 1510, from 1504 he effectively ruled the Italian realm as king.

⁸ The document is in Castilian Spanish, although the spelling is heavily Italianized. This suggests that Navarro likely dictated the *Memorial* to a scribe whose first language was Italian.

⁹ Ferdinand thus held the right to the conquest of all the lands Navarro discusses, just as King Emmanuel I of Portugal, since Vasco da Gama’s return in 1499, had claimed the right to the conquest of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India (*Senhor da conquista e da navegação e comércio de Etiópia, Arábia, Pérsia e da Índia*).

¹⁰ Navarro urges the conquest of Turkey, of the “*Casa Sancta*,” and the “*restitutio dela sancta eglesia oriental a la sancta fe catholica*.” Navarro, *Memorial para la Magestad en orden a la Conquista de Jerusalem*, f. 1r.

exercised the Latin church of his day: the aspiration to achieve a union of the Eastern and Western churches. Throughout his text, Navarro’s writing is deeply inflected by the currents of Church reform and Christian universalist thought that had grown so powerful during the second half of the fifteenth century in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453.

Navarro’s proposal, predicated on the assistance of a Greek Orthodox fifth column, ran counter to ideas expressed by figures with whom Navarro was in dialogue. The course of action he encouraged was in fact a refutation of crusading strategy developed over the previous three centuries. The *Memorial* grew out of a policy dispute between Navarro and the powerful Castilian archbishop Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1436-1517), Cardinal of Spain from 1507. The latter was a proponent of a crusade strategy that was known as “the way of Egypt.” This was a plan for the conquest of the Holy Land predicated on establishing control of the mouth of the Nile River (or the cities of Alexandria and Damietta) and then employing that strategic point as a base from which to attack Jerusalem, approaching Palestine by land from Sinai, by sea, or through a joint land and sea operation. The “way of Egypt” was the strategy employed by Salah ad-Din (Saladin) when he conquered Jerusalem from Christian rule in 1187, and European crusaders, including King Louis IX of France (r. 1226-1270), subsequently adopted the same approach, albeit without success.¹¹ The Majorcan polymath Ramón Llull adapted the “way of Egypt” to an Iberian milieu, by devising a strategy that entailed first the conquest of Granada, then the Maghrib, followed by Alexandria and finally

¹¹ Joinville, *Life of St. Louis*, in *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London: Penguin, 1963), in particular Chapters 4-8.

Jerusalem. This strategy, including Lull’s adaptation, was developed largely in response to the difficulties posed by attempts to move crusading armies across Anatolia.¹² In his *Memorial*, Navarro argued strongly against proposals for a North African crusade and advocated, instead, the conquest of Ottoman Greece and Turkey, a victory that would be assured by the assistance the Latin invaders would receive from the Greek Orthodox inhabitants.

In addition to what he termed the “sterility” of the land, Navarro believed the lack of a local Christian population in the Maghrib would pose difficulties to effective Spanish rule. In his *Memorial*, Navarro argued vociferously against Cisneros’ projected string of North African presidios, suggesting, with a rhetorical flourish, that in order to hold those points, Ferdinand would need so many Christian settlers as to depopulate the entirety of Spain.¹³ The conquest of Greece and Turkey could be more easily effected and maintained, wrote Navarro, due to the substantial population of Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ Navarro was correct in his assessment of the size of the Orthodox population living within the Ottoman Empire: in the early sixteenth century the Ottomans still ruled over a Christian majority, and this was particularly true in the

¹² These divergent views on crusading strategies are discussed by Richard Fletcher, in his work on Christian-Muslims relations, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Dramatic Story of the Earliest Encounters Between Christians and Muslims* (London: Penguin Books, 2003). As Fletcher writes, the efforts that focused on “the way of Egypt” were predicated on establishing control over Egypt, then marching a crusading army through northern Sinai to Jerusalem: “For millennia before the commercial exploitation of oil changed all sorts of balances, it has been broadly true that he who holds Egypt controls the eastern Mediterranean.” (p. 81)

¹³ Pedro Navarro, *Memorial*, f. 4r and again at f. 4v: “a V.R.M. sea el animo a la sancta Impresa: y non a perder tiempo gientes en la barbaria [the Barbary Coast]: que tomada quando se podiesse tomar cumple se aya de dexar y spanya despoblar.”

¹⁴ *ibid.*, f. 2r. In regards specifically to Turkey, Navarro writes, “es tierra muy habitada Imperio porque toda o por la muy mayor parte es habitada de xanos.” Navarro repeats his conviction that Turkey possesses a large Christian population on f. 4v of the *Memorial*: “La turquia es toda habitada de xanos.”

case of their possessions in the Balkan Peninsula.¹⁵ Navarro argued that these Christians living under Ottoman rule would rebel against their overlords, should Ferdinand invade, thereby allowing the Aragonese king to take possession of the land with little bloodshed and without the need to import Latin Christians to secure and hold the land.¹⁶ Navarro clearly believed that the Orthodox Christians would act not only as settlers who would help hold the land for Ferdinand, but potentially in a military capacity as well: he claimed that in his conquest Ferdinand would gain many “valedores,” a term best translated as “defenders,” in a military sense.¹⁷

Navarro asserted that the Orthodox Christian inhabitants would support Ferdinand because they were Christian and because, being Christian, they were oppressed by the Ottoman sultan.¹⁸ Navarro perceived the condition of the Christians living in the Ottoman Empire as one of slavery and servitude. Among the benefits that he argued would accrue to Ferdinand following a conquest of Greece and Turkey, Navarro listed “the gratitude of so many Christians, presently in a state of servitude and slavery and continually afflicted by the Mohammedan blasphemy.”¹⁹ In these assertions, Navarro

¹⁵ Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), pp. 25-6, where the author discusses the relatively flexible and pragmatic form of governing that the Ottomans developed in the fifteenth century in order to maintain their control over a Christian majority.

¹⁶ Pedro Navarro, *Memorial*, f. 2v: “Cumple que los tales farmulas desemparen las prouintias y dichas prouintias non hauendo deffensores : y mas siendo xanos subito se rebelan : y assi dicha V. R. Mta entrando : posiede sin lançada y herida la mayor parte de la tierra : y sin hauer menester hombres agardala : por ser xanos y ser fora de aquella angaria de los fijos y fijas se mantienen y mantendian en la obediencia de V. R. M.”

¹⁷ *ibid.*, f. 2r. I am translating the term “valedores” as “defenders,” rather than “protectors,” as this best fits the sense of Navarro’s argument.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, f. 2v. “Aquesta fortaleza se corrompe con su propia natura : por la causa suso dicha que los vasallos xanos son angariados del gran turqo : en los fijos y fijas y en los ducados pagan por cabeça : quien siendo por V.R. M. libres de la angaria de los dineros obligados : con alegria la pagaran por su propia libertat y de sus fijos : pagandola V. R. alteza en tal fortaleza cresce y el gran turqo manqua.”

¹⁹ *ibid.*, f. 1r: “la compasion de tantos xanos sclauos y sieruos: continuamente afligidos ala blasfemia machometicha.”

appears to interpret religious difference in the Ottoman Empire according to the parameters with which he was familiar in Iberia. In the fifteenth-century Iberian Peninsula in which Navarro had come of age, to be non-Christian was to occupy a second-class rank. Navarro’s understanding of the sentiments of Orthodox Christians living under Ottoman rule assumes that the religious tensions that characterized late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Spain held true in the multi-confessional society of the Ottoman Empire.

Pedro Navarro’s Iberian contemporaries shared his conviction that the Orthodox Christian inhabitants of the Turkish realms would naturally ally themselves with Latin Christian invaders. King Emmanuel of Portugal, in a letter to Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros of March 2, 1506, voiced his belief that Turkey and Greece might be conquered with ease due to the great number of Christians who inhabited those lands.²⁰

A few years later, the Cardinal of Santa Cruz wrote a letter to King Ferdinand expressing precisely the same belief concerning the proclivities of the Greek Orthodox. The Cardinal explained to Ferdinand that, thanks to a convergence of factors, all of Greece could be taken with ease and with few soldiers, due to the desire of the Greeks to be ruled by Christians.²¹

²⁰ Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Mss./19699, caja 61: *Carta del Rey D. Manuel de Portugal para el Cardenal Cisneros, sobre la conquista de Jerusalem* (Abrantes, 2 March 1506). The originals of these letters are housed in the archive at El Escorial. The copies held at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid are sixteenth-century copies that reproduce the originals verbatim. These letters are not published. Folio 3r of the first of two letters: “y la tierra del turco asi de grecia como de turquia segun lo q tenemos sabido y oydo tiene la mejor dispusicion y manera del mundo para se poder conquistar por aver en ella muchos xpianos y otras calidades q en ella ay.”

²¹ Letter from Cardinal of Santa Cruz to Ferdinand of Aragon, 11 April 1514 (Simancas, Estado. Legajo 847, fol. 83; printed in José M. Doussinague, *El Testamento Político de Fernando el Católico*, (Madrid: CSIC, 1950), pp. 305-6) “... parece que si Dios quisiese que esta santa tregua traxese paz y deudo de V. Al. y sus deudos con Françia que con mucha façilidad y con poca gente se tomaria todo lo de Grecia por la grand enemistad de los turcos entre si y grant voluntad del pueblo griego a reducirse a cristianos si veen

Ferdinand’s own correspondence reveals that he held the same view of the Christian inhabitants of the eastern Mediterranean. The Aragonese king expressed confidence in the success of a planned crusade, due to the assistance he expected to receive from Eastern Christians.²²

con que seguramente lo fagan y esto es muy cierto y dello yo he avido mucha inteligencia y todo el peligro de los cristianos, es solo el turco que lo del Soldan y de Tunez es poco en su comparación, V. Al. lo prouea por Dios y procure que el ungaro no componga con el Turco paz ni tregua . . .” (pp. 305-6). Santa Cruz later writes that this moment is opportune because “Dios tiene tan encendido el fuego entre los turcos y tanta afecion de los griegos a escluir su dominio . . .” (p. 306). B.N. Madrid, Mss./1490: docs. having to do with international relations under Fern el Cat (460 ff., 17th-century). In the section “Cartas para el Rey Católico,” the third letter is from the Cardinal of Santa Cruz to Ferdinand, re: how circumstances have conspired for this to be a particularly favorable year to make war on the Turk (who will be preoccupied in Anatolia) and to conquer Greece & Constantinople; letter refers to Pedro de Navarro, and discusses plans he (Pedro de N.) laid out in Naples (sent from Rome, 11 April 1514) (ff. 338v-339v):

“Muy Catholico Serenissimo Principe Rey y señor

Despues de la otra escripta se entiende que El Turco es muy bexado, de su sobrino [el guerno] del sofi en la Anatholica, que es la assia menor y es el natural estado y ansi dexado todo lo de greçia, Com poco pressidio el ba em persona assi con todos sus exercitos de forma que pareçe no podra este año mucho haçer en europa antes pareçe que ssi Dios quissiesse que esta, [esta] tregua traxesse paz y deudo .V. alta. y sus deudos com françia que con muçha façilidad, Y, com poca gente, se tomaria todo lo de graçia por la general enemistad de los turcos, entre si y general boluntad del pueblo griego a reduçirse, a christianos si ben con q [seguramense] lo fagan y esto es muy çierto y dello yo e hauido muçha inseligençia y todo el peligro de los christianos, es solo el turco que lo del soldan y de tunez es poco en su comparación .V. Alteça lo probea por Dios y procure que el ungaro no [componga] con el Turco paz ni tregua al qual agora el Turco, ofre toda cossa / [f. 339r] segun se entiende y .V. Alteça debe con el haçer algun deudo, como [entiendo] se a platicado de una nieta y su dibission haçe grande mense (meaning “grandemente”?) a que con lo que en napoles, deçia el Conde Dom Pedro Navarro de una Armada de XV. o XXV. hombres que de salto hiriesse a gatipoli en los castillos del estreçho se tomaria çierto, Constantinopla para Vro. nieto que a ello ayudaria, el emperador y el Rey de françia dando su [hija] y los [eneratos] que aogra estan heçhos, actualmense con secreto y diligencia, combertirlos a esto quando, Dios tiene tan [ençendido] el fuego entre los turcos y tanta afecçion de los griegos A escluir de su dominio, pareçeme que este es mi [offiçio] y biniendo, oy de andar, las siese (meaning “siete”?) yglesias Por .V. Alteça y por la paz los embaxadores de arragussa me han de esto del Turco çertificado y por esso lo escribo, aunque V. Alteça lo entendera por otras partes espeçial por la santidad De nuestro S.or que dessea [esto] muçho y çierto / [f. 339v] es ya cassi [imfamia?] de este siglo no [ocurrir?] aque el Turco no emue (meaning “embie”) sus Cursarios con tanto cargo por todos estos mares desta via sin les haçer Ressençia y toda Italia esta para huir y dejar la armada donde Tierra de Turco [descondiesse/ desçendiesse?] si fuesse de alguna [q.da?] y .V. Alteça a de probeer en esto sobre todos q tiene con ellos mas confines, la uida y Real estado de .V. Alteça, Dios [muestro su/ muestrose?] Bienabenturadamense prospere y acreçiese en Roma. XI de abril de DXIII.

humil seruidor criado [y hetbursce/ y hetbur s de?] V. Alteça que sus Reales manos vessa=

El cardenal de santa +”

²² Letter from King Ferdinand of Aragon, cited in: Luis Morales Oliver, “La Figura de Fernando el Católico en la España de su Tiempo” in *Curso de Conferencias sobre la Política Africana de los Reyes Católicos*. 4 tomos. (Madrid: CSCIC Instituto de Estudios Africanos, 1951-1952), tomo 4, pp. 73-90.

The view of the Greek Orthodox potentially acting as a fifth column in the event of a Latin crusade against the Ottomans held currency in other parts of Europe as well. In 1513, two Italian monks, Paolo Giustinian and Pietro Querini, presented a *Memorial* to Pope Leo X. The content of this document bears a striking resemblance to that of Navarro’s *Memorial*, composed seven years earlier. The two Italian monks exhorted the pope to launch a crusade against the Turks and advocated attempts to convert the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Syria to Christianity.²³ In Giustinian and Querini’s text, however, it is the authors’ confidence in the assistance of the Greeks that guarantees the success of their proposal, as the authors posit, with a rhetorical flourish, that upon a Latin invasion one hundred million Orthodox Christians would join the invading force to assist in defeating the Turks.²⁴

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I bring up Pedro Navarro’s *Memorial* because, in its exhortation to King Ferdinand, it offers a fairly concise elaboration of this vision of a Spanish universal

Morales Oliver cites Ferdinand’s conviction that he would be welcomed by the Christian inhabitants of the eastern Mediterranean: “Y cuando caminemos en la conquista, recibiremos de los cristianos de Oriente y recibiremos de los cautivos la ayuda, porque ellos se levantarán a nuestro favor.” (p. 82) Unfortunately, Morales Oliver provides neither date nor addressee for this letter.

²³ The Mamluks, of course, were threatened by the Ottomans’ expansion in the eastern Mediterranean. For this reason, Catholic Europeans held out hope that they might serve as allies against the Turks. In 1516-1517 the Ottomans conquered the Mamluks, incorporating their lands into the Ottoman Empire.

²⁴ Giustinian and Querini, as cited in K.M. Setton, “Leo X and the Turks,” pp. 367-424; reprinted in K.M. Setton, *Europe and the Levant in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: Variorum, 1974), here at p. 372: “Moreover, once the Christian army had begun to fight and the first sign of victory had become manifest, according to Giustinian and Querini, 100,000,000 [*centena millia millium*] Christian subjects of the Turks would rise up and use the arms they did not lack.”

empire centered on the Mediterranean. But what do we mean when we talk about early modern aspirations to universal empire? Are we talking about actual control over the entirety of the world? Well, the short answer is yes and no ...

The main tenets of this concept, according to Christian writers, were:

- A) A general peace among Christians
- B) To end the Great Schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches
- C) The restoration of the formerly Christian lands of Asia and Africa to Christendom
- D) The establishment of a universal politico-religious order [**these were the tenets among Catholic polities – worth developing further the fact that in the Ottoman Empire the tenets of universalist claims of sovereignty were somewhat distinct**]

A) Navarro addresses the first of these, Christian peace and union, when he discusses the benefits that would stem from a Spanish assault on the Ottoman Empire: Beyond the service to God, Navarro wrote, a Spanish crusade would result in a cessation of what he described as the “civil wars” that persist among Christians and the attainment of “a general peace among Christians throughout Europe.”²⁵

B) Secondly, regarding the ending of the Great Schism: In his *Memorial*, Navarro resorts to the traditional conception of the Church in corporeal terms: he writes that Greek kings and emperors had become alienated from the Holy Mother Church of Rome, and for this

²⁵ “Primo. una paz pacifica por toda la xanidat en toda europa,” Navarro, *Memorial*, f. 3v.

reason were “members that had become separated from the mystical body of Christ our Redeemer.”²⁶ This separation was the source of the corruption of the mystical body of Christendom. However, continued Navarro, in recovering Greece and Jerusalem all would be unified, and in union there would be no corruption.²⁷ He goes on to argue that a Spanish subjugation of the Ottoman Empire, including its many Greek Orthodox subjects, would result in “the restitution of the holy Eastern Church to the holy Catholic faith.”²⁸

It is worth noting once more, however, that Navarro’s *Memorial* proposed not only a military conquest of Greece and Turkey, and the liberation of “enslaved” Eastern Christians, but also a plan for ending the schism between the Eastern and Western churches. Indeed, Navarro believed his proposal would effect the restoration of the Orthodox Church to the Holy Mother Church of Rome, a major step in establishing a universal Christian union.²⁹

Composed, as it was, in 1506, three centuries after the zenith of European crusading efforts, Navarro’s *Memorial* might appear somewhat Quixotic, a relic from a bygone age. In fact, the text is strongly representative of some of the most influential

²⁶ Navarro’s original reads: “membros apartados del cuerpo mistico de X.o [Christo] nuestro Redemptor.” *Memorial*, f. 2r.

²⁷ Navarro, *Memorial*, f. 2r.

²⁸ Navarro urges the conquest of Turkey, of the Casa Sancta, and the “restitutio dela sancta elesia oriental a la sancta fe catholica.” Navarro, *Memorial para la Magestad en orden a la Conquista de Jerusalem*, f. 1r.

²⁹ This is what Navarro describes as the “restitutio dela sancta elesia oriental a la sancta fe catholica.” *Memorial*, f. 1r. Navarro does not provide the sort of advice on precisely how to end the schism that the modern historian might desire. Implicit in his *Memorial*, however, might be the understanding of the doctrine of Caesaropapism, which traditionally granted authority of the Byzantine emperor over the Greek Church. As Ferdinand had obtained the rights to the Byzantine Empire from the last Byzantine claimant, Andrew Paleologus, in 1502, this, in theory at least, gave him authority over the Greek Church. As titular head of the Orthodox Church, Ferdinand would have been in at least a legal position, if not a practical one, to force the Orthodox patriarchs to recognize Roman primacy.

intellectual currents in early sixteenth-century Europe. The *Memorial* is but one of many similar crusading texts produced around the same time, largely in response to the rise of the Ottoman Empire. What is more, the crusading agenda present in Navarro’s text is melded to an impetus aimed at church reform that swept fifteenth-century Europe, in part as a result of the schism between the Roman and Avignon papacies as well as corruption in the office of the papacy and an attendant decline in the spiritual authority popes could wield. Would-be reformers of the Church worked through a series of church councils in their attempts to cleanse the Church of its corruption, and some, losing faith in the office of the papacy, looked to a temporal ruler to purify the mystical body of the *Ecclesia*. Navarro’s *Memorial* draws on all of these elements, ascribing to Ferdinand of Aragon the spiritual role of cleansing and unifying the universal church.

Columbus’ interest in an Asian approach to Jerusalem, alluded to earlier in this chapter, is of a piece with a well-established Catholic tradition of detecting the presence of potential crusading allies in distant lands of the East. By 1506 the elusive Christian ruler Prester John had a venerable, if unverified, lineage. King Emmanuel of Portugal, in a letter to Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros in anticipation of a crusade to be launched in the summer of 1506, expressed optimism that the Latins would soon join forces with Prester John and march together on Jerusalem.³⁰ Nor were Catholic crusading plans

³⁰ Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Mss./19699, caja 61: *Carta del Rey D. Manuel de Portugal para el Cardenal Cisneros, sobre la conquista de Jerusalem* (Abrantes, 2 March 1506). “y cierto que quien bien quisiere mirar el misterio del descubrimiento de la yndia y querer *nuestro Señor* que en estos tiempos christianos pudiesen llegar a santa catalina de monte sinay a hazer gerra [sic] a los moros y que se pudiesen ajuntar con los del Preste Ju.o [Prester John] como confiamos en *nuestro Señor* que *nuestra* gente y armada haga pues *nuestros* navios llegan a sus puertos mas le parecera que *nuestro Señor* quiere que los moros sean destruydos en este tiempo de lo que en otra cosa alguna.” (f.2v) In a similar vein, upon first arriving in India the Portuguese understood the Hindu inhabitants to be schismatic Christians who needed only to be brought back into line with Rome, so that they might join forces in a war against Islam. On this, see: António da Silva Rego, ed., *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do*

predicated solely on the discovery of some distant Christian ally; there was also some hope of joining forces with an Islamic power, such as the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Syria or the Safavid rulers of Persia, in order to defeat the ascendant Ottoman Empire that (since 1453) ruled from Constantinople.³¹ Navarro’s crusading plans predicated on receiving assistance from Greek Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Sultan thus fit into a broader pattern of crusading plans that expected to discover allies for a holy war against the Ottoman Empire. At first glance, Navarro’s would appear to be a more plausible proposal than these related plans, and the degree of detail he provides makes his text a far more concrete and practical plan than Columbus’ vague exhortation to Ferdinand and Isabella.

Beyond the similarities that Navarro’s text bears to contemporary crusading literature, the *Memorial* is emblematic of a reformist movement in Europe desirous of purifying the Catholic Church and attaining Christian union. The most significant gestures in this direction arose in the form of the fifteenth-century Conciliar Movement.

A series of church councils, held successively at Constance (1414-1418), Basel

Oriente-India, 12 vols. (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1946-58): In particular, the letter from King Emmanuel of Portugal to Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, July 1499 (vol. I, doc. 1, pp. 3-): Here Emmanuel discusses bringing the eastern “Christians” of India (actually Hindus) back to Catholicism, then forging an alliance, that they might then destroy Islam.

³¹ On the European view that differentiated between various Islamic polities, see: Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008). Meserve emphasizes that Renaissance humanists thought of the Ottomans as illegitimate, as usurpers, in a way that other Islamic empires were not (pp. 1-21). On p. 11 she lists the Mamluks as among those more “legitimate” Islamic polities with which alliances might be forged. In regards to European understanding of the early sixteenth-century rise of the Safavid Empire, see pp. 231-6: here Meserve argues that the rise of the Safavids was interpreted by Europeans as a sign that God had created a force in the East to lend the Christians assistance against the Ottomans. As noted above, the Italian monks Giustinian and Querini viewed the Mamluk rulers of Egypt as potential converts to Christianity and allies in a war against the Ottomans. See: K.M. Setton, “Leo X and the Turks,” pp. 367-424; reprinted in K.M. Setton, *Europe and the Levant in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: Variorum, 1974), here at p. 372.

(1431-1449), and Ferrara/Florence/Rome (1438-1442), took up the most pressing issues facing Latin Christendom, among these the papal schism within the western church as well as the longstanding schism between the Latin and Orthodox churches. To these aspirations to Christian unity was joined a crusading ideology directed toward the subjugation of the Ottoman Empire and a Christian recovery of the Holy Land.

At the Council of Basel the Portuguese Benedictine friar Andrés de Escobar gave a speech that captured the spirit of the age: the friar stressed the necessity of reforming the church, members and head alike (to use his language), to subject the infidel Muslims and the pagans to the holy Catholic faith, to recover the Holy Land, Jerusalem, and other lands that once belonged to Christians, and to bring into line the Greek schismatics, all under the leadership of the Roman pontificate of the universal church.³²

Several years later, the Council of Florence was convened with the specific aim of unifying the Latin and Orthodox churches. Present at this Council were representatives of every known branch of the Church.³³ The assembled representatives issued an act of union on July 6, 1439, but there was dissent among the Greek representatives at Florence, and popular opposition in Byzantine lands culminated in violence in the streets of Constantinople, preventing the decree from having any impact once the Orthodox representatives returned home.³⁴

³² Andrés de Escobar, as cited in Alain Milhou, *Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista español* (Valladolid: Casa-Museo de Colón, 1983), p. 186

³³ The Council was initially convened in Ferrara, but was moved to Florence and later to Rome. See: Robert Finlay, “Crisis and Crusade in the Mediterranean: Venice, Portugal, and the Cape Route to India (1498-1509),” *Studi Veneziani* 28 (1994): 45-90.

³⁴ See: K.M. Setton, “Byzantium and the Italian Renaissance,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia, 1956): pp. 1-76. Setton here examines the sessions held at Ferrara and Florence with the aim of reunifying the Eastern and Western churches (p. 69). On the eruption of violence in the streets of Constantinople following receipt of news of the act of union, see: Deno J. Geanakoplos,

Navarro’s desire to see the Orthodox Church subject to Rome is thus consistent with a common Latin aspiration in fifteenth-century Europe. However, like the Latin prelates at the Council of Florence decades earlier, Navarro failed to give due weight to Greek antipathy toward union with Rome. In the violence of the Greek popular response to the decree of union issued at Florence in 1439, some scholars detect a cultural, rather than theological, basis for this position. Deno Geanakoplos, for instance, asserts that, beyond the religious obstacles to Christian union, there existed other considerations perhaps even more problematic to resolve: “There was another factor, more difficult to define but of at least equal importance – the deep-rooted antagonism for the Latins felt by the Greek population of Constantinople on whom, in the last analysis, the success of union depended. This popular antipathy for the Latins was more than religious in scope, but it tended, in the spirit of the age, to find expression in the church.”³⁵ Even as Ottoman forces stood massed on the outskirts of Constantinople, by now a mere rump remnant of the Byzantine Empire, popular Greek sentiment militated against an act of union with the Roman Church that would have brought at least some military assistance to the defense of the city against the Ottomans.³⁶

Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), p. 107.

³⁵ Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), p. 87.

³⁶ John Meyendorff, “Was there an Encounter Between East and West at Florence?” in *Christian Unity: The Council of Ferrara-Florence 1438/39-1989*, edited by Giuseppe Alberigo (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), pp. 153-75. See, in particular, pp. 169-70: “The masses, on the contrary – both in Asia Minor and the Middle East and, more recently, in the Balkans – were already accepting the need to survive under Muslim rule. It is significant to remember that the majority of soldiers, which composed the army of Muhammed the Conqueror in 1453 were Christians, recruited in conquered imperial territories. It was those people as well as the distant societies of Russia, Georgia, or Trebizond, who had to be won to the cause of union, if the council was to be accepted by the church as a whole. It is fully understandable that, for the bulk of Orthodox population, the negative message brought from Florence by Mark of Ephesus, supported as he was by the spiritually influential monastic communities, was much more understandable

Significantly, Navarro places the blame for the Great Schism squarely on the Orthodox, and he interprets their subjugation to the Ottomans as an act of “divine and eternal justice” (*diuina y eternal Justicia*) in retribution for their disobediences to the “Holy Mother Church” (*Sancta madre iglesia*).³⁷ This is a formula that interprets the rise of the Ottoman Empire as an instrument of God’s punishment, a castigation meted out upon the Orthodox for their disobedience to Rome. Accordingly, Navarro’s approach transforms the perceived effect of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople: in this light, the events of 1453 are no longer a disaster, a threat to the survival of Latin Christendom, but an affirmation of the righteousness of Catholicism.

C) Following the attainment of a Christian peace and the ending of the Great Schism, the universal emperor was to lead the recovery of the formerly Christian regions of the world that had come under non-Christian rule, namely Asia and Africa.³⁸ The aspiration to “recover” Asia for Christendom included, of course, Jerusalem and other sites that were important in the sacred geography of Christianity. At various points throughout his *Memorial*, Navarro states that the overarching objective of a Spanish crusade against the Ottomans ought to be: the “restitution of the blood of our Savior Christ Jesus to its proper chalice” and “to restore the blood of Christ.”³⁹

and acceptable than the idea of papal rule. The Orthodox faith could not be betrayed for the sake of the questionable and problematic survival of a dying empire.”

³⁷ Navarro, *Memorial*, f. 1r.

³⁸ Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra writes that the Earth was understood as a *corpus mysticum*, with two of the three parts (Asia and Africa) now under the rule of infidels, and that it was the responsibility of Christians to restore those parts, once more bringing unity to the Earth and to God’s divine plan. See: M.A. de Bunes Ibarra, “El marco ideológico de la expansión española por el norte de África,” *Revista Aldaba*, no. 26 (September 1995): 113-34, here at p. 117.

³⁹ Navarro writes that Ferdinand enjoys advantages over all other Christian kings: then lists them all; “Sollo Spagna secilia : puglia son los harneros del mundo a toda natura de victuaglias. Con sollo la

Navarro’s contemporary, the jurist and law professor Juan López de Palacios Rubios (ca. 1447-1524) (author of the infamous *Requerimiento* that Spanish conquistadors read upon claiming lands in the Americas), crafted a legal argument justifying Spanish conquests in Africa as part of a just war, and relating these to a hoped-for Spanish-led recovery of the Holy Land. The Muslim occupation of Jerusalem was “tyrannical,” asserted Palacios Rubios, and Ferdinand, as titular King of Jerusalem, held the rights to the legitimate recovery of the Holy Land.⁴⁰

D) The final piece of the puzzle in this theory of universal empire was that, by bringing Asia, Africa, and Europe under a single ruler, the emperor would establish a universal political and religious order, thereby bringing unity to the Earth. As Pedro Navarro put it, there will be “one God and one Prince, and . . . Your Royal Majesty [Ferdinand] will achieve a perpetual union in the service of almighty God.”⁴¹

This political thought on universal empire, both in its early modern iteration and going back as far as Dante, was utopian. The argument justifying such a system of global

Sicilia Los Romanos del universo tomaron la Impresa: quanto mas: y spagna y puglia: non al universo amas a solo restaurar el sangre de Xo. a Xo nuestro redemptor.” (f. 1v) Here he advocates undertaking the *empresa*, not of the universe, but only of Jerusalem. Spain, Sicily, and Apulia are the breadbaskets of the world. Navarro’s point here is that Ferdinand possesses the resources necessary to effect a conquest of Jerusalem.

⁴⁰ In regards to the Holy Land, Palacios Rubios write that it had been violently and unjustly occupied: “fué ocupada violentamente por los infieles que ahora la señorean como tiranos.” As regards his understanding of Ferdinand’s intentions: “Yo sé cómo el ánimo de Vuestra Serenidad está inclinado con todo empeño a esta empresa y cómo se dispone a emplear el resto de su vida en tan santa expedición, según lo he oído muchas veces de sus propios labios.” Juan López de Palacios Rubios *De insulis*, aka: *De las islas del mar océano*, p. 62.

⁴¹ “unus deus unus princeps: sera por V.R. alteza la perpetua unyon en el seruitio del omnipotente dios: y en la Gloria de V.R.M.” Navarro, *Memorial*, f. 2r. “Cumplidamente deue restituir la sangre de nuestro [saluador X.o Jhu: al suo PPõ va]o.” (f. 1v) Navarro then goes on to cite the Biblical passage concerning one shepherd and one flock (John 10:16); his argument here is that Ferdinand should occupy the role of “shepherd” within the temporal and spiritual world. “aql verdadero Catholico p manos del qual se ha de complir la palabra de nuestro saluador: Jhu: fiet unus pastor et unum ouille.” (f. 1v)

governance was that this unified order would bring an end to strife among the world’s various polities, creating a climate of peace that would allow mankind to attain the highest form of happiness possible in the temporal world.

The understanding of Ferdinand as the political and spiritual leader who would possess sovereignty over all Christians, regardless of whether they were his Catholic Iberian subjects or Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman sultan, expresses a notion of extra-territorial sovereignty that other scholars have noted in Islamic contexts: by way of comparison, as Mohamad Ballan has shown, the *qasida* the Granadino *moriscos* wrote to Bayezid II appealed to him as a Caliph, a ruler whose sovereignty is extra-territorial and extends to all Muslims everywhere, regardless of political boundaries. This is something that Giancarlo Casale points out in the context of Selim I’s auto-stylization as guardian of Islam following the Ottoman conquest of the eastern Mediterranean and the Hijaz.

During the Ottoman-Mamluk struggle for control over Egypt and the holy cities of the Levant and Hijaz, the Ottoman ruler Selim I (r. 1512-1520) employed a discourse of legitimation that would have been completely intelligible to the councilors at Ferdinand of Aragon’s court. Scholars of the Ottoman Empire, including Cemal Kafadar, Palmira Brummet, and Giancarlo Casale have noted that, during a period of rapid expansion and at times contested political legitimacy, Selim cast himself as a guardian of religious orthodoxy as a means of cementing his authority within the Islamic world, particularly vis-à-vis the ascendant Shi’a Safavid Empire in Persia. Following the Ottoman conquest of Jerusalem, Medina, and Mecca in 1516 and 1517, Selim participated in a triumphal entry into Cairo, the former Mamluk capital, in which he proclaimed himself “Servant of

the Two Cities” and assumed the title of “Caliph,” claiming sovereignty over all Muslims, in an expression of sovereignty that Giancarlo Casale has termed “extra-territorial,” as it did not apply to a defined geographic space.⁴² In a sense, Navarro is appealing to Ferdinand as occupying a similar position within the *respublica christiana*, as a ruler whose sovereignty extends even to the Greek Orthodox living under Ottoman rule.

IV.) [keep this section on precedent/model of Ancient Rome? If so, bring in Ottoman engagement with the same model, citing Gülru Necipoglu among others] Given the pan-Mediterranean scope of early modern Spanish ambitions in the Old World, one would imagine that the precedent of Ancient Rome would have figured prominently in Spanish thinking about empire in the inner sea. Indeed, Pedro Navarro’s exhortation of Ferdinand to reunite the eastern and western churches contains an echo of the long-held medieval desire to reunite the two halves of the Roman Empire. And yet, Spanish engagement with the historical model of Rome was often ambivalent. This is largely explained by the fact that for much of the early modern period, the Spanish monarchs did not possess the imperial title of the Holy Roman Empire. During the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Crown depended on strong alliances with both the Holy Roman Emperor and the Papacy in order to keep French ambitions in Italy and the Mediterranean in check. Therefore, Spanish chroniclers, jurists, and diplomats were careful to avoid

⁴² Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 6. Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 7, p. 30.

representations of their monarchs that would appear to impinge on the precedence asserted by these two offices, each of which claimed to be the heir to Ancient Rome.

Under Charles V, however the imperial title was united to the Spanish Crown, resulting in quite a distinct means of representing Spanish engagement with the Mediterranean world. For instance, following his conquest of Tunis in 1535, Charles participated in a triumphal entry into Rome that borrowed heavily from Classical models of imperial authority.⁴³ Moreover, members of Charles’ royal circle commissioned tapestries depicting the Emperor’s victory at Tunis according to Roman models, with Charles cast as a second Scipio Africanus, the victorious Roman military commander who defeated Hannibal in the Punic Wars.⁴⁴ Under Charles’ son and successor Philip II (r. 1556-1598), who did not hold the imperial title, some Spaniards continued to depict the Catholic monarchy’s actions in Africa according to a Classical model in which Spain, as the “New Rome,” brought civilization to the barbarians. Luis del Mármol Carvajal employed this reasoning to justify a hoped-for Spanish conquest of all of North Africa, asserting that the Muslims had destroyed the “buenas artes” that the Romans had cultivated, thereby impugning their right to self-governance.⁴⁵

The legacy of Ancient Rome was, of course, inescapable, and each of the aspirants to Mediterranean hegemony, including the Ottomans, deployed the model of Rome according to the exigencies of their own particular situation. For Spain, however, just as important as Rome was the Biblical history of the Mediterranean. The dominant

⁴³ Rüther, pp. 327-343.

⁴⁴ Soler del Campo, pp. 105, 125, 147, 217.

⁴⁵ Mármol Carvajal, authorial Prologue.

imperial ideology for most of the early modern period adhered to a vision of the Mediterranean as the center of the world, the meeting point of the three lands (Asia, Africa, and Europe) that had been settled by Noah’s sons in the wake of the flood, and the Holy Land where Christ had lived and died. The prospect of a Christian conquest of the defunct crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, and even the use of the title to Jerusalem as a means of claiming precedence among the princes of Christendom, continued to animate the minds of Spaniards who thought about and wrote about the Crown’s interests in the Mediterranean basin.⁴⁶

Ferdinand claimed the right to lead the conquest of Jerusalem due to the fact that, through his acquisition of Naples, the title to Jerusalem now belonged to him. Although the territory of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was under the control of the Mamluks of Egypt in the early sixteenth century, Ferdinand’s diplomatic correspondence reveals the way in which the possession of this seemingly symbolic title in fact played a critical part in his articulation of Spanish imperial interests in lands ringing the Mediterranean. On February 28, 1510, Ferdinand wrote to his ambassador in Rome, instructing him to solicit from Pope Julius II (r. 1503-1513) a bull that would grant Ferdinand the right to the conquest of the lands of “the East,” a vaguely defined region stretching from North Africa eastward into Asia. The Aragonese king wrote:

“And in the said bull that you are to procure, I desire that it grant in general terms the lands from the eastern border of the Kingdom of Tremecen, or beginning from the Kingdoms of Bougie and Algiers inclusive, all the lands from there toward the East. Perhaps some might raise concerns, saying that in such generality this grant could be understood to include all of Greece and Asia, and to this I would respond that, should God favor us with a conquest of these territories, it would not be unsuitable that the apostolic See should grant us these lands, although it is not

⁴⁶ Even today the Spanish monarchs still claim the title of King and Queen of Jerusalem.

necessary to express it in these terms, but rather state your case according to the generalities that I have outlined here.”⁴⁷

Ferdinand emphasized that, although he desired the recognition of this right from the papacy, it was a mere formality. Citing the Italian jurist Bartolus of Saxoferrato, Ferdinand claimed that his status as King of Jerusalem entitled him to conduct conquests not only in the Holy Land proper, but more generally throughout Greece and Anatolia and in any other lands ruled by the Turks.⁴⁸ Indeed, Ferdinand expanded his argument further, stating that as King of Jerusalem, he was aggrieved, not only by the infidels occupying the Holy Land, but by all other infidels. This, he claimed, rendered any military action he took against non-Christians a just war.⁴⁹ We see here in Ferdinand’s

⁴⁷ Ferdinand to Jerónimo de Vich, 28 February 1510. Printed in: (Terrateig 95-6): “Y la dicha bulla que sobrello se ha de despachar querriamos que fuesse general desdel confin del reyno de Tremeccén que está hazia la parte de leuante, o començando desdel reyno de Bugia y Alger inclusiue todo lo que está desde allí hazia la parte de leuante. Por ventura podrían allá poner duda, diziendo que en esta generalidad se entenderia todo lo de Grecia y Asia y a esto respondemos que no sería inconueniente que si Dios nuestro señor nos diese gracia que ganassemos algo dello la silla apostólica nos lo concediesse desde agora ahunque no era menester expressarlo sino poner lo en general como hauemos dicho.”

⁴⁸ Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado. Legajo 8605: Ferdinand to Jerónimo de Vich, 28 February 1510. Printed in: (Terrateig 95-6): “as you know, the right to the conquest of Jerusalem belongs to us and we rightfully possess the title to that kingdom. As Bartolus writes, he who holds the rights to the conquest of Jerusalem may licitly take the lands ruled by the Turks, even if they do not possess Jerusalem, because, as he says, Jerusalem cannot be conquered or held without first conquering the lands ruled by the Turks. When one is granted a particular right, one is also granted the rights to everything necessary in order to fulfill that right. . . .” Original: “. . . quanto más que como sabeys la conquista de Hierusalén pertenece a nos y tenemos el título de aquel reyno y de derecho, como dize Bartholo, aquel a quien pertenece la conquista de Hierusalén lícitamente puede tomar las tierras que poseen los turcos, ahunque ellos no tengan a Hierusalén, porque, según él dize, sin ganar de las dichas tierras Hierusalén no se puede conquistar, ni después de conquistado, conseruar, y a quien se concede vna cosa se concedan todas aquéllas sin las quales aquéllas no se puede fazer.”

⁴⁹ Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado. Legajo 8605: Ferdinand to Jerónimo de Vich, 28 February 1510. Printed in: (Terrateig 95-6): “Moreover, as you know, the Church has a standing and declared war against the infidels who occupy Jerusalem and, as follows, against all other infidels, as they are enemies of our Holy Catholic faith and do not recognize His Holiness. This being the case, it follows that whatever one might seize from the infidels will belong to him who seizes it, as with things taken in the course of just and licit war. For the general rule is that that taken in just war is the rightful property of him who takes it, and in the case of war instigated by the Church, territory taken shall belong to him who first occupies it.” Original: “Demás desto ya sabeys que la iglesia tiene indito bello y declarada guerra contra los infieles que tienen ocupada a Hierusalén y por consiguiente contra todos los otros infieles, pues son enemigos de nuestra santa fê cathólica y no reconocen a Su Santidad, y siendo ésto assí como es sigue se que todo lo que se

letter the articulation of a doctrine justifying any acts of aggression he might instigate in non-Christian lands ringing the Mediterranean, a right that Ferdinand arrogates to himself on the grounds that he is the titular King of Jerusalem. And while Ferdinand’s letter does instruct his ambassador to solicit from the pope the recognition of this right, it is a right that Ferdinand claims on dynastic grounds, as king of Jerusalem, rather than as deriving from the pope’s authority as *dominus mundi*.

* * *

One can only understand the sorts of imperial claims the Spanish Crown made vis-à-vis the Mediterranean when these claims are viewed in conjunction with similar and related claims made by the kings of France, the Papacy, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Ottoman Sultan. In this regard, the universalist ideologies proclaimed by each of these powers operated in similar fashions. In spite of their professed confessional differences (and imputations of their rivals’ heterodoxy or status as religious infidels), these polities were in fact profoundly integrated, politically, culturally, and intellectually. As such, aspirations to some form of universal empire, as espoused by Ottoman Sultans and Spanish monarchs, were decidedly exclusive in their demarcation of religious difference, yet they should not be read as indicative of a “clash of civilizations.” On the contrary, the imperial ideologies espoused by Ottoman Sultans and Catholic princes were

tomare de los infieles por quienquiera que lo tome será suyo, como cosa adquirida y tomada en justa y lícita guerra; ca la regla general es que lo que se toma en justa guerra es de quien lo toma, y pues esto se toma en guerra mouida por la yglesia lo que en ella se tomare será de quien primero lo ocupare.”

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perfectly intelligible to one another, and they operated in a dialogue of competing claims concerning political legitimacy and supremacy in the Mediterranean.

While Spanish monarchs never asserted claims of sovereignty over the *respublica Christiana* quite as far-reaching as Selim’s proclamation, the similarities between the means of claiming political legitimacy through defense of the faithful by rulers of the two ascendant empires at opposite ends of the Mediterranean points to commonalities in the way both empires represented their mission according to a complexly negotiated engagement with the accreted legacies of the Mediterranean World, including the imperial legacy of Ancient Rome as well as the universalist doctrines of both Christianity and Islam.

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