

## Ten Ḥafsid Letters (1535-1536) from the General Archive of Simancas (Spain) Respecting the Politic Situation in Tunisia after the 1535 Defeat of the Ottoman and the Restoration of Ḥafsid Rule

Houssem Eddine Chachia (University of Sfax)  
Cristelle Baskins (Tufts University)

**Abstract:** This essay offers a brief introduction to archival documents from late medieval to sixteenth-century Tunis. It then presents nine letters sent by Muley al-Ḥassan, the sultan of Tunis, to Habsburg officials immediately following the 1535 defeat of the Ottoman corsair Barbarossa and the restoration of Ḥafsid rule. We also include a letter sent to Charles V a tribal chief is called Sheikh Bediouf. The letters reveal ongoing threats from the Ottomans, battles with local tribes, concerns about the loss of trade, and instructions to the Tunisian ambassador, Abu ‘AbdAllāh Azweghi.

**Keywords:** Tunis, Ḥafsid, Muley al-Ḥassan, Charles V, Sheikh Bediouf, Bernardino de Mendoza, Francisco de los Cobos, the Comendador Mayor of León.

Spanish archives, such as the General Archive of the Crown of Aragon in Barcelona, the General Archive of Simancas, and the Royal Academy of History in Madrid contain a large number of Ḥafsid letters, dating from the middle ages up to the early modern era. In contrast, Tunisian archives only contain correspondence between the beys and the kings of Spain starting in the late eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Ḥafsid documents in Spanish archives were first studied in the early twentieth century. In 1911, Andrés Giménez Soler published thirty-four documents consisting of letters and treaties between the Ḥafsid Sultans and the Kings of Aragon. The earliest document, dated 7 February 1300, is a letter from Sultan Abu ‘Asida Muḥammad al-Muntaṣir (1294-1308) to king James II of Aragon (1291-1327); and the latest, dated 10 June 1363, was sent by Abū ‘Abdāllah Ibn Taferjin (died 1364) to Peter IV of Aragon (1336-1387).<sup>2</sup> The Tunisian author Omar Saidane also studied these same documents; he republished them in two books, the first in 1985 and the second in 2002.<sup>3</sup>

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1. For the formation of the Spanish archive in Algiers, see Gilbert Jacqueton, *Les Archives espagnoles du gouvernement général de l’Algérie. Histoire du fonds et inventaire* (Algiers: A. Jourdan, 1894).

2. Andrés Giménez Soler, “Documentos de Túnez, originales o traducidos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón,” *Anuari de l’Institut d’Estudis Catalans* 3 (1909-1910): 210-59.

3. Omar Saidane, *Correspondence between Jaime II and the Hafsid Sultans Abou ‘Assida and Ibn al-Lahieni, or Hafsid Relations with the Court of Aragon in the time of Jaime I* (Sousse: Saeedan Printing & Publishing, 1985 (in Arabic); *Ibid.*, *Relations between Catalan Spain and the Hafsid Sultans in the First and Second Trimester of the Fourteenth Century* (Sousse: Saeedan Printing & Publishing, 2002, (in Arabic). See also, Isidore De las Cagigas, “Un traité de paix entre le roi Pierre IV d’Aragon et le sultan de Tunis Abu Ishak II (1360),” *Hesperis* 19 (1934): 65-77.

Although a large number of documents and letters survive from the fourteenth century, correspondence declined in the fifteenth century as a result of the deterioration of relations between the Ḥafsid and the Aragonese. Except for the treaty of 1403 between Abū Fāris ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Mutawakkil (1394-1434) and Martin the Great called the Elder and the Ecclesiastic (1396-1410),<sup>4</sup> we have to wait until the later 1510s we find records of the attempts by the Catholic kings (1479-1504-16) to control cities in North Africa, such as Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, and Béjaïa.<sup>5</sup> Formerly amicable relations between the Ḥafsid and the Spanish thrones had run into conflict. But they would soon ally against a common enemy, the Ottomans, who threatened both the power of the Ḥafsids in Tunisia and the dominance of the Spanish over the western basin of the Mediterranean. Under these conditions, an active correspondence between the Ḥafsids and the Spanish was renewed. In the General Archive of Simancas there are dozens of documents dating between 1535 and 1574.

Researchers began to study and publish the Simancas documents starting in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1875, Elie de La Primaudaie published a number of documents about the Spanish presence in North Africa between 1505 and 1575; although he had access to archival documents, he published synopses rather than word-for-word translations.<sup>6</sup> Louis Poinssot and Raymond Lantier drew on the primary sources published by Primaudaie, Odorici and Amari, and others in their study of the Spanish governors of the fortress of Ḥalq al-wādi, known as La Goletta, between 1535 and 1574.<sup>7</sup> Pierre Grandchamp published a letter from 1573 written during the last phase of the Ḥafsid struggle against the Ottomans.<sup>8</sup> And Charles Monchicourt based his research on primary source material, especially the archival documents in Simancas.

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4. Robert Brunschvig, *Tārīkh Ifrīqīyah fī al-‘ahd al-Ḥafṣī min al-qarn 13 ilā nihāyat al-qarn 15 M*, translation by Ḥammādī Sāḥilī. 2 vols, (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmi, 1988), 254-5. After teaching French in Tunis and Algiers, Robert Brunschvig became a professor of Islamic culture in France; he also edited the journal, *Studia Islamica*.

5. AGS=General Archive of Simancas, ACA=Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Generalitat, Pergaminos, Carpeta, 43, Perg. 837. But see Francesco Cerone, “La politica orientale di Alfonso di Aragona: Le relazioni e le alleanze Africane,” *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 27 (1902): 380-424, for archival documents in Barcelona and Naples relating to Alfonso V of Aragon and Abu Omar Othman.

6. Élie De la Primaudaie, “Documents inédits sur l’histoire de l’occupation espagnole en Afrique (1506-1574),” *Revue Africaine* 19 (1875): 62-77, 148-57, 161-93, 265-88, 337-60, and 483-96; *Revue Africaine* 20 (1876): 128-44, 232-44, 320-35, 387-416. F. Élie de la Primaudaie was an archivist in the Direction générale des Affaires civiles in Algiers, For his role in the collection of copies of Spanish documents, especially those from Simancas, see Jacqueton, *Archives espagnoles*, 34-35.

7. Louis Poinssot, and Lantier Raymond. *Les gouverneurs de La Goulette durant l’occupation espagnole: 1535-1574* (Tunis: Socièté Anonyme de l’Imprimerie Rapide, 1930). Poinssot was the Director of the Service des arts et antiquités de la régence du Tunis. Lantier was an historian. They jointly carried out archeological excavations. See the work of Odorici and Amari, *Lettere inedite*.

8. Pierre Grandchamp, “Documents relatifs à la fin de l’occupation espagnole en Tunisie (1569-1574),” *Revue tunisienne* 21 (1914): 11-12. He relied on the Spanish Archive in Algiers.

Sixteenth-century Ḥafsid treaties with Spain were studied by Primitivo Mariño who published full transcriptions along with variants based on originals in Simancas.<sup>9</sup> More recently Catherine Gaignard returned to the treaty of 6 August 1535 between Muley al-Ḥassan and Charles V.<sup>10</sup> Sadok Boubaker edited the Arabic version of the same treaty;<sup>11</sup> he also translated five letters from Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles V, Francisco de los Cobos, and Ferrante Gonzaga into French.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Housseem Eddine Chachia published the treaty of Bona in Arabic<sup>13</sup> as well as the ten letters<sup>14</sup> for which we offer English translations in this article.

Although, the condition of the documents in Simancas is good or acceptable, they were challenging to edit and translate, due to the lack of clarity in writing and the occasional lacunae. In addition, they reveal a confusing blend of classical Arabic and Tunisian dialect, frequent grammatical errors, and Arabization of Spanish words that differed from one letter to another. In general, we can say that the quality of writing is very modest, indicating the limited abilities of Muley al-Ḥassan's secretaries.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the letters give a vivid impression of the two rulers, who were also captured in contemporary woodcut portraits (see below). Their correspondence reveals ongoing threats from the Ottomans, battles with local tribes, concerns about the loss of trade, and instructions to the Tunisian ambassador, Abū 'Abdallāh Azweghi.

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9. Mariño Primitivo, *Tratados internacionales de España. Carlos V. II. Tratados con el Norte de Africa* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1980).

10. Catherine Gaignard, "Un bel exemple d'entente hispano-tunisienne, le traité du 6 août 1535 entre Charles quint et Moulay Hasan," *Mélanges Louis Cardaillac: études réunies et préfacées par Abdeljelil Temimi*. Zaghouan: Fondation Temimi pour la recherche scientifique et l'information, 1995, vol. I., 319-28.

11. Sadok Boubaker, "L'empereur Charles Quint et le sultan hafside Mawlay al-Hasan (1525-1550)," *Empreintes espagnoles dans l'histoire tunisienne*, Sadok Boubaker and Clara Ilham Álvarez Dopico eds., (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2011), 58-71.

12. Ibid., 72-82, from the Italian versions of letters (1539-1546) in Odorici, Federico and Michele Amari, *Lettere inedite di Mulay Hassan e Ferrante Gonzaga vicerè di Sicilia (1537-1547)*, (Modena: Atti e memorie delle R.R. Deputazioni di storia patria modenese e parmense, 1865, vol.3), 115-92.

13. Housseem Eddine Chachia, "Two Unpublished Letters from Muley Alhacen Al Hafsi to the King of Spain, Carlos V," *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine* 151 (2013): 422-4, (in Arabic).

14. Housseem Eddine Chachia and Abdeljelil Temimi. "Unpublished Ḥafsid Letters in the General Archive of Simancas (1535-1536)," *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine* 157 (2015): 423-55, (in Arabic). These transcriptions were undertaken independently of the work of Emilio Sola and his students at the University of Alcalá de Henares and made available online in the Archivo de la Frontera: <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/010-1536-Rey-de-Túnez-y-Bernardino-de-Mendoza.pdf>. See also the digitized documents in PARES.

15. For analyses of Ḥafsid Arabic, see Amari, *Lettere inedite*, 139-47; and Rachid El Hour, "Un ejemplo de Árabe medio en el occidente islámico moderno: la documentación tunecina del Archivo General de Simancas." *Estudios de Filología Española*, J.A. Bartol Hernandez and J.F. García Santos eds., (Salamanca: Universidad-Luso Española de Ediciones, 2012), 87-94.



**Fig. 1:** Anon., *Rex Thunissae*, 1536, woodcut, 43.6 x 28.5 cm. (source: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Etampes, Reserve AA-3 Sylvestre)



**Fig. 2:** Giovanni Britto, *Charles V, bust length, holding a sword, facing right*, 1535-45. 49.2 x 34.8 cm (source: David Rosand and Michelangelo Muraro Titian and the Venetian Woodcut. Washington, D.C., 1976, cat. no. 46.)

### Letter n° 1: Muley al-Hassan to Charles V, August 1535.<sup>16</sup>

Praise be to God alone!

From the slave of God, who depends on him in all his affairs, and depends on his generosity in everything, secret or public, who is our master and chief, Amīr al-Mū'minīn<sup>17</sup> Abi 'Abd Allāh [Muḥammad al-Ḥassan] Sultan of the city of Tunis, God Almighty promotes his honor and opens our mouths in thanks and praise, to the famous, the most honored and proud among the Christian kings, Don Carlos the emperor of Rome, Sultan of Spain and the two islands<sup>18</sup> of Sicily, may God give him satisfaction, and guide him to do good. We inform you, that we maintain our love and goodwill, the passage of time from now until the Apocalypse will not change or modify [it],<sup>19</sup> and we ask about your condition, and look forward to your news. I inform you that all those who left our capital

16. AGS Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 164.

17. Commander of the Faithful.

18. Two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, known as the Regno.

19. Key: [...] missing or indistinct words; [inserted word/s] information supplied from; context; A.H. or Hijri calendar; C.E. or common era.

Tunis returned to it voluntarily, and out of love for us, and joy over our return, and they have shown us the signs of obedience, and none of them do anything without our consent. Because we know that whatever makes us feel happy, will also make you happy, we write to you with this information: we ask you to order the traders from your lands to come to this country with their merchandise to trade [to encourage, facilitate?] buying and selling, the father and the brother, whoever is coming or going, whether the city dweller or the Bedouin. This is the most important request, and the best thing that you can do, this is in your interest and that of the Muslims. And, let me tell you that the captain Bernardino [de Mendoza], who resides in the tower [La Goletta], is not a bad man, he only did what was required of him and what you ordered him, but sometimes he becomes furious, so order him to be friendly and a good companion and a good neighbor. And, order him to [allow travel to] the neighboring cities, like Carthage and Rades and the like. Written in the late Safar al-Khair II<sup>20</sup> nine hundred forty-two [August 1535].

**Letter n° 2:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles , September 18, 1535.<sup>21</sup>

Praise be to God alone!

From the slave of God, who depends on him in all his affairs, and depends on his generosity, in secret or public, who is our master and chief, Amīr al-Mū'minīn Abi 'Abd Allāh Muḥammed al-Ḥassan , Sultan of Tunis, may God give him victory, to the great Sultan, the famous, Don Carlos, the emperor of Rome, Sultan of Spain and Germany, and the two islands<sup>22</sup> of Sicily, may God treat him with generosity. As you know, we maintain our love, the passage of time from now until the Apocalypse will not change [it], and we ask about your condition, and look forward to your news. I inform you that we went with a *Mḥala*,<sup>23</sup> and we castigated all of the *Al-a'rabs*,<sup>24</sup> and we expelled the friends of Barbarossa, and they left defeated and unhappy. And we report that Kheir Eddine, called Barbarossa, gathered around thirty ships, and he will move with them, so we ask you to send forty ships, on the coast of our country, from Bona to Tunis. And may God Almighty keep us and you in the grace of health, he is capable of everything. Written by the supreme order of the Sultan al-Ḥassan, may God give him victory, on the date of twenty, Rabi 'Al Sharif, of the year nine hundred forty-two. [September 18, 1535], God knows his goodness.

20. Khair = good. Archivo de la Frontera gives the date as 1536.

21. AGS Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 109.

22. Two Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, known as the Regno.

23. Army.

24. Bedouin tribes.



**Letter n° 3:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles V, September 20, 1535.<sup>25</sup>

Praise be to God alone!

From the slave of God, who gives him victory, with his grace, secret or public, who is our master, Amīr al-Mū'minīn Abi 'Abd Allāh Muḥammed al-Ḥassan, Sultan of Tunis, may God give him victory, to the great Sultan, the famous, Don Carlos, the emperor of Rome, Sultan of Spain and Germany, and the two islands<sup>26</sup> of Sicily, and the country of the Christians, may God treat him with generosity. As you know, we maintain our love and goodwill, the passage of time even up to the Apocalypse will not change [it], and we ask about your condition, and look forward to your news. We inform you that the captain Bernardin[o de Mendoza], who lives in the fortress of Ḥalq al-Wādī [La Goletta], does not treat us as you order, and not as mentioned in our treaty. For example, he said that three circumcised Muslims – who have been reading the Quran since they were six years of age – were Christians. He said that we had to send them to him; then he sent us his men, to inspect their circumcisions, and to hear them say that they are Muslims.<sup>27</sup> In another example, he has prohibited our ships from entering the lagoon, and he [...] the man in his ships. He is interested only in his own business and what benefits him. And this Barbarossa has ships, and he is not oblivious, so you should think who is best to be your chief, and who can rebuild the fortress. Send him orders, that when we find a *Roumi*,<sup>28</sup> we will send him to Mendoza, without him having to ask., We are still searching [for Christians], and all those we find, we give to him, as mentioned in our treaty. You did us a service we will never forget, and even if we cut our own flesh into pieces, we can never repay your Grace. And this country became populated, and its inhabitants returned. And we beg of you, do not listen to him without the testimony of witnesses, whether they are Muslims or Christians. May God Almighty keep us and you in the grace of prosperity, he is capable of it. Written by the royal order [of Muley al-Ḥassan], may God give him the victory, on the date of twenty-two, Rabī' al-'awwal al-Sharif, in the year nine hundred and forty-two [September 20, 1535], God knows his goodness.

**Letter n° 4:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammed Azweghi, May, 1536.<sup>29</sup>

Praise be to God!

May God guard and protect you, al-Faqih, the benefactor, the distinguished Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammed Azweghi; God honor you, glory be to 'Abd Allāh, Muḥammed Al-Ḥassan; God protect him... and we await your response, we hope

25. AGS Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 111. Frontera Doc 114 (Spanish).

26. Two Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily.

27. For the dispute about these boys see also AGS, Estado, Legajo 463, docs. 1, 107, 108, 110.

28. Christian.

29. AGS Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 161.

God will give us good news about you. And we inform you that three thousand minus one hundred [2900] Turks on the island [Djerba] either died or escaped, [...] that ‘Omar Ibn ‘Abd Arahmen and Bani Ali attacked Kairouan and the surrounding countryside [...] and fifty people from Kairouan died. And there was a battle with al-Hnancha [...] <sup>30</sup> some of them went to the Turks of Constantine [...] and there are now one hundred Turks there: fifty cavalry and fifty ground forces...and we arrived on the island [...] waiting to see what would happen. May God give us good news about you [...]. On the last day of Dhou al-Ka’da, in the year [nine hundred and] forty-two. [Second half of May, 1536]. God knows his goodness.

**Letter n° 5:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles V, June, 1536.<sup>31</sup>

From the slave of God, who depends on him in all his affairs, and depends on his generosity, secret or public, who is our master, Amīr al-Mū’minīn Abi ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammed al-Ḥassan, Sultan of Tunis, may God give him victory, to the great Sultan, the famous, the very great, the brave, the most honored and proud among the Christian kings, the Sultan Don Carlos, the emperor of Rome, God Almighty honored him. As you know, we maintain our love and goodwill, the passage of time from now up to the Apocalypse will not change [it], and we ask about your condition, and look forward to your news. And to that, we sent you a letter, in which we told you all about [...], and we sent you our intimate friend and favorite, al-Faqih, the benefactor, the distinguished Abi ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammed Azweghi, but we have not received a reply from you regarding help, so we are worried.<sup>32</sup> We want to remind you, if it is possible to [...],<sup>33</sup> because we rely on you, and we are allies [...] in his<sup>34</sup> letters about all things, about which we wrote to you before. And what he tells you [...], we do not see from him,<sup>35</sup> anything but goodness, and he only did what you ordered him to do. May God keep for us and for you the grace of victory, and he is our shepherd, and the best keeper. Written on the date of the last of Dhou al-Ka’da al-Haram, in the year nine hundred and forty-two. [First half of June, 1536]. God knows his goodness.

**Letter n° 6:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles V, June 1, 1536.<sup>36</sup>

To the grand Sultan, the distinguished, the famous, the brave, the king of Christian kings, who honors his followers, the Sultan Don Carlos the emperor.

30. See Laurent-Charles Féraud, “Les Harar, seigneurs des Hanencha. Études historiques sur la province de Constantine.” *Revue Africaine* 18 (1874): 11-32.

31. AGS, Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 162.

32. Between 1536-1538, Muley al-Ḥassan’s envoy was a guest of Viceroy Ferrante Gonzaga in Messina and Palermo; see Odorici and Amari, *Lettere inedite*, 126, 155, 158.

33. Unclear word, probably, “answer us.”

34. Bernardino de Mendoza, governor of La Goletta ?

35. Bernardino de Mendoza?

36. AGS, Patronato Real, Legajo 11, Doc. 204.

Praise be to God alone! From the slave of God, who depends on the generosity and bounty of God in everything, secret or public, who is our master: Amīr al-Mū'minīn<sup>37</sup> Abi 'Abd Allāh Muḥamad al-Ḥassan Sultan of Tunis, to the grand Sultan, the distinguished, the famous, the very great, the gallant, the brave, the king of Christian kings, [who honors his followers], the Sultan Don Carlos the emperor, by the generosity of God. We inform you of our continued love and unceasing friendship, as we are accustomed; we ask about your condition, and look forward to your news. We were pleased with your arrival in Rome and your triumphal entry.<sup>38</sup> Praise be to God who gave you the victory and help against the enemy, thanks to him and his generosity. God Almighty helped you and gave you the victory over your enemies, and he maintains us and you in the grace of victory, and he is our shepherd, and the best keeper. Written on the date of the twelfth al-Haja al-haraam, in the year A.H. 942 [June 1, 1536] in God's generosity.<sup>39</sup>

**Letter n° 7:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles V, August, 1536.<sup>40</sup>

To the great Sultan, the distinguished, the famous, the brave, the favorite, the courageous, the audacious, the highest king of Christian kings, who honors his followers, the Sultan Don Carlos the emperor, God Almighty honored him.

Praise be to God alone!

From the slave of God, who depends on him in all his affairs, and depends on his generosity in everything, secret or public, who is our master and chief, Amīr al-Mū'minīn Abi 'Abd Alah Muḥammed Al-Ḥassan, Sultan of Tunis, may God almighty give him victory, to the great Sultan, the distinguished, the famous, the brave, the favorite, the courageous, the audacious, who enjoys the highest prestige and honor, who gives power and control over his people, the Sultan Don Carlos, the emperor of Rome, Sultan of Germany and Spain, and the two Sicilies, and Jerusalem, may God treat him with generosity, and guard him. As you know, we maintain our love and our friendship, and goodwill, the passage of time up to the Apocalypse will not change [it]. We have received your letter, and we thank God for your prosperity, and we thank you for your generosity and kindness to my delegates; you are known and famous for this, and you accustom us to it. And also, we thank God for the victory that he gave you over your adversaries, God willing, [He] will always give you victory over your enemies, and accord you success over your rivals. And we sent our delegate to you, al-Faqih Muḥammed Azweghi to bring us news from your country.<sup>41</sup> And you treated him very well, and we are certain from your letters and his letters, that you love us, and your

37. Commander of the Faithful.

38. For the triumphal entry 6 April 1536, see Madonna, "L'ingresso del Carlo V."

39. Boubaker dates the letter to 22 May 1536; see "L'empereur Charles Quint," 36.

40. AGS, Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 168.

41. With Viceroy Ferrante Gonzaga in Messina or Palermo.



friendship is true, and we await your support, and we ask God to help you conquer your enemies. May God guard you for us, and keep you well; he is available and able to do that. God suffices us, for he is the best disposer of affairs. Written at the end of the month of Safar al-Khair, in the year nine hundred and forty-three. [Second half of August, 1536]. God knows his goodness.

**Letter n° 8:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Francisco de los Cobos, the Comendador Mayor of León, September, 1536.<sup>42</sup>

Praise be to God alone!

From the slave of God, who depends on him in all his affairs, and depends on his generosity, secret or public, the Amīr al-Mū'minīn Abi 'Abd Allāh Muḥammed Al-Ḥassan, Sultan of Tunis, may God give him victory, to al-Faqih, the dignified, the famous, Comendador mayor,<sup>43</sup> God honors him. As you know, we maintain our love and our friendship and goodwill, the passage of time up to the Apocalypse will not change [it], and we ask about your condition, and look forward to your news. We inform the Sultan emperor and you, that the evil of the Turks has increased, and their power has become stronger on land and sea, and they forcibly and coercively captured some of your ships, which were sent to us, and the reason for this is the negligence of the emperor regarding this country, [despite?] the lengthy residence of our delegate in his home.<sup>44</sup> This is what we wrote to him and you many times, and we depend on him and you for victory, and you are our representative there and we do not have any favorite of the Sultan, only you. The wait has been long, and we fear that he does not support us. And you should know, the sea has become dangerous for us, and on land we do not control anything beyond the city where we are now, and you know the political situation of the country. We knew, and now we are sure, that the Turks in Constantine will be allied with the people of the west to attack us. And the Sheikh of Djerba prepared the Lund<sup>45</sup> and recruited some of the foul tribes of the al-'Arabes<sup>46</sup> and he is [...] from the east, and this creates anxiety, and there are rumors that they have a fleet coming to help him grab the victory, and to achieve their revenge. And for this country the sultan emperor [Charles] spent money [...] and it is his country, and we are dust to him, so we ask you to send help to take this country back, or send us your answer, and think about what you have to do for your country, because we do not have any other helper than God and the Sultan emperor. And if you, as we hope, still love and believe in us, send us help quickly, because we are scared that they will attack us by surprise or by our inaction. This country is yours, and its prosperity or poverty depends on you.

42. AGS, Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 177 and Doc. 170.

43. Synopsis in Primaudaie, "Documents inédits," 238. Francisco de los Cobos was in Genoa in September 1536.

44. Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammed Azweghi.

45. Navy.

46. Bedouin tribes.

And God is responsible to maintain us in the grace of prosperity, and he suffices us, for He is the best disposer of affairs. Written in the end of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal, in the year nine hundred and forty-three. [First half of September, 1536].

**Letter n° 9:** Sheikh Bediouf to Charles V<sup>47</sup>

Praise be to God!

Translate to Arabic: the emperor, Sultan of Spain is well, thanks be to God. We inform you that we maintain the affection between us, and we want only what you want, and if the Muslims revolt, then we remain steadfast, and if we are all, we will beat the Turks and the others, and we inform you that we met your friend Bernardino de Mendoza, the governor of the tower,<sup>48</sup> and there I told him and he heard about it, and he will tell you how he listened to me on your behalf and the captain supplies you in your absence and he is your best friend and if you want anything from the Muslim country, give us notice and you should follow the advice of the governor of the tower.<sup>49</sup>

**Letter n° 10:** Muley al-Ḥassan to Charles V<sup>50</sup>

Praise be to God!

From the slave of Almighty God, Muḥammed al-Ḥassan, may God grant him success, to the highest Sultan of his people, the most powerful in his nation, Sultan of Spain and [...] and Germany, and Sicily, and many other Christian countries, and the emperor of Rome, may God honor him. We inform you that your envoy arrived, and we thank the grace of God because you are well. And We advise you that Bernardino de Mendoza, the governor of the tower,<sup>51</sup> told me what you said, and he told you what happened here, and we inform you [...] and we had twenty-two ships, one quarter of them [...] lost to the Turks [...].<sup>52</sup>

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47. AGS, Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 174.

48. La Goletta.

49. See the letter sent by Charles V to the Sheikh in 1534, with instructions to support Muley al-Hasan: Francisco López de Gómara, "Crónica de los Barbarrojas," in *Memorial Histórico Español: Colección de documentos, opusculos y antigüedades* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia de la Historia, 1853), vol. 6, 520-1. Also Primaudaie, "Documents inédits," 242; Charles Monchicourt, *Kairouan et les Chabbia: 1450-1592* (Tunis: Alocchio, 1939), 164, correspondence between Bediouf and the governor of La Goletta, Alonso de la Cueva, in 1558.

50. AGS, Estado Legajo 463, Doc. 153.

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52. Unclear writing in the margin. Probably refers to a battle in Djerba.

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العنوان: عشرة رسائل حفصية (1536-1535) محفوظة في الأرشيف العام لسيانكاس (إسبانيا) تتعلق بالوضع السياسي في تونس بعد هزيمة العثمانيين عام 1535 وإعادة إقرار حكم الحفصيين.

مُلخص: حاولنا في هذه الدراسة تقديم عرض موجز لبعض الوثائق الأرشيفية الغميسة المتعلقة بتاريخ تونس خلال القرن السادس عشر. وهذه الوثائق عبارة عن عشر رسائل بعث بها السلطان الحفصي مولاي الحسن إلى السلطات الرسمية الإسبانية مباشرة بعد حملة تونس سنة 1535 وهزمها خير الدين بروسا، والتي تم على إثرها إعادة تنصيب السلطان الحفصي. كما تضم الوثائق التي قمنا بترجمتها رسالة من الشيخ بالضيوف إلى شارل الخامس. وتعكس هذه الرسائل مدى تواصل التهديدات العثمانية للحفصيين، ومعارك هؤلاء مع القبائل المحلية للسيطرة على المجال، بالإضافة إلى توصيات موجهة إلى سفير مولاي الحسن للسلطات الإسبانية أبو عبد الله الزواغي.

كلمات مفتاحية: تونس، الحفصيين، مولاي الحسن، كارلوس الخامس، الشيخ بالضيوف، برناردينو دي ميندوثا، فرنيسكو دي لوس كوبوس، القائد الأعلى لليون.

**Titre: Dix lettres Ḥafsid (1535-1536) conservées dans les archives générales de Simancas (Espagne) concernant la situation politique en Tunisie après la défaite de 1535 des Ottomans et le rétablissement du régime Ḥafsid**

**Résumé:** Cet essai propose une brève introduction à des documents d'archives datant de la fin du Moyen Âge à Tunis au XVIe siècle. Il s'agit aussi de présenter ensuite dix lettres envoyées par Muley al-Ḥassan, le sultan de Tunis, aux responsables des Habsbourg, immédiatement après la défaite de 1535 du corsaire ottoman Barbarossa et le rétablissement du régime Ḥafside. Nous incluons également une lettre envoyée, par un chef de tribu nommé Cheikh Bediouf, à Charles V. Les lettres révèlent des menaces continues de la part des Ottomans, des confrontations armées avec les tribus locales, ainsi que des inquiétudes concernant la perte du commerce et des instructions à l'ambassadeur de Tunisie, Abu 'AbdAllāh Azweghi.

**Mots-clés:** Tunis, Ḥafsid, Muley al-Ḥassan, Charles V, Cheikh Bediouf, Bernardino de Mendoza, Francisco de los Cobos, le Comendador Mayor de León.