

THE EARLY HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE EXPANSION REFLECTED IN  
INDIVIDUAL FATES: THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS AND THE AFRICAN COAST  
IN SUPPLICATIONS TO THE POPE (CA. 1440-1510)

*LA HISTORIA TEMPRANA DE LA EXPANSIÓN PORTUGUESA REFLEJADA EN  
DESTINOS INDIVIDUALES: LAS ISLAS ATLÁNTICAS Y LA COSTA AFRICANA  
EN LAS SÚPLICAS AL PAPA (CA. 1440-1510)*

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*Abstract:* This article makes use of the supplication registers in the archives of the Penitenzieria Apostolica –for a long time strictly locked away and inaccessible to research– in which people from the whole of Christendom turned to Rome for absolution or dispensations that were reserved to the pope. Many supplications, which had to start by relating the personal case in detail, contain allusions to historical events. Whoever had taken part in fighting as a cleric –forbidden of course– might perhaps describe episodes from the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the siege of Rhodes in 1480 or the battle of Pavia in 1525. Whoever had defied the papal embargo, which forbade supplying Muslims with materials essential to war, describes the goods and the circumstances of his Mediterranean trade. From the lowly perspective of personal experience, this article focuses on places and events of the early Portuguese expansion during the 15<sup>th</sup> century: the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, the Guinea Islands etc., banishment to islands that were unpopulated and only just discovered; the sentencing of clerics to fight for Ceuta against the Muslims (they all used the pope as he were as an appellate body, this is the only reason why we know of them); husbands missing at sea; the role of the Order of Christ, and many other cases. Besides, from a source also long overlooked for the most part, the Roman customs registers, one finds references to the first arrivals in Rome of slaves, animals and goods from areas south of the Sahara, thus from Portuguese enterprises heading to the African west coast before reaching the Cape.

*Keywords:* Portuguese Expansion; Atlantic Islands; Maghreb; Apostolic Penitentiary; exile; Guinea.

*Resumen:* Este artículo se basa en los registros de súplicas de los archivos de la Penitenciaría Apostólica –durante mucho tiempo estrictamente cerrados e inaccesibles a la investigación– en los que personas de toda la cristiandad se dirigían al Papa para pedir absolución o dispensa en casos de violaciones del derecho canónico, cuestiones reservadas a Roma. Muchas súplicas, que tenían que empezar relatando detalladamente el caso personal, contienen alusiones a acontecimientos históricos. Alguien que hubiera participado en una pelea como clérigo –algo prohibido, por supuesto– podría describir por ejemplo episodios de la conquista turca de Constantinopla en 1453, el asedio de Rodas en 1480 o la batalla de Pavia en 1525. Alguien que hubiera desafiado el embargo papal, que prohibía proporcionar a los musulmanes materiales para la guerra, describiría las mercancías y las circunstancias del comercio mediterráneo. Desde la perspectiva inferior de la experiencia personal, este artículo se centra en los lugares y acontecimientos de la expansión portuguesa del siglo XV: las Azores, las islas de Cabo Verde, las islas de Guinea, etc; el destierro a islas despobladas y recién descubiertas; la condena de religiosos culpables de luchar por Ceuta contra los musulmanes (todos ellos utilizan al Papa como órgano de apelación, esta es la única razón por la que sabemos de ellos); maridos desaparecidos en el mar; el papel de la Orden de Cristo, y muchos otros casos. Además, a partir de una fuente que también ha sido ignorada durante mucho tiempo, los registros aduaneros romanos, se pueden encontrar referencias a las primeras llegadas a Roma de esclavos, animales y mercancías

procedentes del sur del Sáhara, es decir, de empresas portuguesas que se dirigían a la costa occidental africana antes de llegar al Cabo.

*Palabras clave:* expansión portuguesa; islas Atlánticas; Magreb; penitenciaría apostólica; castigo del destierro; Guinea.

#### SUMMARY

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Since, however, they have nothing on this island on which to survive other than herbs, are constantly somehow ill, and walk about naked and barefoot in the greatest misery, as there are also lizards on the island, wild animals that devour humans alive, one can sooner die in this place than live there<sup>1</sup>.

With these eloquent words two Portuguese clerics, Antonius Nunii and Petrus de Arvinda, describe their miserable lives in exile on a *lost island*, which is called the *St. Thomas Island* (*insula deperdita sancti Thome vulgariter nuncupata*), the island just discovered of São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea. The two actually lived thousands of nautical miles away on the Azores, which shows the dimensions of the Portuguese ocean realm acquired at an early date –the Azores were discovered by the Portuguese in about 1335, taken into possession in 1427 and settled, thus representing the most distant group of islands of the “Méditerranée atlantique” (Chaunu)<sup>2</sup>. Living on the main island of the Azores, in *insula sancti Michaelis dos Acores regni Portugalie*, eight years earlier (thus in 1493: in the same year Christoph Columbus passed these islands on the return from his first voyage to the Americas), the two had been to blame for the death of an adversary in an escalating feud with another family. In accordance with a then customary act of atonement, they had thus gone to North Africa to join the fight against the Muslims (without express mention of being sentenced to such a feat). Having returned from this two-year mission, they were dragged before the court on São Miguel. As clergymen, they rejected the judgement of a secular judge and demanded to

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix No. 1. I would like to thank Dr Catherine Atkinson for the translation from the German.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the further historical framework of our topic cf. Magalhães Godinho 1962; Hamann 1968; Chaunu 1969; Newitt 2005; Bethencourt, Ramada (eds.) 2007; Reinhard 2016, esp. ch. II; Jaspert, Kolditz 2018; De Oliveira 1972. As well as the source collections: Parry 1969; Schmitt 1984; Carnemolla 2000; Magalhães Godinho 2011.

be tried by the judge responsible for the Military Order of Christ, the vicar of Tomar. He condemned them to harsh imprisonment and to eternal banishment on that “lost” island with its animal monsters (admittedly, in Antiquity the rare *stellio* meant smaller lizards, not exactly ones that devoured human beings).

## 1. THE SOURCE. THE ROLE OF THE PAPACY

The source that reports to us this fate of two individuals from the time of the Portuguese discoveries –inaccessible to research for a long time– is the supplications register of the Penitenzieria Apostolica, the church’s highest office of penance and grace<sup>3</sup>. Whoever had committed offences against Canon law that could not be absolved by one’s own bishop and were reserved for the pope, had to turn to the pope with a supplication for absolution or dispensation, who in turn let such requests be dealt with and registered by the Penitenzieria<sup>4</sup>. The petitioners first had to describe in detail their case –and this *narratio* is what we are focussing on because it lets normal humans speak to us, who never otherwise are given a chance to say anything in historical sources. It is not the canonistic aspect of the cases that we are looking at here, it is the personal fate described by the supplicants.

In the case of Antonius Nunii and Petrus de Arvinda, one could presumably have found remote little islands of punishment in the archipelago of the Azores (the king even allocated islands “if you should ever discover one” or islands “that one once sighted from a distance, but then unfortunately did not find again”). But King John II had only just discovered the island of São Tomé off the west coast of Africa and had just appointed it, for the sake of its more rapid settlement, as a place of exile for those condemned to death, as Martin Behaim remarks on his world globe of 1492 in the legend for the Guinea Islands, explicitly with the date of 1484: *There was only wilderness and no humans. We found there only forest and birds. There the king of Portugal now annually sends his people who were guilty of homicide, men and women, and gives them [whatever is necessary], so that they cultivate the fields and feed themselves, so that this country is inhabited by the Portuguese*<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica, *Registra matrimonialium et diversorum* (hereafter called PA), see bibliography. On the archive: Saraco 2012.

<sup>4</sup> On the institution, tasks and procedure of the Penitenzieria Apostolica, Salonen, Schmutge 2009; and the Introduction by Clarke, Zutshi 2012-2015. The German, English, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish supplications have now been edited, but not the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese ones.

<sup>5</sup> Schmitt 1984, p. 72; S. Tomé was presumably discovered as early as 1472: Hamann 1968, pp. 108-110.

(Likewise, some who were condemned to death and banished were handed over to the first voyagers to India to be sent ahead if one expected an unfriendly reception on unknown coasts).

In addition, Jews (mostly Spanish exiles) were sent by the King to São Tomé, among them *c.* 2000 Jewish children abducted from their parents and forcibly baptized. Much has been speculated about their fate (the man-eating lizards on São Tomé mentioned also in this context, were probably crocodiles, at that time still mentioned on the island)<sup>6</sup>.

After our two clerics had held out on the island for three years and their adversaries (although the *principales autores* of the conflict, it is maintained) had obtained absolution from Rome, they now go the same way and ask for termination of their exile, referring to their fight against the Muslims and pleading for commutation of their punishment into pious donations. The Apostolic See entrusts ecclesiastical office-holders in Lisbon with the procedure<sup>7</sup>.

Naming Tomar as the two petitioners' district of origin (*clerici nullius diocesis sed de vicariatu de Tomar*) extends the horizon of this story. Tomar, northeast of Lisbon, was initially the Portuguese head office of the Order of the Knights Templar, then of the Military Order of Christ, which had been created by the Portuguese king in 1319 –expressly as the successors and heirs to the disbanded Knights Templars<sup>8</sup>. The dominant role of the Order of Christ in the Portuguese discoveries is well-known (Henry the Navigator was its Governor), and the order was also equipped accordingly: ecclesiastical jurisdiction, patronage right over churches, the status of *nullius diocesis* (as here), assigning prebends, the rich possessions of the Templar order, trade monopoly. On the islands of the Atlantic alone, the order had at that time eight commandries.

As laid out above, the story of Antonius Nunii and Petrus de Arvinda is to be found in the registers of the Penitenzieria Apostolica. The fact that they are small, personal fates and not state deeds, is due to the nature of the source –and should not be too negligible for us. For they are humans of their own times, and some requests let the background of a larger history shimmer through: *how, in 1453, I just managed to escape from Constantinople, being*

<sup>6</sup> Garfield 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix No. 1. Verdict of the *vicarius* of Tomar also in two other cases of the Azores: “cupiens in insulis de les Acores vulgariter nuncupatis certos suos consanguineos et amicos visitare”, a priest of the Aviz order illegally entered the Azores PA [PA see note 3] 50 ff. 52v, 53rv (1501); sentence from the island of S. Maria (in the Azore archipelago) for seven years “ad partes Affrice” 52 ff. 755v-756v (1504).

<sup>8</sup> On the Order of Christ in the context of the Portuguese Expansion see, recently, Humble 2015, pp. 120-125.

*conquered by the Turks; how, in 1480, I was an artillery observer during the siege of Rhodes, and the tower broke down beneath me; what I vowed to do, in 1525, in the heat of the battle, in which my king, Francis I of France, was taken prisoner: large history reflected in small human destinies*<sup>9</sup>. Requests from the whole of Christendom –and also from a small Atlantic island off the coast of equatorial Africa, only just discovered by the Portuguese. This article seeks to give information about what this –for a long time inaccessible– type of source has to offer for the early history of the Portuguese expansion.

Our focus is also on the *narratio* because our source, the preserved registers which start in 1439, thus covers crucial decades of the Portuguese discoveries. In 1439 Cape Bojador, considered a dangerous threshold on the long passage down the west coast of Africa one has just rounded (1434) is reached; in 1441 Cabo Blanco is reached, in 1456 the Cape Verde Islands are discovered –always groping one’s way along the coast like groping along a wall in a dark room and straining to hear news from the interior about worthwhile commercial opportunities, and indeed with increasing hope when Cabo Blanco, a meagre desert cape, is followed by Cape Verde, green, inhabited, tropical Africa beyond the Sahara. In 1484 one arrived at the delta of the Congo. From now on the Portuguese sea route caused the caravan routes with their fleets of camels through the Sahara to shrink: *l’Afrique noire est définitivement arrachée au Maghreb*<sup>10</sup>.

The role of the papacy in the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries is well-known and need not be explained here. Only this much: Since Henry the Navigator had had himself invested with the funds of the Order of Christ for the “fight against the Saracens” by Martin V in 1420 and since, in 1455, the Portuguese king had had the *de facto* monopoly of the coasts discovered *from Cape Bojador and Cape Noun (Cape Chaunar) to the whole of Guinea and beyond*<sup>11</sup> confirmed by Nicholas V with the bull *Romanus pontifex* (all these bulls were created on the initiative of the Portuguese, not on the pope’s; in such programmatic texts it is Henry the Navigator speaking, not the pope!)<sup>12</sup>, since that time at the latest it was known in Rome and in the Penitenzieria what was involved in such supplications.

In the supplications it becomes clear that Rome was often appealed to against the local ecclesiastical jurisdiction (successfully, for all preserved

<sup>9</sup> Examples in Esch 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Chaunu 1969, pp. 136-143.

<sup>11</sup> “a capitibus de Boiador et de Nam usque per totam Guineam et ultra”.

<sup>12</sup> De Witte 1953 pp. 683-718; 1954 pp. 438-461; 1956 pp. 413-453 and 809-836; 1958 pp. 5-46 and 443-471; Martin V for the conquest and defence of Ceuta bulls nos 1-11 (1418-1421); *Romanus Pontifex* bull no. 28.

supplications are granted a positive reply; we do not know whether supplications were sometimes rejected because only the positive answers were registered). In our cases, applying to Rome was the even more obvious choice, since the Portuguese Atlantic islands, owing to their being presented to the Order of Christ, had the status of *nullius diocesis* –stressed again and again– and thus that of being *sedi apostolice immediate subiectus*.

## 2. THE ISLANDS OF THE ATLANTIC AND OF THE GULF OF GUINEA AS PLACES OF EXILE

Which offences might lead to being banished to the remote Guinea island of São Tomé is shown on the basis of another supplication, in which a certain Johannes Roderici Baveto, a noble clergyman from the diocese of Guarda, describes his unusual case to the pope as follows:

When he was once staying in the city of Alenquer in the service of the queen of Portugal, a house there had been allotted to him for his bodily provisions, the landlord of which introduced himself as the administrator [of a house of the order] of the Holy Spirit. When he wanted to pay for the bread that he had received from the housekeeper and she had tried to demand from him, as it seemed to him, too high a price, he refused to pay. The woman repeated to him that it was bread from the Holy Spirit and that was why he should pay so much. He then asked the woman: “Is the Holy Spirit a baker?”, and she assured: “Yes!” Then he became infuriated with the woman and answered excitedly: “If the Holy Spirit is a baker or bread seller, then I deny him, I do not believe in the Holy Spirit as a bread seller: He can kiss my arse! (*me osculetur in ano*)...”. Accused on account of these blasphemous words and convicted, he was banished to Allencer in Africa for three years to fight against the infidels<sup>13</sup>.

Admittedly he was allowed with royal permission to return after four months to complete his business, but in the meantime his period of banishment had been increased. He now appealed to the archbishop’s curia in Lisbon, but this condemned him to six years’ exile to the *civitas Turgen*, in Africa<sup>14</sup>. He set off into exile, but returned within a few days. That was too much for the curia:

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<sup>13</sup> PA 48 f. 345v–346v: see Appendix No. 2: Alenquer north of Lisbon; Lourenço 2001. I cannot identify Allencer in Africa.

<sup>14</sup> The “*civitas Turgen* / Turpen / Turipen.”, mentioned in some supplications as place of exile, could be Tangier, maybe misspelled from “Tingen”, cf. PA 56 f. 33v “cum... versus dictam civitatem [Ceuta] navigare vellet ventis causantibus ad civitatem Tingen. applicuit”.

then he should go to São Tomé for six years (if Elba is not sufficient, then St. Helena will do), *which is much further from Lisbon than civitas Turpen!* At a nod from the queen, the punishment was reduced in distance, but (interesting equivalents!) temporally doubled: 12 years' exile in Ceuta. The condemned man immediately went to Rome to secure there personally the termination of his exile (his indignation was not directed at the Holy Spirit itself, only against the woman, he said) and finally obtained his return to Portugal in return for the usual payment for pious works.

Of Portugal's Atlantic islands, Madeira is most frequently mentioned in the registers of the Penitentiary. Not as a place of banishment: this island was too good for that, highly productive (wood, sugar, wine), as Cadamosto had already experienced in 1455 (also from here, exile is pronounced away from here *ad partes Affrice*)<sup>15</sup>; the island is mentioned in connection – as is usual in these documents – with the affairs of normal humans. These are stories of marriage, matters of wills and testaments, homicide, cancelling of vows, fasting regulations, the building of a chapel on private property; the reform of a nunnery is also mentioned (but the Poor Clare sister Johanna d'Albuquerque sent here for this purpose in 1494 prefers to return to the mainland after 14 years)<sup>16</sup>. A Florentine merchant in Funchal is also named, and the *capitano* (i.e. here: the owner of one of Madeira's two emphyteutic estates, in a legal form that Verlinden has called “vassalité coloniale”), [Manuel] de Norogna, and his daughter<sup>17</sup>. The island's special status (because belonging to the Order of Christ) is emphasized in various ways<sup>18</sup>.

This status applied to the Cape Verde Islands, too; the hierarchy of judicial competencies resulting from it is portrayed in detail in one case. Gregorius Correa *capitaneus insule de Leti de Caboverde vulgariter nuncupate, clericus nullius diocesis* had instructed *notarius sive scriba dicte insule* – his subordinate – to draw up a letter with false accusations. This person refused and thus landed in prison, where he died as a result of ill-treatment. Now the law started to move against the *capitano*, a whole series of cog wheels, whose

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<sup>15</sup> PA 51 f. 201rv by the vicar of the Order of Christ “in exilium ... contra infideles dimictando et bellando” (*commutatio* 1503). Cadamosto: Gasparrini 1966, pp. 92-93.

<sup>16</sup> PA 43 f. 211r; 46 ff. 178v, 180r, 181v, 244v, 331v; 47 ff. 321r, 322v; 49 ff. 535v, 518r; 50 ff. 88v, 112r; 52 f. 442v; 53 f. 346rv; 54 ff. 118v, 276rv, 325r, 333v; 55 ff. 179rv (reform, cf. f. 185v), 314v, 320v, 339rv (Madeira 1494-1509).

<sup>17</sup> Georgius Raynerius *mercator florentinus* PA 46 f. 178v (1497) and Caterina de Norogna 44 f. 146r (1494).

<sup>18</sup> PA 46 f. 181v; 47 f. 321r; 49 f. 535v; 50 f. 112r *et al.*: “Insula de la Madera nullius diocesis sed de territorio et iurisdictione militie Jhesu Christi sedi apostolice immediate perinens”, or “nullius diocesis sed de territorio et iurisdictione vicariatus insule de Madera”, or “Madera vicariatus opidi de Thomar ordinis militie Jhesu Christi”.

interlocking is very instructive<sup>19</sup>. He did not appeal against this judgement. Instead, he turned to Rome in order to have the term of exile terminated or changed to a place that he might reach with greater ease (*commodius*), as he has no inclination to go to Africa<sup>20</sup>. And he met with success.

The Cape Verdes had only been discovered, as the eastern group of islands, in 1456, when Alvise da Cà da Mosto (or Cadamosto), a Venetian in the service of Henry the Navigator, together with the Genoese Antoniotto Usodimare explored the deltas of Senegal and Gambia on two voyages, in 1455 and 1456. He found the islands still completely uninhabited, as he describes in a lively manner (*e non trovano strada nessuna né signal nessuno, per el qual se podesse concluder che in essa ne fosse habitanti*)<sup>21</sup>. That was soon to change. The Cape Verdes (like his other Atlantic islands Henry the Navigator let crown fiefs revert by will to the crown) became Portugal's most important base on the way down the west coast of Africa. On his first voyage to India, Vasco da Gama touched the Cape Verde Islands both on the outward voyage in 1497 and on the return trip in 1499 –our supplication was only written two years earlier!

The dimensions of the area also become noticeable, when a request is made to be allowed to hold the requiem masses one donated there in Machico on Madeira because of the *distancia* rather than in Lisbon, or vice versa to hold requiem masses donated on the island of São Jorge (in the Azore archipelago) in Portugal<sup>22</sup>. Or to hold requiem masses donated on the island of São Jorge (in the Azore archipelago) in Portugal, because the island is quite distant from Portugal, therefore the wish is difficult to fulfil, Tristão da Cunha (*Tristanus de Cugna*, the famous admiral) says as the heir, who had discovered much more distant islands in the southern Atlantic on the way to India three years earlier, in 1506<sup>23</sup>.

And these new dimensions are also reflected in the modest journeys through life, of which we hear in this source (and only in this source). A Franciscan of the Observant order left his monastery in the diocese of Coimbra

<sup>19</sup> PA 49 f. 503v-504r (approved on 9 August 1501): “propter quod fiscalis illustrissimi regis Portugalie habentis iurisdictionem super dicta insula pro parte gubernatoris ipsius insule prefatum exponentem [the culprit] coram dilecto filio Didaco Pinheiro vicario generali auctoritate apostolica in spiritualibus et temporalibus ordinis milicie Ihesu Christi iudice deputato per prefatum regem administratorem ipsius insule, sub qua iurisdictione dictus exponens erat, convenit; quiquidem Didacus ad omnes actus iudiciales contra prefatum exponentem processit et suam diffinitivam pronunciavit sententiam cum relegatione perpetua ad partes Affrice, a quaquidem sententia dictus exponens minime appellavit”.

<sup>20</sup> “cum... animum suum ad dictas partes inclinare non possit”.

<sup>21</sup> Gasparini 1966, pp. 92-93.

<sup>22</sup> PA 53 f. 346rv (1507).

<sup>23</sup> PA 55 ff. 451v-452r (1509) “per non modicum spatium itineris”; similar: see note 24.



without permission, roamed about for a while, then joined the monastery in Lisbon; but there, too, he did not like it among the Observant brothers, so he went to the Conventuals –and to the remote Azores, where he lived *in seculo*, among the people. From the Azores he went to Rome (a journey of approximately 3500 km!), in order to ask the curia to be absolved of his unusual steps: *est presens in Romana Curia*<sup>24</sup>. Complaints about the uncustomary life on these exotic islands –that appear so paradisiacal from a distance– for example about the climate, are also expressed only indirectly in this kind of source, by way of justifying the supplication: the impossible climate here, “sometimes too dry, sometimes too damp”, makes it impossible to adhere to the rules on resting from work on feast days; two families write from Madeira that they would have to work their fields also on Sunday<sup>25</sup>. It would be quite absurd to donate a chaplaincy for requiem masses in the Church of the Holy Spirit on the Cape Verde Islands: *the changeable weather here, Holy Father, is so detrimental to one’s health and pestilential that one finds no chaplain for it (quod nullus capellanus... reperitur) and many chaplains have already died there; it would be better to transfer the donation to the church of the All Saints Hospital in Lisbon*<sup>26</sup>.

The king sent Portuguese missionaries to the Congo (*ad certam terram seu insulas de Magni congou nuncupatas: i.e. Mani Congo*, or “Lord of the [Kingdom of] Congo”)<sup>27</sup>. Distant India also crops up once: a knight of the Military Order of St. James / Santiago (*militia S. Jacobi de Spata*), having travelled to India and the countries of the infidels along with many other Christians by order of the king of Portugal to fight the infidels and to spread Christianity, returns after three years (so he could have sailed to India with Francisco de Almeida in 1505) and finds his wife with a child conceived adulterously, kills her and is banished to Africa for this<sup>28</sup>.

Only in very personal individual fates do we perceive the Portuguese island realm in this source, but we do at least encounter all the islands: the Azores, Madeira, the Guinea Islands; and also the Castilian Canary

<sup>24</sup> PA 52 ff. 817r-818r (1504); cf. the case of a priest, who left his Minorite convent in Portugal without permission, went “ad insulas dos Assores” and carried out pastoral duties there for 20 years (so from ca. 1489) 56 ff. 4v-5r (1509).

<sup>25</sup> PA 54 f. 325rv (1508): “aliquando nimia sicitate et aliquando nimia humiditate”.

<sup>26</sup> PA 56 f. 369rv (1510).

<sup>27</sup> PA 56 f. 35v-36r (1509): “ad... incolas in fide Christi instruendos”, with mention of a black person there, “Ethiops”.

<sup>28</sup> PA 55 f. 19v (1508): “de Indie et infidelium partibus ad quas pro infidelium expugnatione et Christifidelium dilatatione cum aliis quampluribus christianis ex regis Portugalie precepto se contulerat”.

Islands<sup>29</sup>. And only in individual fates do we meet the dangers of voyages undertaken on the high seas to distant islands –by the Portuguese or others. A Spanish woman complains that her husband left right after their wedding *and went off to remote, distant regions*. After several years she had enquiries made in Portugal, *where the said Franciscus had stayed for a long time (ubi dictus Franciscus diutius moram traxerat)*, but in vain, and so she had to believe *Franciscus boarded some ship, which then went down in a shipwreck*. Thus she finally married someone else<sup>30</sup>. But was she allowed to? That is why she ended up in these registers.

Such cases also exist for other countries. A man, suspected of murdering a royal official, is banished from Mallorca for ever and goes *ad partes remotas*, but his wife does not want to accompany him, not even when he asks her again, having returned secretly ten years later. So he goes *iterato ad longinquas partes* (for the Mediterranean region *remote* or *longinque partes* would be an unusual requirement); sometime later he is also on Sardinia. Thus he finally marries another. But was he allowed to? Johanna could still be alive<sup>31</sup>. Or a widow bemoans her husband, a Frenchman, who was lost at sea, *in mari submersus est*, in a fight over *certis insulis a sede apostolica privilegatis* (which usually points to islands of discovery). Here it is the desire for absolution for the spouse –now dead, who had perhaps committed an offence– that leads someone before the Penitentiary<sup>32</sup>.

What these supplications also offer are the usually small requests of clerics, to which reference is only made in passing here. One example: in the register, six requests from the chapter and diocese of Coimbra appear, all under the date of 5 April 1498 on six sheets one after the other, as if a package of letters had arrived from there in Rome –perhaps via Genoa or Florence: all six clergymen, deploring their *humana fragilitas*, had “done it” with nuns (the archdeacon alone names three nuns and two secular women, whom he could not resist); four had already been banished by the bishop of Coimbra without a place of banishment being named, and they now ask Rome for an early

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<sup>29</sup> The Canary Islands are mentioned PA 3 f. 278r: the bishop of Rubicón on Lanzarote (1485 bishop’s see transferred to Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) appoints one of his canons (“ecclesie Rubicen. in insulis transmarinis”) to be procurator “pro agendis negotiis et sussidio passagii maritimi” (1452). PA 50 f. 526r on the obligation of the priest of Santa Cruz towards the Order of Christ (1503). About the role played by the Canary Islands (slave trade, production of sugar, access to African markets) see Armenteros 2018.

<sup>30</sup> PA 48 f. 393rv Maria Ramos and Franciscus de Herrera, both from Orgaz, diocese of Toledo (1499): “et ad longinquas remotasque partes se contulit....; dictum Franciscum quandam navem ascendisse illamque in quodam maris naufragio subversam fuisse”.

<sup>31</sup> PA 47 f. 215r Martinus Mas (1498): “a predicta velle discedere patria recusavit”; cf. “ad longinquas partes” 50 f. 119v (1502).

<sup>32</sup> PA 42 f. 212r Looting in the war against the French king (1493).

termination of the exile<sup>33</sup>. More interesting is the supplication of a certain Rodericus Didaci *laicus Columbrien. dioc.*, who had wanted to murder the bishop of Coimbra, Johannes Galvani (João VI Galvão, 1460-1481), and now, in 1489, receives absolution with his accomplices<sup>34</sup>.

The monarchs and the royal court only put in an appearance if certain individuals feel concerned and expect a solution from Rome. This was the case with the fall of the mighty house of Braganza, when Duke James, son of Ferdinand II executed by King João II in 1483, speaks in his supplication of the reconciliation with the new King Manuel and the restitution of confiscated places<sup>35</sup>. The registers refer also to other activities of the King<sup>36</sup> and the members of his court<sup>37</sup>. There are several allusions to the wars between Portugal and Castile or Spain as the frame of reference for personal experiences<sup>38</sup>. Another person in high places is the archbishop of Braga, Georgius da Costa, brother of the cardinal of the same name (in whose Roman palace he dies in 1501, already *in Romana Curia residens*): out of indignation, *aliquaqualiter indignatus*, that his sister had married “some aristocrat” without his knowledge, he had sworn not to take the two under his protection<sup>39</sup>.

Individual knights of the Order of Christ also crop up, which played an important role in the Portuguese expansion and now accordingly exercised a strong attraction: a councillor of the Portuguese king transfers from the often-mentioned Portuguese Military Order of Saint James of the Sword (*S. Iacobi de Spata*) to the Order of Christ<sup>40</sup>. Now, members of the two military orders were happy to relax the orders’ rules (especially those concerning fasting and the very many prayers), with one knight of the Order of Christ justifying it by saying that he was at that point in Africa fighting for the faith<sup>41</sup>. But knights of

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<sup>33</sup> PA 46 f. 234v-236v; archdeacon 47 f. 351rv. Similar concentrations elsewhere, e.g. diocese of Lisbon five supplications 48 f. 417v-426r (1500).

<sup>34</sup> PA 38 f. 253r “letaliter vulneravit”, but “plene convaluit”.

<sup>35</sup> PA 47 f. 375v Jacobus “dux Bragantie”, restitution of “oppidum Montisfortis”, 1499 (for the reconciliation see De Oliveira 1972, pp. 209-211).

<sup>36</sup> Papal *indultum* to King Alfonso (V), stating that in his empire the ordination orders are only given “saltem quod bene legeret et competenter construeret”: PA 34 f. 131v, 35 f. 146r (1485, 1486). King Manuel confers rights of citizenship for Lisbon on converted Jews PA 50 f. 452r (1502). Cf. 54 f. 220r a Jew converted “non sponte sed iussu regis Portugalie” (1508).

<sup>37</sup> Members of the court with their concerns: the king’s “thesaurarius” PA 36 f. 167v, his “cappellanus” 47 f. 366r, the “cappellanus” of Philippa, daughter of the regent Dom Pedro 39 f. 176rv; Eleanor widow of King John II 49 f. 232r; his “camerarius” 50 f. 524r.

<sup>38</sup> PA 34 f. 151r (1485), 36 f. 210r (1487), 40 f. 312r (1491), 49 f. 236r (1500).

<sup>39</sup> PA 48 f. 601v (1500); his “cappellanus” 50 f. 85v.

<sup>40</sup> PA 50 f. 48v “nob. Gaspar Insarte conciliarius serenissimi regis Portugalie miles Elboren. dioc.” (1501).

<sup>41</sup> PA 56 f. 94v; cf. f. 103rv (1510). Supplications from knights of the Order of Christ also 50 ff. 96v, 454v.

the Order of St James are mentioned much more frequently (also among those banished to Africa!)<sup>42</sup>.

Portugal's trade with the Muslim Maghreb is also mentioned in this source. Because it was forbidden in principle for Christian merchants to supply goods essential to war to Muslims: numerous goods, from lances through building timber to cattle for slaughter were subject to the Islam embargo, which the papacy had announced repeatedly since the crusades. Whoever broke the rule –and this was a part of daily life– was excommunicated and had to turn to Rome for absolution<sup>43</sup>.

Thus there are numerous cases of forbidden trade dealings between the Christian northern coast and the Muslim southern coast of the Mediterranean in the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary<sup>44</sup>. Among them there are some Portuguese cases, too: a dealer from Porto supplies grain, wine, metal *ad partes infidelium*; another likewise grain, which a lay-brother of the Minorites took on the journeys to the Maghreb for him (judging from his name probably a Dutchman): this one had run away from his convent near Lisbon, until hunger forced him to hire himself out to a Portuguese merchant for such journeys to the Muslims<sup>45</sup>; a Portuguese knight –although his *nauta* denied this under oath perjuringly– had shipped weapons to the Muslims, a Genoese in Lisbon shipped metals<sup>46</sup>. Genoa was by far the most strongly represented Italian colony in Lisbon<sup>47</sup>, and when the Count of Monsanto robbed a storm-damaged Genoese ship in the port of Cascais at the entrance to Lisbon, the Genoese in Lisbon immediately obtained the Portuguese aristocrat's excommunication from their compatriot Pope Innocence VIII<sup>48</sup>. As in former times Venice had turned eastwards, Genoa now looked in the correct direction, i.e. to the west: Christoph Columbus had been living in Lisbon since 1479.

Portuguese trade with the Maghreb of course continued to stand under papal embargo if it served the remaining Muslim ports rather than the ports occupied by the Portuguese. But the cases are not so numerous, because since their aggressive grab for North Africa in 1415 and the resulting, nearly

<sup>42</sup> PA 52 f. 890v; 55 f. 285v, 375v-376r, 442rv. Further supplications from this order: 49 f. 312v, 498v; 50 ff. 100v, 106r, 107v, 465rv; 52 ff. 351v, 537v, 753v; 53 f. 354v; 55 ff. 19v, 21v, 167rv, 314v; 56 ff. 123v, 346v. A member of the Aviz order: 50 ff. 52v, 53r.

<sup>43</sup> III Conc. Lat., c. 24: *Conciliarum oecumenicorum decreta*, 223; X 5.6.6: *Corpus Iuris Canonici* vol. II, col. 773.

<sup>44</sup> Esch 2018; Carr 2019.

<sup>45</sup> PA 12 f. 50v (1464) Henricus van der Eist.

<sup>46</sup> PA 13 f. 149v (1464) Daniel Lomellinus metals; 47 f. 328v (1499) *miles/ nauta*.

<sup>47</sup> Verlinden 1970.

<sup>48</sup> PA 36 f. 172r (1487). "Johannes de Castro comes de Monsanto laicus Ulixbonen. dioc." (João de Castro, 2º conde de Monsanto, c. 1440-1496).

permanent state of war with the Muslims, Portuguese ship owners appeared there predominantly as conveyors for Genoese merchants because Genoa had trade agreements with the Maghreb states<sup>49</sup>.

### 3. CEUTA. EXILE AND FIGHTING ISLAM

The Portuguese penetration into North Africa –a completion of the Reconquista and the beginning of the Portuguese expansion and the discoveries– is well-represented in our source by the name of the city of Ceuta, conquered in 1415. Here is not the place to repeat the history of Ceuta, but some hitherto unknown references are related here.

After its conquest in 1415, Ceuta was a continuously hard pressed outpost of Portugal in Muslim enemy territory<sup>50</sup>. Our source offers an interesting episode to demonstrate that, like the conquest, the defence of Ceuta also attracted foreign knights, particularly since a papal crusade indulgence had been announced for participating in these campaigns. In a supplication, three Scottish knights report, in 1441, of their long journey from the Hebrides to Ceuta with the good resolution *contra Sarracenos pugnare*. In Ceuta they remained one month (and also had this confirmed in writing by the commander and governor of the Portuguese king<sup>51</sup>), but they had the misfortune that there was a truce right then, so that they gained neither battle nor payment. Had they now fulfilled their crusade oath or not? With this question they went to Rome and asked for an answer –but with urgency and without expense, because they were completely without means, and *their language* –their Gaelic– *was understood by hardly four people* in Rome<sup>52</sup>.

A priest of the diocese of Porto had come to Ceuta also, because he had heard of the plenary indulgence that Eugene IV had granted to the Portuguese King Duarte (for his enterprise against Tangier that ended catastrophically in 1437), and thus he came with many others *ad civitatem*

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<sup>49</sup> On trade between Spain, Portugal and Italy with the Maghreb Ladero 2007, pp. 35-45 with lengthy bibliography; on trading goods and balance of payments (always foodstuffs included in the offers made by the Christians) *ibidem*, pp. 37-44. Cf. Jehel 2001; Dufourcq 1990; Gourdin 2001; Themudo 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Unali 2000.

<sup>51</sup> “prou in litteris capitanei armorum regis Portugalie et gubernatoris predictae civitatis Cepte luculenter demonstrare possunt, plenius continetur”.

<sup>52</sup> PA 2bis f. 211v, ed. by Joergensen, Saletnich 2004, pp. 110-111, 175-176: “vulgare suum quod vix a quatuor personis Romane Curie intellegitur”.

*Ceptam et ad villam Tagasten, where many were killed on both sides*<sup>53</sup>. That the fighters should not be charged with killing and maiming (*non imputarentur*, as the bull emphasized), was an important point for a future priest, who could not have anything to do with spilling blood: others who had participated in such fighting and had then had themselves ordained now supplicated for absolution<sup>54</sup>. A commander at Ceuta also puts in an appearance: the Count of Villareal Almeida had vowed to donate to God one tenth of all the booty won in the fight against the Muslims, but did not stick to his promise afterwards, although he had carried away much booty<sup>55</sup>.

The fighting over Ceuta lasted a long time –and appears in our source in an unusual way. Ceuta is now a place of banishment for guilty Portuguese clergymen on condition that they fight against the Muslims during their exile there: *ad debellandum contra infideles* or *contra Mauros pugnaturus*. From nearly all dioceses of Portugal<sup>56</sup> the bishops sent their fallible clergymen to Ceuta or to Arzila (today Asilah) on the Atlantic coast (five cases) –but not until 1471, when it was finally conquered together with Tangier (56 years after adjacent Ceuta!)– and four times to the *civitas Turgen/Turpen*. mentioned as a place of exile; or it was simply called *ad partes Affrice* without naming a place (*nullo sibi loco determinato*). Between 1499 and 1501, 16 cases are mentioned (the Portuguese presence in these registers clearly increases under King Manuel), nine cases between July and November 1499 alone<sup>57</sup>. They are predominantly cases of wounding someone, homicide or sexual misdemeanours (these were frequent, a Portuguese Carmelite even calls himself *filocaptus*, “infatuated” with a married woman), for which reason priests and clerics are sentenced by the ecclesiastical court of their bishop<sup>58</sup> to such banishment.

There may have been many more, because we know only of those who did not accept the exile and appealed against the judgement of their *ordinarius*

<sup>53</sup> PA 3 f. 115r *Alfonsus Gundisalvi presb. dioc. of Porto* (1450); the bulls of Eugene IV for King Duarte: De Witte 1953-1958 nos 12-16 (1435-1437).

<sup>54</sup> PA 49 f. 397r (1501, however, it was fighting *tam per mare quam per terram* under King Alfonso V, so before 1481), 412rv (1501).

<sup>55</sup> PA 29 f. 39r “nobilis Petrus de Meneses comes de Villa regali Almeyda, ... in civitate Septem. tunc capitaneus existens: infideles pluribus annis debellavit et ab eis res et bona quam plurima reportavit, de quorum parte Deo non tamen de omnibus integraliter ut debuit decimam huiusmodi reddidit et persolvit” (1480).

<sup>56</sup> Until 1501 7 from Lisbon, 3 from Guarda, two each from Porto and Coimbra, 1 from Evora.

<sup>57</sup> PA 47 ff. 395v, 411r; 48 ff. 320r, 330r, 334v, 340r, 345v, 371r, 372v, 414r, 543v, 544r; 49 ff. 285r, 370v; 50 ff. 88v, 93r, 113r, 470r. For *civitas Turgen. / Turpen*. see note 14.

<sup>58</sup> In one case by the king: “nobilis clericus coniugatus Georgius de Albor Querque” [Albuquerque], for freeing prisoners three years to Ceuta PA 48 ff. 330r-331r (1499), in another case by the *vicarius de Tomar* PA 50 f. 88v (1501).

at the Holy See. Some went possibly to Rome in person (at that time 11 out of 16! And just consider what this meant for those poor devils to journey from Morocco to Rome). The shortening of the term of exile is granted to them, generally in return for payment of money for ransoming Christian prisoners from the hands of Muslims<sup>59</sup>.

And thus it continued in the following years with banishments to Africa. Just in the four preserved years between 1504 and 1509<sup>60</sup> there are no less than 33 cases in which clergymen with low or higher ordination orders from various dioceses (usually Lisbon: 23) were banished to Africa by their bishops, for one, two, five, seven or ten years or even *ad perpetuum* (there seems to have been a kind of tariff: for *adulterium* with a married woman five years, for homicide ten, for murder lifelong). But most, including those with lifelong sentences, remained, as they admit, for only a few months or even only “a few days” (*aliquot dies*) and then appealed immediately to the pope—possibly travelling to Rome again in person!<sup>61</sup>—again with an abundance of arguments, which provides insight into the living conditions. They argued, for example, on the grounds of poverty. What are we to live off here, with our income and perhaps possessions all in Portugal? Or having used up most of our assets, for most of them had already been imprisoned before the exile in—secular or ecclesiastical—dungeons)<sup>62</sup> And what about the *clerici coniugati*? How are we to provide for our wife and children from here? In 1508/09 the prevailing famine in this part of Africa is also a reason<sup>63</sup>.

Or the banished ones refer to the “other climate” (*aeris novitas*): one cannot get accustomed to life here, here in Africa it is unbearable, *it is better to die there immediately rather than to stay alive*<sup>64</sup>. Therefore, one repeatedly finds the argument (taken seriously by the church) that the sojourn in Africa harms one’s health or even endangers one’s life. Some reason very cleverly that as clergymen they were not allowed to fight at all, so they should not be condemned to fight against the Muslims either<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> Grieser, Priesching 2015.

<sup>60</sup> The second and third year of Julius’ II’s pontificate are lost, which corresponds roughly to the years 1505 and 1506; 1510 contains no banishments.

<sup>61</sup> In PA 52–56 seven such cases are named.

<sup>62</sup> “maiorem partem bonorum suorum consumpsit”.

<sup>63</sup> PA 54 ff. 239v, 286rv; 55 f. 334rv.

<sup>64</sup> “cum ad exilium huiusmodi animum suum inclinare non possit”; cf. PA 53 f. 366r “in illis potius in brevi mori quam vivere posse”; 54 f. 286rv “plus mors quam vita de eo sperabatur; “aeris novitas”: 54 f. 168v.

<sup>65</sup> PA 48 ff. 320r, 372v; 49 f. 370v (“cum clericus sit et ei pugna et arma tractare sint interdicta”; or “cum arma clericorum sint orationes et lacrimae; or “cum sit presbiter, ad arma ... minime aptus existat”).

Among the places of exile –if not simply *in partes Affrice*– Ceuta is mentioned ten times and Arsila six times (in addition *civitas Turgen*. three times<sup>66</sup> and the island of São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea once)<sup>67</sup>. One of the banished protests that the governor did not want him and threw him out<sup>68</sup> –for whatever reasons. What was this poor governor supposed to do with all these guilt-ridden clergymen, who were sent to him in large numbers to fight against the Muslims, but who in terms of training and attitude were not at all suitable!

So many of the banished succeeded in shortening their exile with the help of Rome. However, some met a hard fate. A cleric from Evora fought against the Moors for five years, then on the fleet against the Turks, and even then he was still not released. Two others banished to Africa, among them a knight of the Order of St. James, were put on the Portuguese fleet *contra Turcos*<sup>69</sup>. In 1510 no more banishments to Africa are mentioned (for the time being?).

Let me present one fate among those banished. A clergyman from Lisbon says in his request in 1453 that he had been incited by a nephew of the archbishop of Lisbon to steal gold, silver, vestments and money at night in the archbishop's palace together with accomplices. Once discovered, he was banished from Portugal, landed in Saracen imprisonment and then did not dare to return to Portugal. An appendix of the Apostolic Penitentiary gives a surprising turn to this tortured biography: the case should be handed over to the empress's confessor (namely of Eleanor of Portugal, who had married Emperor Frederick III one year before), because the petitioner wanted to move into her service!<sup>70</sup> From the dungeons of the Maghreb to the court of the emperor –if he really succeeded!

In the more distant surroundings of Ceuta the situation for Portugal had gradually improved. Tangier had at long last, 1471, fallen into the hands of the Portuguese, the journeys down the west coast of Africa had by then already reached the Gulf of Guinea. The cases described in the supplications of Portuguese or Castilian petitioners switch between military and commercial

<sup>66</sup> PA 52 ff. 610r, 809r-810r; 55 f. 74r; Tangier 56 ff. 33v-34r.

<sup>67</sup> PA 54 ff. 332v-333r “ad sedem apostolicam appellavit” reduced by rescriptum from ten years on São Tomé to four years in Africa (1508).

<sup>68</sup> PA 53 ff. 301v-302r “eum gubernator seu capitaneus illarum partium recipere recusavit seu ipsum expulit”.

<sup>69</sup> PA 55 f. 74r “deinde in quadam classe per illustrem Portugalie regem contra Turcos missa et armata interfuit” (1509); 52 f. 665rv for 11 months “continuo pugnans” (1504); 52 f. 890v after the fleet's return still exiled to Africa (1504).

<sup>70</sup> PA 3 f. 376v “Cristoforus Gomecii clericus Ulixbonew.” (Archbishop and *nepos*: Petrus and Nimius de Noronha), 1453: “Et committatur confessori imperatricis, cum eiusdem imperatricis servitium sequi intendat”. Another early case: PA 2bis f. 46rv a clergyman from Evora for ten years to Ceuta “que in Affrica et inter Cerracenos [Saracenos] existit” (1439).



enterprises, which may well come quite close to reality. A cleric from Cadiz reports that he gave money for such an initiative, when fleets of ships for ventures against the Muslims in Africa were equipped several times, and also participated in one once, *on a so-called caravel*<sup>71</sup>. A merchant from Seville admits to having supplied food to Guinea (by Guinea the whole west coast of Africa was generally meant), but in good faith, believing that the trading licence given by the pope to Henry the Navigator for the subjects of the Kingdom of Portugal also applied to the Kingdom of Castile –and in addition flour, chestnuts and oil to the starving Maghreb<sup>72</sup>.

#### 4. PORTUGUESE MARITIME TRADE WITH ITALY

News about Portugal's trade, already with goods from the voyages of discovery down the west coast of Africa, also created a further kind of source only recently studied, and thus this is mentioned here in passing.

This source is the Roman customs registers, which –a rare stroke of luck even in Italy– have been preserved for four decades of the early Renaissance 1445-1485. They register all ships that put into the Roman Tiber port opposite to the Aventine, with the name of the patron, the type of ship, the freight and the value of the goods<sup>73</sup>. Portuguese ship patrons are not named frequently, but at least regularly (*messer Alfonso de Portogallo, misier Zoanne de Portogallo, Zuane de Lisbona de Palermo, Giovan Piero da Portugalo, Ferdinando Portugues, Pietro de Lisbona, Jovani de la Martora de Lisbona* and others) and not only with Portuguese products such as leather. The *caravella* of a certain Johannes Darnes, which puts in in January 1475 (the *caravella* type of ship, rarely registered in the port of Rome, suggests its western provenance)<sup>74</sup>, has goods on board that must originate from Portugal's African journeys<sup>75</sup>. As well as fish and sugar, three *gatti mamoni* (an ape species from south of the Sahara) and 98 parrots with a total value of 100 ducats, there is

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<sup>71</sup> PA 32 f. 174v “Bartholomeus Scoprioanni clericus Gadicen.: quod ipse olim, [cum] pluries classis Christianorum contra Saracenos in Africa existentes pararetur, idem Bartholomeus certam pecuniarum summam pro dicta classe contribuit et semel in classis [correct: classe] huiusmodi contra eosdem Saracenos in civitate Azomorin [today Azemmour southwest of Casablanca] in eadem Africa existente proficiscitur. Idem Bartholomeus in una ex fustis ‘caravelis’ nuncupatis eiusdem classis personaliter ivit” (1483).

<sup>72</sup> PA 18 f. 189rv Alfonsus Petri Melgareio laicus Yspalen. (1470), “credens ... concessione huiusmodi ad regnum Castelle se extendere”.

<sup>73</sup> Esch 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. “Papa Sisto andò a Santo Paolo a vedere le caravelle che haveva mandate lo re di Portogallo” for the crusade against the Turks: *Diario* ed. Chiesa 1911, p. 496.

<sup>75</sup> Esch 2007, esp. pp. 179-180 and pp. 225-227 also for the further imports mentioned below.

*I schiavo negro, nichil* (i.e. no customs duty is to be paid for the black slave, thus he went to someone at the Curia). That was certainly a black person from one of the slave hunts (though the chieftains also easily sold their own subjects), with the large booty of which— as one can see from the records of the royal *Casa dos Escravos* —the Portuguese managed to finance their enterprises, because it was easier to get hold of slaves than gold and spices<sup>76</sup>. And bringing black slaves on the market was even more worthwhile now that with the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, entry to the hitherto most important slave reservoir in southern Europe, the north coast of the Black Sea, had been blocked: a shift to black-skinned slaves, which is reflected in the Italian records and also in paintings<sup>77</sup>.

Exotic goods are also mentioned, like those that Alvise da Cà da Mosto brought back from his journeys to the deltas of Senegal and Gambia in 1455 and 1456, namely parrots (150 at a price of one ducat each, as he himself recounts in his marvellously precise and lively report), apes (*gatti maimoni e babuin*), *pelle di gatti* (namely of African civet cats with their gland secretion, the *zibeto*); ivory (elephant tusks and elephant feet are sent on by Henry the Navigator to his sister Isabella, wife of Philipp the Good of Burgundy); and, as mentioned, black slaves.<sup>78</sup> Parrots, of which the pope always had one around him (thus the *Camera papagalli* in each papal palace and the parrot feed in the papal accounts books)<sup>79</sup>, were now also procured for themselves by the cardinals; and of the three apes on this caravel, the cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (young, but soon *papabile*) took two for himself: two such exotic little animals in a palace was something quite special. And where do the *penne di struzzo* (ostrich feathers) listed in the customs registers come to Rome from, where the *pelle di liopardo*, the *denti d'elefante*? Presumably also from Portuguese voyages to Africa: with the strong trade networks, such goods, already reloaded in Lisbon or only in Gaeta, were not necessarily brought to Rome by Portuguese and registered there under their names<sup>80</sup>.

Now the *exotica* no longer came only from the Orient, but also from the West! Just imagine, one might have found the *Niña* in the customs registers (but they are not preserved for these years), Christoph Columbus's favourite ship. Because between the second and third America voyage, thus presumably

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<sup>76</sup> A black man, “ethiops”, is called a slave in Coimbra: PA 40 f. 370v (1491), another “ethiops” in Santarém 56 f. 409v (1510). On the early Portuguese slave trade, Verlinden 1967.

<sup>77</sup> Helas 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Gasparrini 1966, pp. 66,100, 107; Esch 2007, pp. 179-180.

<sup>79</sup> Diener 1967.

<sup>80</sup> Esch 2007, pp. 138, 180; on the important role of Gaeta and trade with the Iberian Peninsula Esch, Esch 2014. On Genoese trade with Subsharian Africa, C. Taviani (forthcoming).

in 1497, the *Niña* –against the will of Columbus– had been chartered out for a voyage from Cadiz to Rome, which led only as far as Sardinia, where she was captured by pirates and recaptured by her master. So the *Niña* did not arrive in Rome (where the ship would have been registered by the Roman customs under the name of the ship's patron), but rather returned to Columbus's disposal for his third voyage<sup>81</sup>. Or one would find among the ships' patrons in the customs registers the patron of the *Pinta*, Martín Alonso Pinzón, of whom it is maintained in the *Pleitos de Colón*, the trials against Columbus's heirs, that he

went to Rome in the year before he went to discover, and ... being one day in the library of the pope, as he had been on many other occasions, as he [the son of Martín Alonso Pinzón] knew quite well, a family member who was a servant of the pope, who was a great cosmographer and he had many and extensive writings and there he showed these to them, and this witness and his father spoke many times with this servant of the pope about things related to the world map. There this witness and his father learned of these lands that were yet to be discovered<sup>82</sup>.

That the products of America also reached Rome early is revealed, not in the lost customs registers, but rather by a special clue: the first painted representation of corn and sunflowers is to be found in the garlands in the vaults of the *Loggia di Psiche*, the Villa Farnesina of the papal banker Agostino Chigi, painted by Raffael and his workshop in about 1518<sup>83</sup>.

So, some of the Portuguese ship owners mentioned in the Roman customs registers explicitly carry the designation *de Lisbona*. Always an important station on the route from Italy to England and Flanders, Lisbon was the seat of a substantial colony of Italian merchants, above all Genoese and Florentines: welcome to the king, because there was no such dynamic, financially strong, organized entrepreneurship like that of the Italians in Portugal, and thus he was dependent on their good services. It was above all the Florentines who were active in goods trade on Portuguese ships (sugar from Madeira to Italy and to England) as well as in the cashless money

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<sup>81</sup> Morison 1942, I p. 151, II p. 232.

<sup>82</sup> “Estando un dia en la libreria del Papa ayende de otras muchas veses que avia estado por razon de mucho conosciemiento que tenia con un familiar cryado del Papa que era grande cosmografo y tenia mucha y largas escripturas y ally les enseño platicando muchas veses el dicho su padre y este testigo con el suso dicho cryado del Papa en las cosas con el mapamondo”: Phillips, Johnston, Wolf 2000, pp. 205-206. and 421, *cf.* pp. 173, 213, 219, 221, 224. *Cf.* Almagià 1992, p. 78. Assuredly, it was a pure invention to prove his own rights to circumnavigation of the world (the loan registers of the Vatican Library are, by the way, partially preserved for this pontificate and edited by Bertóla 1942).

<sup>83</sup> Cherubini 1991, pp. 89-98 with figs. 51 and 52.

transfers to the Apostolic Chamber (or to the Florentine artists for “the chapel of the cardinal of Portugal” in S. Miniato al Monte)<sup>84</sup>.

## 5. OUTLOOK AND CONCLUSION

Now Lisbon became the point of reference for other nationalities, too, and became the reloading point for further services as well: captains, settlers and soldiers now also found their chance. Because the Portuguese expansion to the Far East required numerous mercenaries, particularly in its brutal initial phase. And in the years of their successful Burgundy and Milan wars, the Swiss were particularly sought after as mercenaries.

One example: in August 1520, the Council of Berne received a letter from the Portuguese *chargé d'affaires* in Rome, wherein he communicated that a Bernese subject in Portuguese services had died in India as a *bombardeiro* (*in servitiis dicti regis in India*) and the heirs could have the inheritance handed over to them in a hospital in Lisbon<sup>85</sup>. It was the answer to an enquiry from the Bernese Council of March 1519 about the legacy of a citizen of Berne who had died in the service of the king: an official enquiry, which has been preserved in Lisbon and tells us the names and circumstances<sup>86</sup>. It concerned a certain Wolfgang von Laupen, who, in great debt after the bankruptcy of his father, first escaped to Fribourg and then to Portugal, where he hoped he could be enlisted (about which the council knew nothing) as an artilleryman on a voyage to India –probably in the hope of returning to Berne with a rich booty and of satisfying his creditors in the council. The discoverer of the sea route to India, Vasco da Gama, is still alive, and there is already a Bernese in India!

From the global view of the new route to India back to the view of the entire Mediterranean –at that time nearly just as global a perspective. The conquest of Constantinople and the expansion of the Turks both into the Balkans and to the Middle East changed the balance of power and commerce in the eastern Mediterranean basin and made the view westwards, beyond the Mediterranean, even more promising. Petitioners who wish to be released by the Penitentiary from their vow of travelling to the Holy Sepulchre now start to justify their plea by writing that they had heard that because of the

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<sup>84</sup> For the Italians, D’Arienzo 2004; for the Genoese, Verlinden 1970; for the Florentines, Melis 1990; Guidi 2014. The example of the Cambini see Tognetti 1999. Also in our source: the chapter of Braga transfers money to the Apostolic Chamber via (unnamed) *mercatores florentini* PA 34 f. 138v (1485).

<sup>85</sup> Staatsarchiv Bern, *Unnütze Papiere* 52 no. 73.

<sup>86</sup> Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, *Corpo Cronologico*, II, 80-120, ed. by Schickert, Denk 2010, with facsimile p. 64 (kindly drawn to my attention by Vinzenz Bartolome).

Turks no one could get through to Jerusalem any more. That was exaggerated, but great anxiety did have to be overcome, as we know from many pilgrims' reports (in general, if the supplications speak of the Muslims of the East, the *Turci*, they speak with far more fear than they do of the Muslims of the West, the *Sarraceni*). A group of Portuguese women had embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and had managed to get, with the help of alms, from Portugal to Rome. But now they did not know how they should traverse all these Muslim countries (*per terras plurimorum Sarracenorum transire*). Rome did not know either (it was difficult enough to imagine even without the Turks) and released the Portuguese pilgrims from their vows<sup>87</sup>.

Finally, how the conquest of Constantinople could throw someone's life off course is shown in a letter whose narrative begins with the storming of Constantinople and ends in Portugal<sup>88</sup>. As a young man in the monastery of Pera, the Frank quarter opposite Constantinople, the Benedictine Augustinus Galeci had taken his vows. When the Turks stormed Constantinople in 1453, he fled, probably with the last Venetian galleys that left the conquered city, to Venice, where he was admitted by the superior in S. Giorgio Maggiore. However he was soon after sent on to S. Giustina in Padua. But the air did not suit him there, he explained by way of justification, and thus he left the monastery without permission and moved on to Portugal, where he lived successively in various Benedictine monasteries (which, unlike the first three, were not strictly observant, *licet non de observantia*, hence his supplication). Now he was living as a 60-year old (he had thus experienced the conquest of Constantinople at the age of 28), in the convent of Paço de Souza: the shift of emphasis and perspective from the eastern to the western Mediterranean in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, illustrated in just one life.

On the basis of a Vatican source hitherto hardly used for Portuguese and Spanish history, the study has attempted to show how history of huge dimensions –that of the great discoveries– was experienced from the perspective of normal people. The supplications in the archive of the Apostolic Penitentiary let people speak who normally never had a chance of entering a historical source and who in this type of source expressed their problems so personally that the Penitentiary long believed that some of these supplications were closed with the seal of confession, so that the supplication registers were held under lock and key for this reason. What the great contemporary historians at that time portray in a sovereign overview as decisions made by princes, as achievements of admirals, captains and merchants, appears here reflected in

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<sup>87</sup> PA 8 f. 149rv (1460), Esch, Esch (eds.) 2012, pp. 293-311, here p. 311; no more passage: *ibidem* p. 295 f. A pilgrim from Lisbon to Rome in the jubilee year 1500 PA 49 f. 400rv.

<sup>88</sup> Appendix III.

the fates of individuals, who arrive horror-stricken in exile on small, distant islands that had only just been discovered and that were still to be populated, people who eloquently expressed their fear of strange places, of the distances, the climate and the natives. This source does not change our image of the great discoveries. But it adds to this image and fills it out with personal detail and a sense of atmosphere. And that should make it worthwhile consulting this unique source.

## 6. APPENDIX I

1501 April 5. Rome

*Two clerics of São Miguel on the Azores, exiled for murder (1493) by the vicarius of the Order of Christ to São Tomé (the island just discovered in the Gulf of Guinea) despite having been employed against the Muslims of the Maghreb for two years, are granted termination of exile.*

Città del Vaticano, Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica, Registra matrimonialium et diversorum, vol. 49, f. 429rv.

Antonius Nunii et Petrus de Arvinda clerici nullius diocesis sed de vicariatu de Tomar exponunt quod aliter inter ipsos exponentes ab octo annis citra et quosdam Sebastianum et Henricum Barbosa et Andream Gundisalvi ipsorum exponentium consanguineos seu cognatos ex una et certos Riolanum Valasci et Rodericum de Sanza eius nepotem ex altera partibus tunc in insula sancti Michaelis dos Acores regni Portugalie ipsis omnibus existentibus, dissensio sive discordia exorta extitit taliter quod Rodericus de Sanza, Henricus et Sebastianus Barbosa ac Rolanus Valasci vulnerati fuerunt, ipse vero Rodericus de Sanza forse culpa sua seu imperiti medici infra certos dies sicut Domino placuit ex illato sibi vulnere huiusmodi expiravit. Prefati vero exponentes de huiusmodi casu dolentes ab intimis ad partes Africe, ubi contra infideles continuo bellum geritur a credentes [*correct*: accedentes], ibidem duobus annis permanserunt accerrime contra infideles bellando. Cumque ex post ipsi exponentes ad dictam insulam remeassent fuissentque per iudicem secularem carceribus nuncupati [*correct*: mancipati] ratione clericatus forum illius declinarunt ac ad vicarium de Thomar ordinis Cisterciens. milicie Jhesuchristi nullius diocesis eorundem exponentium in ea parte iudicem competentem remissi fuerunt. Quiquidem vicarius eos diris carceribus mancipari mandavit et fecit et eis sic in carceribus constitutis Sebastianus et Andreas Gundisalvi prefati qui in premissis principales auctores fuerunt per certos iudices a sede apostolica desuper impetratos absolutionem de premissis fuerunt consecuti. Prefatus vero vicarius de Thomar exponentes prefatos ad perpetuum in insulam perditam sancti Thome vulgariter nuncupatam relegavit in qua exponentes prefati tribus annis vel inde circa pene eis infligte parendo permanserunt et in ea permanent

de presenti. Cum autem ipsi exponentes nichil preter herbas pro sustentatione humane vite in insula predicta habeant et continuo quodammodo infirmi existant, nudi et excalciat[i] maxima cum miseria incedentes, in qua etiam insula sunt stelliones, animalia fera que homines vivos deglut[i]unt adeo quod locus huiusmodi plus morti quam humane vite convenit et homines ibidem iugiter moriuntur, etsi per amplius ipsi exponentes permanere cogentur, mortem evadere non valerent et iam octo fere annis penitentiam de premissis egerint, supplicant quatenus eis huiusmodi exilii penam in aliqua alia pietatis [opera] seu etiam ut ad aliquod tempus in partibus Africe, in quibus ut prefertur antea biennio contra infideles bellarunt et plures propter similes causas ad dictas partes Africe relegantur, commutari seu commutari mandare necnon iudices defensionis etiam sub censuris super premissis deputare misericorditer dignemini, de gratia speciali. – Fiat de speciali et expresso, Julius eps. Brictonorien. regens.

Et committatur decano Trugen. in civitate Ulixbonen. commoranti et cantori et Fernando de Costa canonico Ulixbonen. ecclesiarum.

## 7. APPENDIX II

1499 October 11. Rome

*After having been condemned to exile –to Tangier, then to the island of São Tomé, then to Ceuta– by the archiepiscopal curia in Lisbon for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, a noble cleric in the service of the queen of Portugal is granted return to Portugal.*

Città del Vaticano, Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica, *Registra matrimonialium et diversorum*, vol. 48, f. 345v–346v.

Nobilis Johannes Roderici Baveto clericus Egitanen. dioc. exponit, quod cum alias ipse orator [in] servitio regine Portugallie tunc in villa Allenquer dicti regni commorans insistendo refectionem corporalem in certa domo sibi pro hospitio in dicta villa consignata, cuius patronus pro factore sancti Spiritus se gerebat, sumere volens panem quem ab hospita dicte domus habuerat, illi eo quod ipsa plus debito ab eodem exponente ut sibi videbatur exigere nitebatur, solvere recusasset et continuo dicta mulier eidem exponenti quod huiusmodi panis sancti Spiritus erat et propterea tantum solveret dixisset, prefatus exponens eidem mulieri, numquid sanctus Spiritus pastor [*correct*: pistor] esset, interrogavit et illa, quod sic, affirmasset, dictus exponens ob id contra dictam mulierem indignatus: “si sanctus Spiritus et [*correct*: est] pistor seu panis venditor, eum abiuro et in sancto Spiritu panis venditor[e] non credo, ac me osculetur in ano” animo commoto respondit. Propter quod dictus exponens super premissis accusatus et convictus, usque ad triennium [*twice*: usque ad triennium] ad villam de Allencer in partibus Africe ad debellandum contra infideles in exilium exstitit condemnatus. Et deinde effluxo termino quatuor mensium eidem

exponenti sub fide sua ad disponendum de negotiis suis a rege Portugalie indulto dictus orator eo quod infra dictum tempus exilii huiusmodi fuit sibi duplicatum, a quo pro parte ipsius oratoris appellato eo ad Curiam ecclesiasticam videlicet Curiam archiepiscopalem reverendissimi patris domini Georgii [cardinalis] episcopi Albanen. ac ecclesie Ulixbonen. administratoris contra ipsum oratorem procedens illum usque ad sex annos ad civitatem Turpen. in dictis partibus Affrice relegavit; ad quam ipso exponente profecto et post paucos dies [ad] habitacione[m] reverso, dictus vicarius iterum contra ipsum exponentem procedens, illum ad certam insulam sancti Thome nuncupatam a civitate Ulixbonen. longe plus civitatis Turpen. remotam per dictos sex annos relegavit; quam quidem relegationem dictus vicarius intuitu dicte regine ad civitatem Cepten. [Ceuta] ad duodecim annos commutavit. Et deinde ipse exponens quod huiusmodi exilium adimpleret, per eum fideiussore per centum ducatos ac fide sua et iuramento datis, ad Romanam Curiam venit in qua est de presenti. Cum autem, pater sancte, dictus exponens ab intimis doluerit et doleat de presenti et non in contemptum sancti Spiritus sed contra dictam mulierem, eo quod plus debito peteret indignatus, predicta verba dixerit animumque suum eundi ad dictum exilium inclinari non possit et cupiat relegationem huiusmodi necnon penam centum ducatorum predictam sibi et dicto fideiussori in alia pietatis opera commutari. Supplicat etc. quatenus ipsum a fide mentita ac reatu periurii et excessibus huiusmodi absolvi necnon sibi relegationem predictam necnon illi et dicto fideiussori centum ducatorum penam per eos ut premittitur incursam in aliqua pietatis opera commutari ac ipsos ad dictam penam et ipsum oratorem ad dictum exilium faciendum minime teneri nunciari ipsumque oratorem ut ad partes proprias redire et in civitate vel diocesi Ulixbonen. vel alibi per totum regnum Portugalie ubi sibi videbitur morari et manere possit et valeat sibi et licite licentiam concedi necnon quibusvis personis et iudicibus ecclesiasticis et secularibus, ne oratorem et fideiussorem predictos in persona, bonis et rebus suis directe vel indirecte, tacite vel expresse molestent seu perturbent sub penis et censuris ecclesiasticis inhiberi mandare misericorditer dignemini de gracia speciali et expresso.

– Fiat de speciali et expresso accedente ad hoc consensu ordinarii qui sententiam tulit. Julius eps. Brictorien. regens.

Et committatur episcopo Cathacen. ad presens in Romana Curia commoranti attento quod orator est presens in eadem. Fiat Julius.

## 8. APPENDIX III

1485 March 29. Rome

*A Benedictine from the convent of Pera, who fled to Venice at the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 and spent some time in S. Giorgio Maggiore and in S. Giustina in Padua, then moved on to Portugal to various Benedictine*



*convents (finally in Paço de Souza), asks for absolution and dispensation, since the latter convents are not strictly observant.*

Città del Vaticano, Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica, *Registra matrimonialium et diversorum*, vol. 34, f. 141v.

Religiosus frater Augustinus Galeci ordinis sancti Benedicti Compostellan.: ipse assumpsit habitum dicti ordinis et emisit professionem in monasterio civitatis de Pera de observantia Constantinopolitan. dioc., et superveniente Turco qui dictam civitatem suo dominio subiecit, dictus exponens a dicto monasterio et civitate aufugit ad monasterium sancti Georgii Venetiis dicti ordinis eciam de observantia, in quo admissus fuit, et deinde de mandato superioris ad monasterium sancte Justine Paduan. ordinis et observantie predictorum se retulit et ibi aliquamdiu permansit, licet non bene sanus propter aerem illius patrie sibi contrarium, et licentia superioris non petita nec obtenta ivit in Yspaniam ad regnum Portugal[i]e et cum habitu dicti ordinis in diversis monasteriis dicti ordinis licet non de observancia vixit, et de presenti in monasterio de Paaco de Sausa [Paço de Souza] dicti ordinis licet non de observancia Portugalen. dioc. residet. Cum autem, Pater sancte, dictus exponens sit sexagenarius et ultra et perpetuo infirmus ac in regno Portugalie non sit aliquod monasterium de observantia, supplicat humiliter Sanctitati Vestre pro parte dicti exponentis quatenus ipsum qui propter premissa excommunicationis incurrit sententias et sic ligatus divina celebravit officia ... a sententiis huiusmodi absolvi... in dicto monasterio de Paaco seu in quocumque alio monasterio remanere possit ... dignemini de gracia speciali et expresso. Fiat de speciali et expresso. F[ranciscus] episcopus Ananien. regens.

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