

Early Modern Iberian History in Global Contexts: Connexions

JUAN RENA AND THE FRONTIERS OF SPANISH EMPIRE, 1500–1540

Jose M. Escribano-Páez



Juan Rena and the Frontiers of Spanish Empire, 1500–1540

This book explores the political construction of imperial frontiers during the reigns of Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V in the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. Contrary to many studies on this topic, this book neither focuses on a specific frontier nor attempts to provide an overview of all the imperial frontiers. Instead, it focuses on a specific individual: Juan Rena (1480–1539). This Venetian clergyman spent 40 years serving the king in several capacities while traveling from the Maghreb to northern Spain, from the Pyrenees to the western fringes of the Ottoman Empire. By focusing on his activities, the book offers an account of the Spanish Empire's frontiers as a vibrant political space where a multiplicity of figures interacted to shape power relations from below. Furthermore, it describes how merchants, military officers, nobles, local elites and royal agents forged a specific political culture in the empire's liminal spaces. Through their negotiations and cooperation, but also through their competition and clashes, they created practices and norms in areas like cross-cultural diplomacy, the making of the social fabric, the definition of new jurisdictions, and the mobilization of resources for war.

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Early Modern Iberian History in Global Contexts: Connexions

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To Elena

Porque este libro era otra razón para decir no



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Abbreviations

ACA	Archivo de la Corona de Aragón
ADA	Archivo Duques de Alba
ADP	Archivo Doria Pamphilij
AGA	Archivo General de Andalucía
AGN	Archivo Real y General de Navarra
AGS	Arhivo General de Simancas
AHMP	Archivo Histórico Provincial de Málaga
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional
AHN-SN	Archivo Histórico Nacional-Sección Nobleza
AMC	Archivo Municipal de Córdoba
AMM	Archivo Municipal de Málaga
ANTT	Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo
APFR	Archivos Personales, Fondo Rena
ARChGr	Archivo Provincial de Granada
ASPVe	Archivio del Patriarcato di Venezia
ASVe	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BA	Biblioteca da Ajuda
BL	British Library
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BRAH	Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia
BZ	Biblioteca Francisco Zabálburu
Caj.	Caja
Carp.	Carpeta
CO_PS	Comptos, Papeles Sueltos
CO_REG	Comptos, Registros
GyM	Guerra y Marina
Leg.	Legajo
MS	Manuscrits
RGS	Registro General del Sello



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Introduction

This book examines the political construction of imperial frontiers during the early modern period. More specifically, it addresses the shaping of these political spaces during the reigns of Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V in the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. The construction of the Spanish Empire has been analyzed from many different perspectives. In recent decades, narratives about the state-building process led by the Crown in its attempt to construct a centralized administration have been replaced by a more pluralistic approach stressing the negotiations between different members of the body politic. While recent scholarship has led to a better understanding of the power relations between the different members of this large polity, it has generally neglected the study of the frontiers as crucial spaces in the shaping of the empire. This neglect contrasts starkly with the frontier societies' capacity to contest and adapt the policies dictated from the imperial court, a capacity that has been demonstrated in recent works on the history of the territorial definition of early modern empires. With this background in mind, my main objective is to offer an account of the construction of the Spanish Empire's frontiers as a vibrant political space where a multiplicity of figures interacted to shape power relations in ways that went beyond opposition to central policies and performances of territorial appropriation. Furthermore, I describe how merchants, military officers, nobles, local elites and royal agents forged a specific political culture in the empire's liminal spaces. Through their negotiations and cooperation, but also through their competition and clashes, they created practices and norms in areas like cross-cultural diplomacy, the making (and remaking) of the social fabric, the definition of new jurisdictions, and the mobilization of resources for war.

Contrary to many studies on this topic, this book neither focuses on a specific frontier nor attempts to provide an overview of all the imperial frontiers; instead, it focuses on a specific individual: Juan Rena (1480–1539). This Venetian clergyman spent 40 years serving first Ferdinand the Catholic and later Charles V in several capacities. He began his service to the Spanish Crown as an obscure merchant negotiating with

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Muslim authorities in the Maghreb on behalf of Ferdinand the Catholic, but toward the end of his life he had become a bishop and military advisor to Charles V. While in the service of these monarchs, he traveled from the Maghreb to northern Spain, from the Pyrenees to the western fringes of the Ottoman Empire on the Greek coasts, working as a merchant, a diplomat, a churchman, a paymaster, or the purveyor or commissioner of the navy. Despite this apparent diversity of locations and assignments, underlying all his tireless activity in the service of the Spanish Crown was the need to provide the nascent Spanish Empire with robust frontiers, and this is the main subject of this work. Hence, what follows is not an account of Rena's career, but a book on how the Spanish Empire was built, not through the actions of the inner circles of the imperial government but from below, not within the imperial palace or the parliaments but on the frontiers.

In recent decades the way in which we understand early modern monarchies and empires has changed radically. Traditionally, these polities were understood as clear precedents for the modern state because of their supposed centralized nature.¹ Different authors have shown that the Iberian monarchies (frequently thought of as paradigmatic examples of power centralization) were actually not a precedent for the modern state because power was in fact dispersed among multiple individuals and institutions.² As a result, specialists in this area have shifted their focus from how the Crown exercised power to a new understanding of power relationships in the Iberian monarchies.³ A milestone in the study of the Spanish Empire, Elliott's seminal work on the composite character of this polity emphasized the negotiated aspect of political relations between the Crown and the different territorial elites.⁴ All this has provided fertile ground for research focused on the back-and-forth between the Crown and different political stakeholders such as local elites in the different kingdoms in the empire, cities, the Church, and the nobility.⁵

The emphasis on the plurality of powers and their negotiated relations made clear the need for a studies on the political space where most of these interactions took place: the court.⁶ In addition to the studies on the royal court as a political space, historians have looked at the court's institutions, which has provided us with new insights into how the imperial administration functioned.⁷ These studies shed light on the important role of courtiers and court factions in early modern politics and have also provided us with complete profiles of the men who served in the core institutions of the imperial government. In addition, we know a great deal about the emperor's political agenda, since several historians have made interesting contributions to the study of imperial politics by looking at the plans devised by the members of the inner circle of the imperial government. The clearest case is Mercurino di Gattinara, the political architect behind Charles V's imperial project, who has had at least three monographs devoted to him.⁸ These lines of inquiry have given us an

accurate understanding of both the monarch's master plans and the vertical ties that bound the Crown to other political stakeholders. Later works have filled in the details by emphasizing the importance of the horizontal relationships between the different members of the body politic beyond the imperial court. Hence, for instance, the links between figures from different territories have been shown to be crucial to the operation of the Spanish Empire.⁹ Another recent contribution has attempted to take a step back from a top-down understanding of the Iberian empires by emphasizing their polycentric nature. This analysis attempts to move beyond a center-periphery narrative focused mainly on the court, in order to show that these vast political entities were built out of the interaction of the multiple interlinked centers (kingdoms, parliaments, cities, etc.) with the king but also among themselves.¹⁰ All these works have widened the scope of approaches to the political history of the Spanish Empire. However, thus far, the imperial frontiers have attracted little attention in the analysis of the empire's political construction.

This is not to say that the history of the frontiers of the Spanish Empire has been understudied. On the contrary, there are numerous works on this subject. However, this scholarship is mainly focused on the forging of national identity and territorial sovereignty. In contrast to a scholarship that looked at the definition of frontiers as part of a state-building process directed by the central authorities, Peter Sahlins has studied how territorial sovereignty and national identity were shaped by the dialectics of state and local interests.¹¹ More recently, Tamar Herzog has studied the mechanisms and processes by which a multiplicity of actors (from kings to peasants, from diplomats to municipalities) established territorial claims and shaped rights over frontier lands.¹² Studies like these have highlighted the agency of local actors and have opened a window onto the vibrant political culture of the frontiers. However, the political creativity on the frontiers went beyond boundary-making and territorial appropriation. Historians working on the frontier societies of the Spanish Empire have shown how these societies were able to forge new links with their neighbors that pulled them in different directions, sometimes even away from the central authority. In so doing, these societies actively influenced the balance of power within and beyond the empire.¹³ Following this line of inquiry, new research on the Iberian empires is analyzing their frontiers as laboratories of integration and conflict.¹⁴ In addition, recent scholarship on early modern political thought has looked at frontiers as spaces where imperial subjects shaped ideas about sovereignty and rulership.¹⁵

This book aims to contribute to these debates by filling the gap at the point where both these fields of study—the political history of the Spanish Empire and the history of frontiers—intersect. More specifically, I argue that frontiers were crucial to shaping the early Spanish Empire. In contrast to narratives that describe the construction of this polity as

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a process starting in the center and expanding towards its limits, I hope to show that the construction of the empire took place simultaneously in both its center and its liminal spaces. Early modern political frontiers used to be perceived as peripheral spaces where local actors were able to contest or adapt the policies coming from the core institutions of the imperial government.¹⁶ This book aims at transcending both the traditional center-periphery approach of works on frontier societies and the debates on the centralized or polycentric nature of the Spanish Empire by adopting an actor-based approach. In so doing, it builds on recent scholarship on the construction of early modern polities from below, that is, as the result of the interaction of different figures who were able to manipulate central power.¹⁷ In order to fully adapt this approach to the circumstances of imperial frontiers, it is necessary to include some other factors, especially the need to defend the territory from external threats.¹⁸ Hence, how different actors transformed the frontier political space by wielding and combining different kinds of power with the defensive needs of the empire is the main subject of this book.

It is my contention that the construction of the imperial frontiers was not just a matter of establishing territorial sovereignty but a crucial aspect of the empire-building process. Conquering new territories was easy compared to the challenge of maintaining and defending those territories in a context of fierce competition among aggressive dynastic states and empires. Thus, when I speak of the construction of an imperial frontier I do not mean the delimitation of a precise line following a military campaign or the signing of a diplomatic treaty. On the contrary, I refer to a political space where the need to defend the empire resulted in specific norms, practices, and power relations. In so doing, I use the term *frontier* with the political meaning of the word *frontera* that was widely employed in early modern sources to refer to territories close to enemy lands and continually exposed to attack.¹⁹ This definition seems to be perfectly suited to refer to the different territorial units under analysis. In the early sixteenth century, the bulwarks defending the Spanish Empire were coastal cities and strongholds like Oran and Mers el-Kébir, but also entire kingdoms like Navarre or, more broadly, the maritime space between Italy and the Ottoman Empire.

By focusing on Juan Rena's activities serving the Crown in the construction of different frontiers, we can witness the practical measures that were taken in the liminal spaces to build the empire. In addition, this actor-based approach allows us to shift the focus from the binary relationship between frontier and imperial center. By following Juan Rena to the different places where he worked in the service of the Crown (North Africa, southern Spain, Navarre, Italy, the western frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, and the Mediterranean Sea), we get access to the interconnected history of the construction of the empire on its frontiers. Juan Rena offers us a unique perspective on the close ties between frontier

actors and both the core institutions of the imperial government and other crucial parts of the political body, other frontier regions, and even other actors beyond the borders of the empire.

Although this is a book on a royal servant working for the Crown on the frontiers of the empire, this is not about how royal agents constructed the imperial frontiers. While Rena is the protagonist of the following pages, he is just one of the many actors on the stage, which also included noblemen and local leaders, military officers and merchants. It is important to bear in mind that, although he is the central character I focus on, he never acted alone. Almost 20 years ago, Henry Kamen emphasized how numerous non-Spaniards helped to bring the Spanish Empire into being. Since then, different authors have broadened the scope of research in this field to include actors such as noble families or cities that helped to shape the Spanish Empire.²⁰ Building on this scholarship, I aim to shed light on the figures who operated at ground level (below the social stratum of the nobility and the urban elites) to enact policy at the geographical limits of the Spanish Empire. In order to do so, it is important not to overstate the agency of actors like Rena. More frequently than not, he did not have the upper hand in the different negotiations he conducted. Furthermore, sometimes he acted following the orders from the imperial court, but sometimes he acted in accordance with his own agenda. Rather than invalidating Rena's heuristic value, all this makes him a useful case study for assessing how imperial politics worked on the frontiers. Sometimes Rena voiced and defended the interests of local figures rather than obeying orders from the inner circles of the imperial government, and in so doing he showed how frontier societies influenced imperial statecraft. However, most of the time his actions cannot be framed within the center-periphery power dialectics but must be seen within the wider framework of the frontier, a political space with its own norms and practices constantly shaped and reshaped out of the interactions of a wide array of parties like the Crown, local elites, power brokers, military men, merchants, and the external enemies of the empire.

Juan Rena: A Brief Presentation

It is difficult to sketch Juan Rena's biography because of the many gaps in our knowledge of his personal life.²¹ His origins remain obscure, and we will probably never know anything about his early life. We do know that he was born in Venice around 1480 and in fact he was very proud of his Venetian origins.²² We also know that he was ordained during his early years in Venice.²³ Nevertheless, as he did not belong to an important noble family or to the Venetian elite, it is very difficult to find out anything about his family background. The Venetian state archives have only a few sources referring to members of a Rena family from the Middle Ages.²⁴ For instance, a Pietro Rena (also a priest) worked as a chancellor of the

Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople in the mid-fourteenth century.²⁵ Nevertheless, these sources tell us nothing about Rena's immediate family. Rena did not leave us any information about his family background except for a passing mention to his father, Polo Rena, that he made to one of his servants.²⁶ He did not maintain close ties with his relatives in Venice, but he did, for instance, help his nieces to enter the convent of Saint Joseph by paying their dowries and using his contacts within the Venetian church, which might be an indication of the humble background of his family.²⁷ If we know very little about his family background, we know even less about his training during his early years in Venice. It has been suggested that Juan Rena studied in the school of the prestigious mathematician Luca Pacioli, but this Franciscan friar (considered the father of modern accounting and bookkeeping) was not in Venice during Rena's youth.²⁸ Nevertheless, that Rena mastered modern accounting techniques is beyond doubt, and actually this was one of his main assets in his later professional career.

We will never know why Rena moved from Venice to the Iberian Peninsula, but most probably he arrived in southern Castile aboard one of the mercantile convoys connecting Venice, the Maghreb, and the southern coast of Andalusia.²⁹ Unfortunately, we do not know what brought him into the service of the Spanish authorities. The first reliable information that we have about him is that in 1504, shortly after his arrival in Castile, he carried out some diplomatic missions as a representative of Ferdinand the Catholic in North Africa, negotiating with the king of Vélez de la Gomera, a haven for pirates in what is present-day Morocco. A self-described man of credit on the Mediterranean frontier,³⁰ by the end of 1504 Rena was also negotiating in the royal court of the Catholic Monarchs on behalf of Muslim merchants and officials from the kingdom of Tlemcen.³¹ Thereafter, the king and Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba (the nobleman in charge of protecting the southern frontier) employed him in the conquest and defense of Spanish strongholds on the Maghrebi coast.³² Rena soon learned how dangerous serving the Crown could be. In 1507 he had to ensure the supply of provisions to the garrison at Mers el-Kébir from the Andalusian ports at a time when the region was suffering the worst agrarian and demographic crisis in its recent history. In addition to the difficult task of collecting huge amounts of foodstuffs in a context of failing harvests, rising prices, and a plague outbreak, Rena faced yet another change: escaping death. During his stay at Puerto de Santa María, Rena was stabbed (the circumstances of the attack remain obscure). Even worse, while he was recovering he was struck with the epidemic that was devastating the region. He spent three months fighting for his life, but he survived thanks to the medical care paid for by his masters.³³ This bitter experience taught Rena two lessons that he would carry with him for the rest of his life: serving the Crown was risky, but at the same time, having the support of the powerful could mean the difference between life and death.

Later, in 1512, Rena participated in preparing a fleet to transport an English army to support the Castilian troops in the conquest of Navarre. Soon thereafter he became paymaster (military treasurer) of this strategic territory on the northern frontier of the empire.³⁴ This appointment laid the foundation for his later accumulation of administrative positions in this kingdom during the years after its conquest. He also took part in Navarre's internal government, especially in the financial sphere, where he acted as an accounting official and judge of financial affairs (*oidor de comptos*).³⁵ To these activities we should add his role as vicar general of the Navarrese see, the most important position in the diocese's government.³⁶ During the political crisis at the beginning of Charles V's reign, the Revolt of the Comuneros (1520–1522), Rena took part in raising an imperial army to put down the rebels. A man of action, he also engaged in combat against the rebels, and during the assault of Tordesillas, the last stronghold controlled by the *comuneros* army, he was wounded by an arrow in the face.³⁷ From then onward, Rena carried the mark of royal service on his face. During the next two years he continued working in military logistics in the context of the war between Charles V and Francis I.³⁸ By that time Rena held high posts both in the church hierarchy and the imperial administration. However, in a sharp contrast to his official status, he continued working on the ground. We see him laboring hand in hand with the miners who excavated a tunnel to demolish a fortress while surrounded by enemy forces in the summer of 1522 or covered in mud while coordinating the provisioning of German mercenaries during a siege in the frigid winter of 1524.³⁹

Five years later he returned to the Mediterranean, where he acted as general purveyor of the imperial navy.⁴⁰ Following his services in the Mediterranean, Rena became a member of the entourage accompanying the emperor on his tour of Europe. In 1529 he took an active part in the organization of Charles V's Italian tour, where the latter was crowned emperor by Pope Clement VII.⁴¹ During the 1530s, Rena was again employed in coordinating the emperor's Mediterranean naval forces and in organizing Charles V's major military operations, such as the conquest of Koroni, on the Greek coast (1532), the first naval campaign against the Ottoman Empire, or the conquest of Tunis, in North Africa (1535).⁴² These services earned him the role of personal councilor to the emperor on military affairs during the final years of his life. This coincided with the peak in his ecclesiastical career. In 1534 he was appointed bishop of Alghero, in Sardinia, and four years later he was given the bishopric of Pamplona.⁴³ He died in Toledo on January 18, 1539, after almost 40 years serving the Spanish Crown in building up its imperial frontiers.⁴⁴

How was Rena portrayed by his contemporaries and by later historians? He was sometimes characterized as an auxiliary figure in the political landscape of the day, but in general he has received little, and fragmentary, attention. The very first mention of Rena was in Francesillo

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de Zúñiga's burlesque chronicle of Charles V's reign, which indicates that he was already a known figure in the court of Charles V.⁴⁵ He also appeared in the works of Pedro Girón and Francisco López de Gómara, two chroniclers, who referred to him as a servant of the emperor.⁴⁶ The soldier Martín García de Cerezeda included some references to Rena as purveyor of the navy and military advisor to Charles V in his account of the conquest of Tunis.⁴⁷ About a century ago, a local pundit granted Rena a privileged place in his history of the conquest of Navarre and gave birth to a "black legend" about Rena. Since then Rena has continued to be featured in works on the conquest, frequently as an emblematic representative of the cruelty of Spanish practices during that period.⁴⁸ The multiple posts and responsibilities that Rena held earned him allusions in various works, but these are almost always mere passing mentions, the only exception being a chapter on his activity as vicar general and bishop of Pamplona.⁴⁹ In recent years, however, Rena has attracted the attention of several scholars thanks to his astonishing web of contacts. Hence, he has been depicted as a member of Fernández de Córdoba's network, an important noble lineage in the service of the Spanish Crown.⁵⁰ Rena also appears as a friend of Ignatius of Loyola's in a modern biography of the founder of the Jesuit order, but no documentary evidence backs this claim.⁵¹ As we can see, despite the little attention that he has received, Rena is far from a complete unknown. Nevertheless, a comprehensive and integrated study of his activities is still lacking, mainly because a complete account of his services on behalf of the Crown has become possible only recently due to the reorganization of his personal archive.

To a large extent Rena's astonishing career could only have been possible during the formative stage of the Spanish Empire. Rena arrived in the Iberian Peninsula at a time of political turmoil and radical transformation. It is worth noting that the reigns of Ferdinand the Catholic, Queen Isabella (1479–1516), and their grandson, Charles V (1519–57) began in the same way: with significant internal conflict.⁵² Ferdinand and Isabella fought a war against the powerful supporters of Isabella's niece, who also aspired to the Castilian crown; and Charles's nomination as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1520) coincided with the revolts of the *comuneros* and the *germanías*, two urban uprisings in Castile and Aragon, respectively. In addition to these major conflicts, each of the monarchs faced fierce opposition by different local oligarchies and some branches of the nobility. Needless to say, the Crown also received and relied on the support of strategic collaborators from the major cities' governments and key figures among the aristocracy. Indeed, the violent contestation of the Crown's policy is proof that the construction of the Spanish Empire and its political system was the result of a delicate balance of powers and interests. This was the political chessboard Rena had to navigate in serving the Crown, by reconciling interests and attracting collaborators.

The career of someone who spent most of his life constructing frontiers cannot be fully understood without reference to the international context. Common narratives on the rise of the Spanish Empire usually privilege the spectacular acquisition of territories both in Europe and the Americas (such as the conquest of Naples, Sicily, Milan, or Mexico), while neglecting the acquisition of other areas with a strategic value for the defense of the empire. However, the Catholic Monarchs' expansionist project actually began with the construction of frontiers to protect their realms against external enemies. The conflicts with the French monarchs in Catalonia (1495 and 1503) were the first in a series of military campaigns on the northern frontier of the realm aimed at securing the Pyrenees that ended in 1512 with the conquest of Navarre. More or less at the same time, the Catholic Monarchs launched an ambitious expansionist strategy in the Maghreb, which resulted in the conquest of a series of coastal cities and strongholds—Melilla (1497), Mers el-Kébir (1505), Oran (1509), and Tripoli (1511)—in an attempt to protect their southern domains against the attacks of Muslim corsairs. To a great extent, Charles V's decisions to annex Milan (1535) and conquer Tunis (1535) were the result of his need to secure his Italian domains. Hence, these conquests were just a return to an old strategy that started during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs decades earlier.

Rena's career reflects the ongoing need to provide the empire with strong frontiers during the first stage of the empire-building process. While the construction of these new frontiers can be understood as proof of Spain's increasing power, they were also the result of the ascendancy of two rivals: the French monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. The French king, Francis I, became the main threat to the Iberian and Italian domains of the Spanish Empire.⁵³ At the same time, the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent conducted a series of military campaigns that changed European and Mediterranean geopolitics for centuries to come.⁵⁴ Both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans had expansionist aspirations to extend their empires beyond the limits of the ancient world, but the Mediterranean basin continued to be the principal arena of their confrontation.⁵⁵ Crisscrossing tirelessly from one frontier to another, Rena mirrors the path of an expanding empire surrounded by two powerful enemies, or the paradox of an empire expanding its domains out of fear of an external threat.

This book focuses on Juan Rena in order to observe some of the aspects of this process of imperial expansion that are impossible to perceive from a top-down perspective.⁵⁶ In so doing, it offers a micro-historical analysis of the construction of the Spanish Empire. More specifically, I focus on Juan Rena's micro-politics (that is, his use of formal and informal power and ties to achieve his goals) within the larger canvas of the empire-building process.⁵⁷ In adopting this actor-based approach, this book connects with the recent interest on the so-called agents of empire.⁵⁸ This

scholarship has underlined the crucial contributions of a wide array of diplomats, courtiers, or high-ranking military officers. However, it has neglected the crucial role played by figures who were not privy to the highest political spheres. By focusing on a completely different figure like Rena, I hope to establish the agency of the modest individuals who shaped the empire on the ground.⁵⁹ While the construction of the Spanish Empire is firmly associated with its expansion across the Atlantic, Rena spent most of his life traveling around Europe and especially the Mediterranean. With his multiple activities serving the Crown in Málaga, Oran, Cartagena, Barcelona, Genoa, Naples, Tunis, and Koroni, Rena help to turn the political ambitions of Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V into a reality.⁶⁰ By looking at the rise of the Spanish Empire from Rena's perspective, we can see it not as a de-humanized polity (as is the case in the narratives about imperial clashes)⁶¹ but as a collective construction, one that was created and shaped by the activity of thousands of individuals who embodied the empire on its frontiers.

Although this book is the result of an intensive analysis of a wide array of sources, the main core of information comes from Rena's personal archive.⁶² By prioritizing the personal archive of a royal servant working on the imperial frontiers while using the sources of the imperial administration in a fruitful yet complementary way, this book builds on recent scholarship that applies the so-called archival turn to imperial history.⁶³ Rena's personal archive (an extraordinary repository, with thousands of documents, that is being systematically analyzed for the first time) has allowed me to reconstruct his career serving the Spanish Crown in detail from the very beginning of the sixteenth century up to the time of his death. In fact, the actor-based approach of this research would have been impossible without it. Although Rena amassed this archive not to document the period but for his own practical purposes, it does offer a rare assemblage of records that reflect his know-how on frontier building. More important, this rich source has allowed me to analyze Rena's interactions with other individuals connected to the frontiers. Precisely because of this, when possible, I have consulted the personal or family archives of figures closely related to Rena. Moreover, state archives have provided me with a lot of detail about Rena's activity that I have used extensively throughout the book. The documentation produced by the core institutions of the imperial administration has allowed me to balance my narrative, placing Rena within the imperial administration without making him too central a character. Despite their obvious importance, I try to deal with these sources without falling into an all-too-easy reliance on the Simancas General Archive. This treasure trove has attracted several historians who have provided us with excellent studies on the Spanish Empire but always with the royal court and the core institutions of the imperial administration taking center stage—in other words, from a top-down perspective. Avoiding this perspective was crucial for

me because one of the main aims of this study is to show the inner workings of the empire as it expanded not as seen from the court councils, but from the viewpoint of an agent on the ground.

Structure of the Book

Rena's career trajectory has influenced the structuring of the book, which is, in fact, quite straightforward. The chapters are ordered chronologically following Rena's life in the service of the Spanish Empire. As I already mentioned, Rena's main assignments mirrored the different challenges in the construction of the empire's frontiers. Hence, each chapter addresses a specific aspect of the frontier-building process. Rena's career allows us to perceive the continuities between the reigns of Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V and to realize the extent to which the empire of the latter relied on changes that took place during the reign of the former. Even though it is difficult to follow someone like Rena, who spent his whole life traveling, addressing consecutively Rena's most important missions allows us to perceive how imperial frontiers were constructed through the solutions to different challenges as they arose.

Rena's early activities in the service of Ferdinand the Catholic in the Maghreb are the subject of the first chapter. The conquest of a series of cities and strongholds on the Maghrebi coast during the opening decade of the sixteenth century was a foundational episode in Spain's expansion beyond Europe. Rena's participation in this project illustrates the role of figures like him not only in the process of extra-European expansion but also in the definition of the imperial frontiers. The conquest of these cities and strongholds has traditionally been portrayed as a military tour de force made possible by the superiority of the Spanish army. This chapter looks at Spanish expansionism from a completely different angle by focusing on the cross-cultural diplomacy taking place beyond the battlefield. Together with a wide array of collaborators, Rena participated in the diplomacy from below that advanced the conquest of several coastal cities in the Maghreb. He and his colleagues managed not only to establish a stable channel of political communication between the Christian and the Muslim shores of the Mediterranean but also to influence the shaping of the frontier society resulting from the conquest of some of these cities, such as Oran. Furthermore, Rena and the rest of the mediators participating in these cross-cultural negotiations played a key role in restoring the connections of the Spanish stronghold with its Muslim surroundings. By influencing the shaping of this frontier society and connecting it with its neighbors, they helped to establish some of the key bulwarks of the imperial frontiers.

Conquering new frontiers was not enough—it was necessary to protect them. Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V were able to do that thanks to the collaboration of powerful aristocrats. That noble cooperation

was essential to administering and governing different territories of the empire is very well known. Nevertheless, Rena's activity serving Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba (also known as the Alcaide de los Donceles, the nobleman in charge of guarding the new imperial frontier in the Maghreb) allows us to go a step further. As we will see in Chapter 2, the collaboration between the monarch and the noblemen, and also the activities of figures like Rena, created and shaped a new political space closely associated to the frontier's defense. This political space transcended the limits of new imperial bulwarks like Oran, to incorporate other areas that contributed—through trade and political connections, for instance—to their defense. Thus, this chapter explores how Spanish expansionism influenced domestic politics, and the other way around, how Spanish local politics shaped the new imperial frontiers. Rena's activities in the service of the Alcaide de los Donceles allow us to reconstruct how the political space of the frontier was influenced by a complex interaction of jurisdictional pluralism, conflicting powers, and private interests.

Whereas Ferdinand the Catholic protected his southern domains by conquering a set of coastal strongholds in the Maghreb, in the north he conquered an entire kingdom: Navarre. This is scene of Chapter 3. This strategic kingdom controlled access to the Iberian Peninsula from southern France. In the Italian Wars, the Navarrese monarchs sided with the French king, and Ferdinand the Catholic responded by invading this kingdom. There was no room for neutrality between the two ascendant powers fighting for hegemony in Europe. King Ferdinand knew that it was impossible to resist the French threat with a weak frontier and therefore decided to transform Navarre into one of the main bastions defending his realms. Rena arrived in Navarre a few weeks after its conquest together with a team of royal servants with long experience in the construction of frontiers. Most of them left soon after, but Rena stayed on for almost 13 years (from 1512 to 1525), becoming a key factor in the defense of this territory. From his position as a paymaster and, above all, as an expert with the necessary knowledge of the local scene, Rena participated in coordinating the military machinery and its funding, and in outlining the defensive strategy. Nevertheless, the construction of the military frontier was only one of the tasks at hand. The other, more important one was the political incorporation of Navarre into the Spanish Empire. The success of this process of political incorporation relied on two things: first, restoring the social fabric of the kingdom, and second, determining the place that this new polity would occupy within the Spanish Empire. As we will see, Rena played an important role in both.

After years of service to the Crown on the mountainous frontier of Navarre, Rena moved to a completely different setting: the Mediterranean. He may have changed territories but not his job: he went on to work in the construction of a maritime frontier, the subject of Chapter 4. Rena's move

from Navarre to the Mediterranean reflects a shift in Charles V's priorities, from protecting his Iberian realms from the French threat to protecting his Italian dominions from the Ottoman menace. During the early 1530s the Habsburg and Ottoman empires began to confront each other directly for hegemony in the Mediterranean. To a great extent, Charles V was able to protect his Italian domains from the Ottoman threat (which justified his rule over them) because he established a strategic alliance with the Genoese admiral Andrea Doria. In this chapter, I analyze Rena's activity as commissioner of the navy during the first joint operation of Andrea Doria's naval forces and Charles V's imperial administration against the Ottomans. Needless to say, compared to Doria and the emperor, Juan Rena was a character of little importance, but as Chapter 4 argues, he also played a key role in the construction of the imperial frontier in the Mediterranean. After his appointment as commissioner of the navy in 1532, Rena had to mesh together two different organizations: the imperial administration and Doria's private military enterprise. By analyzing Rena's activity as commissioner general, we will see his influence over the practical terms that governed this strategic alliance. Furthermore, by analyzing his participation in some crucial debates about how and whether to continue expanding the frontier, I will also describe Rena's ideas about the Mediterranean frontier he was helping to construct.

Throughout the four chapters I offer a new account of the construction of the Spanish Empire from a different perspective. Rather than depicting the frontiers as a sort of periphery of the periphery, the focus on Rena's activity allows for a reassessment of these liminal spaces beyond their role as a theater for imperial confrontation. They were also a creative space—that is, a place where the need to guarantee the defense of the realm resulted in a vibrant political culture whose many concerns included cross-cultural diplomacy, defense funding, jurisdictional questions, and the coordination of imperial warfare. In this account, then, the empire was constructed not only in the monarch's councils but also far beyond the palace gates, across the waters of the contested Mediterranean, near the Pyrenees, and in the remote coastal strongholds of the Maghreb. It is precisely there, in Oran, where this particular account of the construction of the Spanish empire begins.

Notes

1. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins*; Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*; Maravall, *Estado moderno y mentalidad*. For a complete overview of the state-building debate in Spanish historiography, see Fernández Albaladejo, "Les traditions nationales."
2. Clavero, *Tantas personas como estados*; Hespanha, *As Vésperas do Leviathan*; Fernández Albaladejo, *Fragmentos de monarquía*. For an extensive literature review on this topic, see Schaub, "La Península Ibérica"; and Cardim, "Centralização Política e Estado."

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3. For a literature review on the impact of this new direction in the study of the Iberian monarchies, see Gil Pujol, "Notas sobre el estudio del poder"; and Cardim, "Politics and Power Relations."
4. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies"; and Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*. As acknowledged by Elliott, the composite nature of early modern politics was already discussed by Helmut Koenigsberger. See Koenigsberger, "Monarchies and Parliaments." See also the influential work by this author, Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily*.
5. The reign of Charles V offers a good example. Elliott, "Monarquía compuesta y Monarquía Universal"; Tracy, *Holland Under the Habsburg Rule*; Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*; Hernando Sánchez, *El reino de Nápoles*; Yun Casalilla, *La gestión del poder*, 105–36; Perrone, *Charles V and the Castilian Assembly*; Fortea Pérez, *Las cortes de Castilla y León*; and Espinosa, *The Empire of the Cities*. The literature on Charles V's reign is vast. For a complete yet meticulously researched account of his reign, see Parker, *Emperor*.
6. Martínez Millán, "Para un estudio del imperio"; Martínez Millán, *La corte de Carlos V*. English readers can consult Rivero Rodríguez, "Court Studies in the Spanish World."
7. Martínez Millán, *Instituciones y élites de poder*; and Vermeir, "La construcción de l'Empire."
8. Headley, *The Emperor and His Chancellor*; Rivero Rodríguez, *Gattinara, Carlos V*; and Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*. Of course he is not the only example. See also Mazín, "Architect of the New World." Interestingly, the term *architect* has been recently applied to a wide array of subjects who participated in imperial statecraft through their petitions. See Masters, "A Thousand Invisible Architects."
9. Yun Casalilla, *Las redes del imperio*.
10. Cardim, Herzog, Ruiz Ibáñez, and Sabatini, *Polycentric Monarchies*, 3–8.
11. Sahlins, *Boundaries*. For a completely different view, see Nordman, *Fronières de France*.
12. Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*.
13. Bertrand and Planas, *Les sociétés de frontière*.
14. Favaró, Merluzzi, and Sabatini, *Fronteras*.
15. Casale, "Tordesillas and the Ottoman Caliphate"; and Flores, "The Mogor as a Venomous Hydra." Beyond the sphere of political ideas, new research on how the Spanish ruled the frontiers of their empire has shown the need to continue working on how power relations were exercised in imperial borderlands. See Mantecón, "Frontera(s) e historia(s)." Frontiers are attracting more attention among scholars of early modern political history. For a recent attempt to give historical perspective to present debates about walls and borderlands, see Conklin Akbari et al., "Walls, Borders, and Boundaries."
16. Ruiz Ibáñez, "Comprender una monarquía policéntrica."
17. Holstein, "Empowering Interactions," 21.
18. Pardo Molero, *La defensa del Imperio*.
19. Like most of his contemporaries, Rena used the term *frontera* to refer to a territory (be it a kingdom, a region, or a stronghold) under threat due to its vicinity to the enemy. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de Vargas. Pamplona, May 8, 1521. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, no. 24-12. On the military connotation of the term *frontier* in the early modern period, see Febvre, *Pour une histoire à part entière*, 11–24. On the distinction between frontiers and boundaries in historiography, see Sahlins, *Boundaries*, 4; and Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*, 2–3.

20. Kamen, *Spain's Road to Empire*; Liang, *Family and Empire*; and Díaz Ceballos, "Las comunidades urbanas de la Monarquía Hispánica."
21. The most complete description of Rena's life can be found in Chocarro Huesa and Segurra Urrea, *Inventario de la documentación*, 37–68.
22. As a matter of fact, he passed this feeling on to his daughter, Juana Rena, who considered herself Venetian despite having been born in Granada and grown up in Navarre. AGN, APFR, Caj. 16, no. 13.
23. A certain "Johanes Regina" received holy orders in March 1490 in the chapel of Saint Just. Despite the fact that this last name looks like a Latin version of Rena, I cannot affirm that it was Rena. Most likely Juan Rena was one of the many "Jo. Di Venetia" ordained during these years. ASPVe, Archivio Segreto, Ordinazioni, Lib. 2, fols. 127, 136, 141, 143; and Lib. 3, fol. 39. Unfortunately, the records of religious ordinations between 1495 and 1509, when Rena probably took his holy orders, are missing.
24. ASVe, Procuratori di San Marco, Misti, Busta, 75. I would like to thank Francisco Apellániz and Lisa Dallavalle for their guidance in the Venetian archives.
25. ASVe, Cancellerie Inferiore, no. 12, fols. 1–3.
26. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan Rena. Madrid, July 18, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 2, no. 8-3.
27. AGN, APFR, Caj. 10, no. 20.
28. Chocarro Huesa and Segura Urrea, *Inventario de la documentación*, 68. On Luca Pacioli, see Ulivi, "Luca Pacioli."
29. We can surmise that Rena was one of the scribes of the Venetian galleys imprisoned by Cadiz's local authorities between 1502 and 1503. ASVe, Senato, Mar, Reg. No. 16, fol. 60. Unfortunately, the diplomatic sources tell us nothing about this incident. Melero Fernández, "Fondos medievales del Archivio di Stato de Venecia." We know of another priest employed by the Venetian authorities as a notary in the convoy of galleys trading in the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula in the years leading up to Rena's appearance in Castile. Greco, *Quaderno di Bordo*; and Ducellier, "Le registre de Giovanni Manzini."
30. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 3.
31. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150501, no. 99.
32. AGN, CO, PS, Leg. 23, no. 23.
33. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 187, fol. 67.
34. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 375, s.f.; and AGN, APFR, Caj. 14, nos. 1–3.
35. AGN, CO, PS, 1ª S. Leg. 4, no. 14.
36. AGN, APFR, Caj. 87, no. 21-2 and Caj. 94, no. 1-1.
37. Letter from the Constable of Castile to Charles V. Burgos, January 25, 1521. AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 1, no. 105, fol. 709.
38. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 6.
39. Letter from Juan Rena to the Count of Miranda. Maya, August 6, 1522. AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, no. 48. Letter from Juan Rena to the royal secretary Castañeda. Irún, February 13, 1524. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 166, no. 90, fol. 26.
40. AGN, APFR, Caj. 38, no. 1.
41. AGN, APFR, Caj. 73, no. 1.
42. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1 and Caj. 76, no. 14.
43. Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, 3:104, 268.
44. A copy of Rena's will, written the day before his death, is held at AGN, Tribunales Reales, 065185/16014763.

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45. Zúñiga, *Crónica burlesca del emperador Carlos V*, 149.
46. Girón, *Cronica del Emperador*, 48, 84, 96, 147, 259; López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 125.
47. García de Cerezeda, *Tratado de las Campañas*, 2:9, 11, 175.
48. Orreaga, *Amayur, los últimos nabarros*, 119, 189, 218; Esarte Muniain, *Navarra, 1512–1530*, 555. Rena also appears in Monteano Sorbet, *La guerra de Navarra*, 85, 111–16, 131–39, 148, 299–301. Recently Rena become notorious thanks to the ongoing debate regarding the conquest of Navarre, and in fact another local historian has written the only monographic study on Rena. However, this work has only served to revive the “black legend” surrounding Rena without adding anything to our knowledge about him. Esarte Muniain, *Juan Rena, clave*. This short book comes out of a long-standing tradition that regards Rena as an agent of the cruelty of the Navarrese conquest. Monteano Sorbet, “El pagador real micer Juan Rena,” is far more useful.
49. Goñi Gaztambide, *Historia de los obispos*, 3:254–89. A previous reference to this subject in Canellas López, “Contribución a la historiografía de los obispos de Pamplona.” An church scholar mentioned Rena’s participation in the negotiation between the Navarrese churchmen and the Crown regarding church taxes in this kingdom. See Azcona, “El pago del subsidio,” 36–37. Rena’s religious offices outside Navarre also earned him mentions, first as royal chaplain and later as bishop of Alghero. See Rodríguez Villa, *La reina Doña Juana*, 353; and Martini, *Storia ecclesiastica di Sardegna*, 338. Beyond the ecclesiastic sphere, Rena’s different offices are briefly mentioned in different works on the administration of Charles V. See Quatrefages, “La proveduría des Armadas,” 218; Thompson, “Administración y administradores,” 105; Huici Goñi, *La Cámara de Comptos*, 30, 60–61; and Ostolaza Elizondo, “La cámara de comptos de Navarra,” 6–9. In addition to these glimpses of his activities, the fundamental role he played in the military administration of the Spanish Empire was underlined in a study on the military frontier in Navarre: Idoate, *Esfuerzo bélico de Navarra*. Rena also appears as an accounting official during the Charles V’s tour of Italy in Pulido Bueno, *El gran mercader y la corte real*, 97. Closely related to his ecclesiastic career was his role as patron of culture and the arts. See Vallés, *Regalo de la vida humana*, 212; and Chocarro Huesa, “El obispo Juan Rena, mediador.”
50. Liang, *Family and Empire*, 74–76, 124, 129, 131–32, 154.
51. García Hernán, *Ignacio de Loyola*, 33.
52. For a brief yet complete account of the transition from the fragmented kingdoms of late-medieval Iberia to the rise of Spain as a global empire, see Braun, “Laying the Foundations.” On Ferdinand and Isabella’s reign, see Edwards, *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs*.
53. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron*; and Potter, *Renaissance France at War*, 15–41.
54. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*. A useful survey of the rise and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire in this period can be found in Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, 27–61.
55. An accessible account of the rise of the Spanish Empire as a world power can be found in Maltby, *The Rise and Fall*; and Kamen, *Spain’s Road to Empire*. On the Ottomans, see Brumett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine*; and Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*.
56. For a recent and comprehensive introduction to this historiographical trend, see Magnússon and Szijártó, *What Is Microhistory?* See also the classic essay Levi, “On Microhistory.” An interesting update of Levi’s microanalytical

- approach in Trivellato, "Microstoria, storia del mondo." On the suitability of this approach to the study of processes like the one analyzed here, see Levi, "The Origins of the Modern State," 59–61.
57. I borrow this definition of micropolitics from Reinhard, "Amici e creature," 310–12. The relationship between micropolitics and macropolitics is explained in Reinhard, "Kommentar." For a theoretical reflection on approaching history on different scales, see Lepetit, "De l'échelle en histoire."
 58. Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*; and Levin, *Agents of Empire*.
 59. Revel, "L'histoire au ras du sol."
 60. Ferdinand's strategy in the Mediterranean is now understood as an imperial policy that was closely connected to the aspirations to universal monarchy. Devereux, "Empire in the Old World." Nevertheless, universalist aspirations had long been part of Iberian political culture and are not enough to label Ferdinand's political project as an empire. Gil, "A apropriação da ideia de império"; Cardim, "La aspiración imperial," 59–62; and Botella Ordinas, "Exempt from Time."
 61. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen*; and Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*.
 62. I like to refer to this personal archive as an "eccezionalmente normale," that is, as a relevant and unusual source of information. Grendi, "Micro-analisi e storia sociale," 512. On Rena's archive, see Chocarro Huesa and Segurra Urra, *Inventario de la documentación*.
 63. Vivo, "Heart of the State"; and Donato, "Archives, Record Keeping."

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1 Defining the Frontier

Juan Rena's Network and Spanish Expansion Into the Maghreb

Qui descendunt mare in navibus,
facientes operationem in aquis multis,
ipsi viderunt opera Domini
et mirabilia eius in profundo.

(Ps. 107:23–24)

Introduction

On Friday, May 18, 1509, the Castilian army led by Cardinal Francisco de Cisneros conquered the city of Oran, on the Algerian coast. The first eyewitness account of the battle remarked that God had blessed the Christian victory, first by making a cross and a double rainbow appear in the sky, then by enveloping the enemy's army in a black fog, while vultures circled overhead in anticipation. Better still, as the battle progressed towards the end of the day, God provided additional assistance by preventing the sun from setting.¹ God's support aside, the other decisive factor in the Christian victory was the chaotic retreat of the Muslim troops, who were unable to get back into the city. Even so, the first published account of this event explained the Muslims' inability to enter the city as an additional miracle.² Actually, this was indeed a real miracle, but to fully appreciate the reality behind it, we first need to examine the psalm quoted above. In so doing we shift our focus to the world of merchants, those who "went off to sea in ships and plied their trade on the deep waters" because "they saw the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

The conquest of Oran was the most important episode in the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb. This expansion was a by-product of the Catholic Monarchs' ambitions and a key piece of a broader crusading strategy to recover Jerusalem. In the practical sphere, the plan was an adaptation of medieval traditions that considered North Africa as a stepping stone to the Holy Land. On a more theoretical level, this plan was an outgrowth of imperial theories of the day that considered political legitimacy as deriving from the fulfilment of religious obligations,

such as the crusade.³ Given the religious motivation behind these plans, it comes as no surprise that many believed that God's support played a decisive role in the battle for Oran. Nevertheless, as we will see, the groundwork for the conquest of the city was laid long before the Castilian army came on the scene. Prior to the Castilian attack on the city, a series of mediators had been acting there to facilitate discussions between the Spanish authorities and the various peoples of the Maghreb. One of them, Juan Rena, negotiated for both—the Catholic Monarchs as well as Maghrebi officials and dignitaries—during his time in the Maghreb. Using Rena as a starting point, we can reconstruct the complex network of merchants who monopolized these political mediations and examine the impact their activities had on shaping the frontier society resulting from the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb.

Through this focus on Rena and his network, this chapter offers a corrective to earlier interpretations of Spanish expansionism in the Maghreb. Historians have explained the Spanish conquests in this region as a result of an obvious military superiority.⁴ No doubt, the Spanish wielded unprecedented military power in the region, but the important role of mediators like Rena shows the extent to which the Spanish authorities were forced to negotiate with local actors. Hence, this chapter will show that, instead of a simple conquest through the force of arms, the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb melded military force, diplomacy from below, and the forging of alliances with local figures. This emphasis on the importance of negotiation in this specific instance of expansionism makes it possible to connect it with current, more nuanced understandings of European expansion that reassess the notion that European ascendancy was the result mainly of superior military efficacy.⁵ In addition, by focusing on Rena and his network, this chapter will shed new light on the role of mediators in the process of European expansion. Recent studies have shown that those who acted as go-betweens were in fact key figures in the process of European expansion, especially in the Americas.⁶ In this new line of inquiry, go-betweens have been depicted as individuals who facilitate encounters between the inhabitants of two different worlds and in doing so are able to influence the outcome of meetings and negotiations and to exploit their position in this triadic relationship for their own benefit.⁷ Within the field of Mediterranean studies there is a growing effort to construct a similar portrait of go-betweens, especially in studies on the complex diplomatic relations between the rival Christian and Muslim polities and more recently on the shaping of bilingual administrations.⁸ In both cases, the descriptions of these actors and their activities focus on explaining how they profited from bridging the gaps separating vastly different cultures. Sanjay Subrahmanyam has offered a very interesting counterpoint by underlining the many difficulties that go-betweens faced.⁹ Rena and the rest of the characters appearing in this chapter illustrate how profitable and dangerous mediating could be. However, by

analyzing their activities, I aim to move beyond the debate about their capacity to profit from their mediations, in order to emphasize their role in establishing practices that facilitated cross-cultural interactions on the frontiers of empire. Hence, in this chapter I first describe the diplomatic negotiations surrounding Spanish expansion on the Maghrebi coast. I go on to analyze the activities of Rena and other mediators like him who carried out these negotiations. Finally, I aim to show that their activity was of paramount importance because they helped to shape this new imperial frontier.

A Negotiated Expansion

In the early days of 1492, after years of fierce resistance against the Castilian army, the Nasrid kingdom of Granada surrendered.¹⁰ This episode was the prelude to the worldwide expansion of the Spanish Empire. Without a doubt, the most consequential chapter in this history was the conquest of America, but there was another, equally important yet lesser-known chapter: the Maghreb.¹¹ Between the final years of the fifteenth century and the opening decades of the sixteenth, various Spanish authorities, noblemen, and clerics turned their attention to this region and began to formulate plans to conquer it. Rather than imposing their rule over a vast territory, they aimed at controlling the main ports on the Maghrebi coast in order to protect Spanish territories from corsair raids as well as to expand Spanish control over the Mediterranean. The *presidios* that were established following the annexation of different coastal enclaves were also crucial in securing maritime connections between the Iberian and the Italian peninsulas. In the end, the Spanish did not make spectacular gains; nonetheless, this can be understood as a key episode in the history of Spanish expansion. In fact, the men who organized these early efforts to push out the imperial frontiers developed and refined some successful formulas that later proved to be effective in conquering other regions. One of these formulas was the combined use of armed coercion and diplomatic negotiation. Far from being an exception, the Maghreb was a laboratory where a widespread and common practice, the mixture of organized violence and negotiation, was adapted to the specific characteristics of the region.

Between 1497 (the conquest of Melilla) and the summer of 1510 (the conquest of Tripoli), several Maghrebi enclaves were incorporated into the domains of the Spanish Empire in one way or another. After the first tentative attempts to capture some minor coastal towns failed, the Catholic Monarchs tried a new strategy, sending a seigniorial army to conquer Melilla in 1497. Their next important conquest did not come until the summer of 1505, when they took Mers el-Kébir (“the Great Harbor” in Arabic), on the Algerian coast. Three years later a naval expedition failed to capture Honaine, the second most important port in the kingdom of

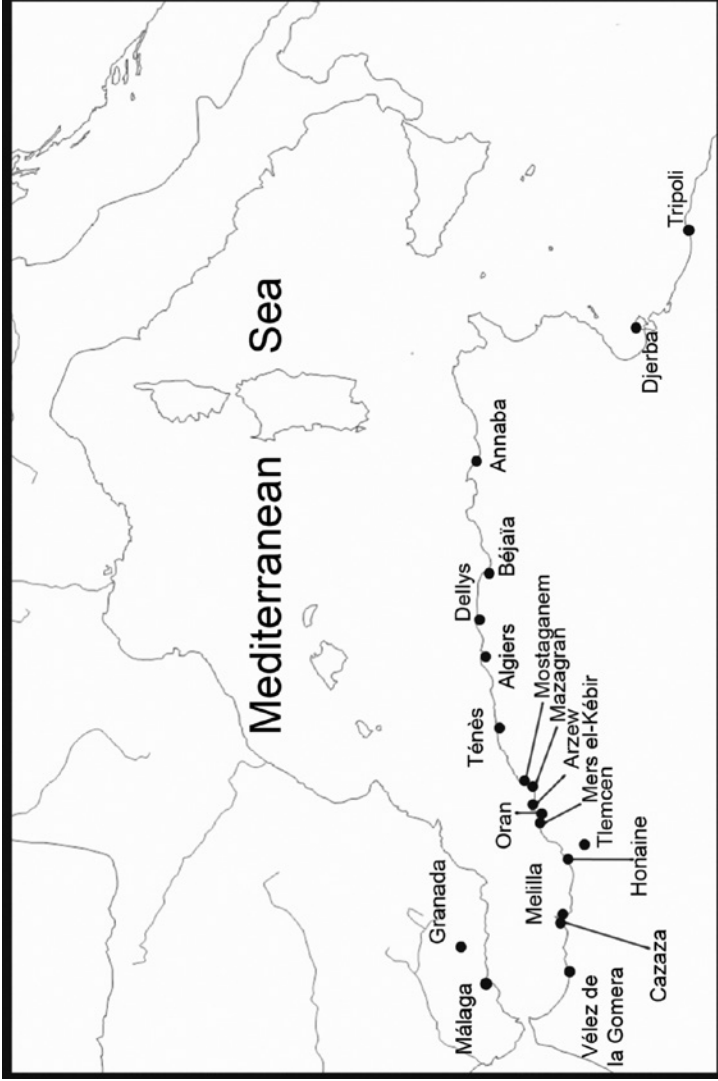


Figure 1.1 Maghrebi Localities Engaged in Negotiations with the Spanish Authorities

Source: Map by author.

Tlemcen. Despite this failure, the following year an army led by Cardinal Cisneros took Oran, the main coastal city in Tlemcen. As a consequence of this victory, many of the coastal towns and villages began to voluntarily surrender to the Spanish authorities. In 1510, Pedro Navarro (the captain general of the Spanish army in Africa) took Béjaïa, a port city in Algeria's Kabylie region. Shortly after, the ruling elite of Algiers signed a pledge of vassalage to King Ferdinand the Catholic. That same summer, Navarro continued his campaign towards the east and captured Tripoli. However, a failed expedition against the Island of Djerba put an end to this chain of successes.¹²

Securing these ports meant that the Spanish authorities were able to establish a series of garrisoned strongholds (*presidios*) to control the Maghrebi coast. Historians have celebrated the military prowess of the Spanish Empire for its success in this early episode of its expansion.¹³ Needless to say, violence was the main force driving the establishment of Spanish rule in the Maghreb. However, armies were not the only actors on the scene. At the same time, there were agents, spies, and merchants who played a crucial role in diplomatic negotiations between political leaders on either side of the Mediterranean. The chronicles of Spanish expansion in this region frequently allude to previous deals when explaining the conquests. According to Lorenzo de Padilla, the author of one such account, who was also a spy and a diplomat in North Africa, the takeover of Mers el-Kébir was prompted by a previous agreement with the governor of the fortress.¹⁴ Even Alvar Gómez de Castro, the biographer of Cardinal Cisneros, refers to intrigues prior to the conquest of Oran, contradicting the official version. Thus, after recounting the miracles, Gómez de Castro describes the negotiations that took place before the city was captured, quoting the testimony of an eyewitness.¹⁵

These negotiations were fully legitimate and in line with political traditions on both sides of the Mediterranean. The political culture of the Maghreb allowed for the process of political subjection to a different king. In the absence of strong monarchical power, urban elites, tribal groups, and frontier societies enjoyed a great deal of freedom and autonomy. They were able to withdraw their allegiance and transfer it to another monarch who could offer peace, social stability, and protection for the local communities.¹⁶ Despite the fact that vassalage bonds had been a pillar of European political culture since the Middle Ages, their nature and limits were a matter of debate in early modern Europe, especially when the subjects of a city transferred their loyalty to a different sovereign.¹⁷ In the Iberian Peninsula, the imperial project inherited from the *Reconquista* included the possibility of ruling over populations that had voluntarily submitted to the sovereignty of the monarch.¹⁸ In a nutshell, these practices are a clear example of how existing political traditions were adapted to new realities during the process of Iberian expansion.

Behind each military campaign there was a dynamic strategy of “diplomacy from below.”¹⁹ In fact, only by examining the negotiations between the “conquerors” and different political actors in the Maghreb can we understand the success of Spanish expansionism in the region.²⁰ Just ten months after the surrender of Granada, two Jews, Symuel Abulafia (who had previously served the Catholic Monarchs in the Granada War) and David de Segura, offered to deliver the city and fortress of Mers el-Kébir into Spanish hands.²¹ The following year, Hernando de Zafra, a royal secretary and the principal protagonist of the African strategy, received a delegation of notables from Tabaharique and Tiguenta, two fortified towns on Tlemcen’s coast. Interestingly, the visit came soon after the royal navy had started raiding the region.²² After brief negotiations, they offered to hand over Tabaharique, Honanie, or Guardania.²³ One of the notables also offered the surrender of Melilla, and soon after the royal secretary began negotiations with two representatives from that city. At the same time, however, the rulers of Melilla also approached the Alcaide of Málaga with the same proposal.²⁴ Two weeks later, Zafra wrote to the Catholic Monarchs informing them of yet another offer, this time from Cazaza, a town near Melilla.²⁵

Subsequently, the fear of military intervention drove other, more important towns and cities to consider peaceful surrender to the Catholic Monarchs. In one of his letters to the monarchs, the royal agent Luis Peixó suggested that the Jerusalem Crusade could be furthered by taking Tripoli peacefully, as its inhabitants already lived in fear of attack.²⁶ More or less at the same time, the viceroy of Mallorca was negotiating with the inhabitants of Dellys, a port town near Algiers, about its surrender.²⁷ In 1499, the authorities of the Canary Islands also succeeded in convincing local chieftains to voluntarily subject themselves to the Catholic Monarchs.²⁸ Back on the Algerian coast, the following year a merchant received royal support to initiate negotiations in the port town of Annaba.²⁹ Not far from there, in 1501, similar negotiations took place with the sheikh of Djerba.³⁰ Nearby, in Tripoli, the governor of the fortress and some local notables plotted to hand over the city’s fortifications to the Catholic Monarchs during the summer of 1503.³¹ Just some months later, one of the mediators in that negotiation, a Venetian in the service of the Catholic Monarchs named Girolamo Vianello tried to arrange an agreement with the governor of Algiers’ fortress to hand over the famous Peñón of Algiers.³² Whatever happened, those discussions ultimately failed, as did similar negotiations with a local chief some years later.³³

According to some sources, the expedition against Mers el-Kébir in 1505 was the result of a previous agreement with the governor of the fortress who offered to turn over the city.³⁴ In 1508, similar tactics were employed to take Honaine.³⁵ Further conversations also took place with the Oran elite, and it seems that the conquest of the city in 1509 was

made possible largely due to the group of local notables who collaborated to ensure that the city fell into the hands of the Catholic Monarchs.³⁶ The year after Béjaïa was captured, in 1511, Pedro Navarro was approached by the governor of Algiers, who offered to surrender the city to Ferdinand and the Catholic.³⁷ This first attempt did not succeed, but shortly thereafter the rulers of Algiers signed a treaty recognizing their subjection to the Spanish king.³⁸ A year later, the inhabitants and rulers of Mazagran and Mostaganem, two port towns on the Algerian coast, did the same.³⁹ All these examples show the necessary and vital role that diplomacy played in the process of Spanish expansion into the Maghreb.⁴⁰

However, most of these negotiations failed for different reasons: popular opposition, the violent reaction of local authorities, and most frequently, lack of interest on the part of the Spanish Crown. The Catholic Monarchs did not pay much attention to the offers that Zafra received.⁴¹ Although at times Ferdinand and the Catholic showed some interest in these agreements, he rarely engaged in these negotiations.⁴² Due to Ferdinand's indifference, Miguel Angel Ladero Quesada has suggested that these diplomatic agreements had no impact on the Spanish occupation of these coastal cities and, instead, argues that they were conquered through arms alone.⁴³ However, I would contend that these negotiations were of some importance to the expansion of the Spanish Empire in Africa, because the men who planned and carried out this expansion conceived this enterprise as a complex mixture of coercion and diplomacy. This combination of force and negotiation had been previously employed in the last phase of the Granada War.⁴⁴ It seems that the same actors who negotiated the surrender of the last Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula adopted the same tactic in the Maghreb.

One of these actors was the aforementioned Hernando de Zafra, who played a major role in expanding the Spanish monarchy's rule in the Maghreb. Given that he had successfully conducted diplomatic negotiations during the conquest of Granada, Zafra adopted the same interesting mixture of diplomacy and war in this new context.⁴⁵ As far back as 1494, Zafra was receiving requests from Maghrebi officials and dignitaries to initiate negotiations for their surrender. With these in hand, Zafra advised the Crown to continue using this combined strategy of violence and diplomacy to secure more key coastal areas in the Maghreb.⁴⁶ Zafra and others like him saw in the fear of attack among the Maghrebi people an opportunity to gain the upper hand when negotiating with the local authorities. By way of example, in one of his letters to the Catholic Monarchs, Zafra suggested using the royal navy to attack some coastal towns and villages. His intent was not to conquer these places but to conduct raids in order to sow fear in the surrounding areas. By giving the Maghrebi communities reason to fear the Spanish, Zafra hoped to bring the multiple negotiations that he was conducting with local chiefs to a

successful conclusion and, in doing so, to encourage others local chiefs to surrender to the Catholic Monarchs.⁴⁷

Hernando de Zafra was not alone in adopting this strategy. The military officers who planned and led campaigns in the Maghreb also saw the virtue of combining the threat of force with negotiation. This was the case, for instance, for Don Íñigo López de Mendoza, II Count of Tendilla. As the captain general of Granada, Tendilla played a vital role in the African policy of the Spanish Empire. Like Zafra, Tendilla was well versed in the benefits of using military force in tandem with diplomacy.⁴⁸ As a matter of simple and pure pragmatism, Tendilla believed that negotiating with the Maghrebi notables was a useful tactic in this expansionist war. In a letter to another royal secretary, Tendilla referred to his negotiations with Abu 'Ali Mansur, the King of Vélez, and wrote: "I want peace until it is possible to make war."⁴⁹ Beyond his pragmatic attitude, Tendilla actually considered these diplomatic agreements as fundamental to any African enterprise and for this reason he regarded the offensive against Oran:

The greatest madness I have ever seen, because those who go to conquer should have some hope of taking something through negotiation, and here that is lacking. They prefer to be destroyed rather than to surrender to him because of Christianity. So everything has to be taken by force, and the conquest will not be so flavorful, neither for those who make it, nor for those who suffer it.⁵⁰

Tendilla was not the only military commander willing to use diplomacy to expand the Catholic Monarchs' rule in the Maghreb. Another was Diego Fernández de Córdoba, the famous Alcaide de los Donceles. His military experience in Granada had prepared him for higher honors in the future campaigns in the Maghreb.⁵¹ In his letters to Ferdinand the Catholic, the Alcaide urged the king to take advantage of the ongoing negotiations with the Maghrebi elites willing to acknowledge the Spanish monarchs as sovereigns.⁵² He also took part in some negotiations himself and was involved in the discussions with the Oran urban elite regarding the terms of the city's surrender.⁵³ The Alcaide also judiciously combined violence and negotiation during the campaign to take Mers el-Kébir. The takeover of this stronghold was planned after its governor had offered to hand over the city.

In one of his letters to a courtier, Tendilla expressed his optimism about this expedition saying: "let us not care about agreements, because the army that we will put ashore will achieve any important thing whatsoever by force."⁵⁴ Tendilla's optimism turned out to be justified (Mers el-Kébir was taken), but nevertheless he was wrong. The fortress's governor, who previously negotiated the surrender, died when the Castilian army stormed the walls. As a result, it was impossible to achieve the immediate

surrender of the fortress.⁵⁵ Actually, the troops led by the Alcaide de los Donceles faced strong resistance in Mers el-Kébir, and they were only able to enter the fortress after negotiating the surrender with the chief of the garrison, who had to be paid accordingly.⁵⁶ This first campaign also revealed the shortcomings of Spain's alleged military supremacy in the Maghreb, especially when some experienced voices pointed out multiple problems in the campaign.⁵⁷ Hence, it is not surprising that after this first experience, the offers of "peaceful" arrangements were treated more seriously.

This shrewd combination of violence and negotiation proved highly effective in the Maghreb. The violent conquest of Granada and the brutality that it unleashed reverberated beyond the Iberian Peninsula. For instance, when Málaga was taken (1487), all the inhabitants were enslaved because their city resisted the Castilian siege.⁵⁸ Considering this brutal precedent, it is hardly surprising that the coastal territories on the other side of the Mediterranean dreaded the arrival of the Castilian army. In addition, their anxiety was accentuated by the arrival of a large number of Andalusian refugees, whose stories spread fear of Spanish authority throughout northern Africa, as Zafra reported:

Furthermore I know that all the Andalusians and most of the people have fled from Tunis and Bougie without stopping in Alexandria or in Damascus, but instead they all pass through on their way to Mecca, and from there to a great city which is in the middle of Asia called Bohaza, and the fear in them is so great, and the certitude that they will be captured so strong, that they believe in this like they believe in their Muhammad.⁵⁹

The direct connection between this widespread fear and the negotiations becomes evident when we read accounts of the situation in the Maghreb. Zafra, who was trying to convince the monarchs to capture Mers el-Kébir, wrote in the winter of 1494:

The whole kingdom [of Tlemcen] is trembling with the keys in their hand . . . because [these people] have neither the force to defend themselves, nor to talk about any other solution, except in coming to the service of Your Highness.⁶⁰

Despite this deep fear of armed intervention, there were other factors that pushed the Maghrebi notables to seek political agreements with the authorities from the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, we should not assume that fear was the most important factor, let alone the only one, in these negotiations. Of particular importance was the existence of violent and deep divisions within the different local communities of the Maghreb. The political landscape of the entire region was characterized by tribal,

political, and ethnic conflict. The Maghreb was dominated (in theory, at least) by three different dynasties: the Hafsids, the Wattasids, and the Marinids. Nevertheless, great parts of it fell outside any formal dominion, and therefore the power of these monarchs was extremely limited. In the region as a whole, factional and tribal groups were the dominant forces, while state power was rather weak. Indeed, in many areas state authority had lost much of its previous importance, and it was replaced by religious leaders in rural communities.⁶¹

The desire for autonomy in some cities could have motivated some of the offers to hand over control to the Catholic Monarchs. Thus, for instance, the inhabitants of Melilla who offered to surrender the city did so only after expelling the royal officer who ruled the city on behalf of the King of Fez, a clear act of rebellion against this monarch. In fact, as they admitted in their conversations with Hernando de Zafra, they offered Melilla to secure Spanish protection because they feared that the offended king would lay siege to the city.⁶² Sometimes it was not the need for protection but the desire to leverage foreign forces against internal enemies that motivated the negotiations. The man who offered the surrender of Tiguent provides us with an interesting example of this. According to him, convincing the city to surrender would be easy if a contingent of around 1,000 soldiers could be deployed, but even in the event that the city refused to surrender, he, his brothers, and relatives “with the help of the army would do battle against the others, who are their enemies” and secure the surrender of the town.⁶³ As we can see, internal divisions and the local people’s willingness to use the external threat as a weapon in their internecine conflicts facilitated political agreements between parties on both sides of the Mediterranean, which is crucial to explaining the success of Spanish expansion into the Maghreb.⁶⁴

We can conclude at this point that during the African campaigns diplomatic negotiations and the use of force went hand in hand, and that they were used in a complementary manner rather than as two different and isolated tactics. Even in the most conspicuous cases, where the predominant factor was the use of armed force, negotiations were necessary. From the viewpoint of the men who planned and carried out the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb, violence and negotiation were two sides of the same coin, and we should not overemphasize one factor by neglecting the other. Thus, diplomacy was crucial in the overseas expansion of the Spanish Empire in the Maghreb and precisely because of this it is necessary to widen the scope of our study to include the people in charge of conducting these diplomatic negotiations.

Mercantile Networks in Diplomacy Across the Mediterranean Sea

Despite the important role that negotiations played in expanding Spanish authority in the Maghreb, there was no administrative institution that

oversaw this extra-European diplomacy, and thus diplomatic missions to the Maghreb were entrusted to private individuals.⁶⁵ Interestingly, most of them were closely interconnected. One was the merchant-trader Juan Rena. By focusing on his socio-professional network we can gain further insights into the complex game of Spanish diplomacy and how it developed in the new frontier between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb.⁶⁶

Juan Rena arrived in the Maghreb at the turn of the sixteenth century, just when the policy of Spanish expansion was taking form. Over time he began to take on increasing responsibility in performing tasks for the Spanish authorities in the region.⁶⁷ Rena was not the most important merchant involved in this effort. Moreover, it seems that he played a more collaborative role in this commercial network.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the evidence that he left behind of his activity makes it possible to reconstruct his network. One of these sources is the *probanza* (a set of affidavits to be used during an administrative or judicial enquiry) that he submitted in order to receive compensation from the Crown for his services. The document is made up of a set of testimonies justifying Rena's right to receive compensation for the service he rendered to the Crown during the African conquests. This source is particularly interesting because it permits us to reconstruct Rena's social network in this specific context by providing us with references to Rena's activities and those of the people with whom he was in contact.

The list of witnesses (selected by Rena from among his close friends) consists of Gabriel Mas, a merchant from Valencia; Juan Bautista de Arborán, a Genoese trader; Juan Gaitán, the *corregidor* of Málaga; and Diego Fernández de Córdoba, the powerful Alcaide de los Donceles and captain general of Oran. As for people who were simply mentioned in the document, the list is a bit longer. It includes the brothers Nicolao and Franco Cattaneo, two important Genoese businessmen; and the merchant Gisbert de Santa Fe, among others. All these men were part of Rena's social network while he was serving the Spanish Empire in the Maghreb, and even more interesting for us here, they all participated in the negotiations between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. The aforementioned document offers us the first insights into Rena's participation in these negotiations. For instance, in it Juan Bautista de Arborán refers to Rena's activities during the negotiations for Oran's surrender to the Alcaide de los Donceles after Mers el-Kébir had been captured.⁶⁹ Moreover, it includes much more information about Rena's previous services as a negotiator in the Maghreb: the discussions with Abu 'Ali Mansur, referred to as the King of Vélez de la Gomera in the Spanish sources, who ruled the port city of Bādis on the coast of the Rif and the most dangerous pirates' cove near Granada's coast.⁷⁰

The diplomatic negotiations between the Castilian authorities and the King of Vélez de la Gomera offer a good starting point to reconstruct the role of Rena and his associates in the continuous bargaining that

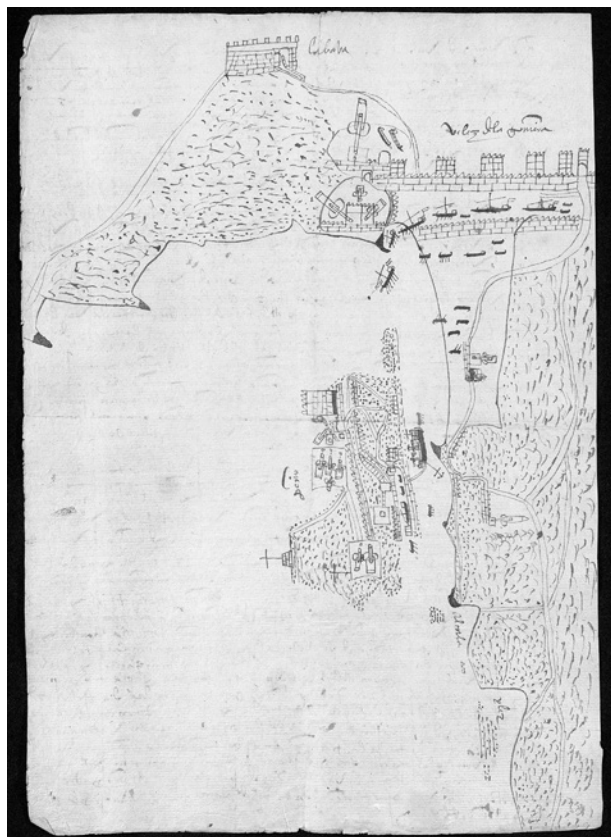


Figure 1.2 Drawing of Vélez de la Gomera (1523)

Source: España, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, Osuna, C. 1635, no. 73.⁷¹

connected the two shores of the Mediterranean. Hoping to use diplomacy to put an end to corsair raids from Vélez, the Castilian authorities responded to gestures made by some of Abu ‘Ali Mansur’s councilors, who were compelled by fear of an attack.⁷² The first official mention of Rena’s involvement in these negotiations is in a letter from the Count of Tendilla dated October 1504, but according to Rena’s testimony he had already begun to take part in these negotiations back in 1503.⁷³ Unfortunately we do not have any information about how Rena became engaged in this matter, but the letter does underline that he held a prominent position in this diplomatic mission. In August 1504, during one of Rena’s stays at the royal court, King Ferdinand the Catholic placed his servant Diego Canelas under Rena’s command during their upcoming mission to Vélez.⁷⁴ Canelas was an expert in negotiating for the release

of Christian captives and he was frequently employed by the Crown for different missions to the Maghreb.⁷⁵ Making him Rena's subordinate shows how highly Rena was regarded by the king as a negotiator with the Islamic authorities of North Africa. Juan Rena spent several months negotiating the suspension of corsair attacks and the surrender of Castil de Pescadores, a coastal town with a strategic port at the foot of the Rif Mountains controlled by the King of Vélez.

In 1504, Rena traveled as many as six times from the royal court to Vélez de la Gomera. Each time he carried correspondence from one king to the other. Despite appearances, he was more than just a messenger. As he said in the *probanza*, during all these visits he was actively pursuing negotiations with the King of Vélez as ordered by the Catholic Monarchs.⁷⁶ Rena's long stays in Vélez de la Gomera make it plausible that he was negotiating and not merely delivering messages.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Rena explicitly states that his mission was to go to Vélez de la Gomera to negotiate a treaty with the king.⁷⁸ Gabriel Mas mentioned that Juan Rena "was continuously with the King of Vélez."⁷⁹ It seems that Rena managed to advance the negotiations because on January 31, 1505, Ferdinand the Catholic gave Rena a safe-conduct to allow him to bring hostages from Vélez to the royal court in order to pressure the King of Vélez into an agreement.⁸⁰ In fact, in August 1505, Hernando de Zafra wrote

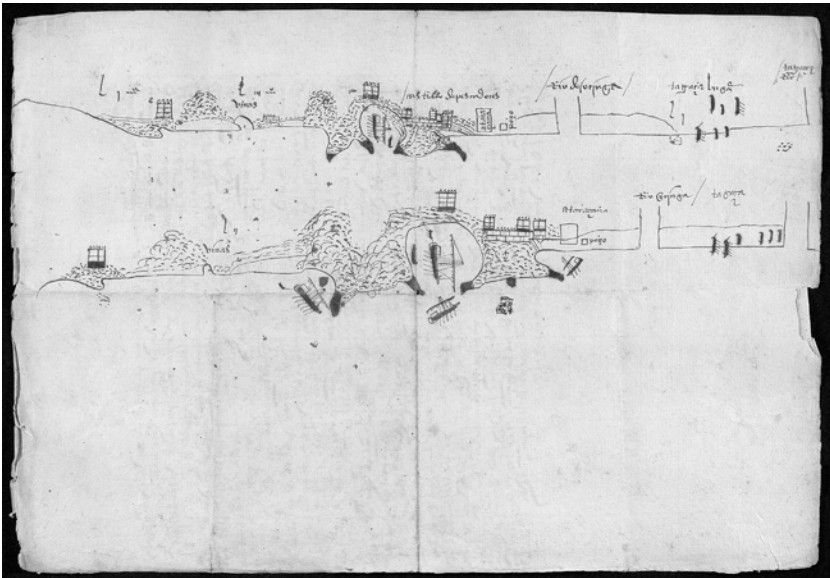


Figure 1.3 Drawing of Castil de Pescadores (1523)

Source: España, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, Osuna, C. 1635, no. 71.

to the King of Vélez to congratulate him on the agreement. Moreover, Zafra attributed the success of these negotiations to Rena.⁸¹ However, we should be skeptical of Zafra's opinion since nothing substantive came out of these talks. Rena's importance for us here is not a function of his success as a negotiator (if any) but of the fact that he belonged to a group of merchants who monopolized the negotiations between the authorities on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Rena was only one part of a commercial network whose members were quite active in the informal diplomacy going on between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. One of the most interesting members of this network was Gabriel Mas. Starting in the late fifteenth century, this Valencian merchant had specialized in the lucrative Barbary Coast trade.⁸² In his affidavit, Mas stated that Juan Rena would inform him "in great secret" about his diplomatic missions involving the King of Vélez de la Gomera and Ferdinand the Catholic. He did this at least a couple of times: first in Granada and again at the royal court.⁸³ This reveals the familiarity and trust between the two merchants, but it also shows how information circulated and accumulated inside this close network. During these same years, Juan Rena and Gabriel Mas were business partners in Oran.⁸⁴ In addition to their commercial partnership, they cultivated a close friendship that lasted for years.⁸⁵ Furthermore, like Rena, Mas also acted as a king's agent in the Maghreb. He himself had been imprisoned and his property seized by the Algerian authorities in 1496, and he was freed following negotiations, so he was well aware of their importance.⁸⁶ While imprisoned, Mas also met one of his future partners: Gisbert de Santa Fe, another member of Rena's network.

Only two years later, Mas started to take on a more active role in the negotiations with African authorities. In 1498, he carried out a secret mission in the Maghreb in the service of the king.⁸⁷ Some months later he returned there again, this time in the company of Muslims who took part in the negotiations for the surrender of Dellys, a port city on the Algerian coast.⁸⁸ In subsequent years, Mas gained an even more prominent role in the African policy of the Castilian authorities. The Count of Tendilla consulted him when negotiating a peace treaty with the King of Vélez de la Gomera.⁸⁹ Moreover, in 1505, Tendilla suggested to Hernando de Zafra that he ask Mas's advice about a group of Maghrebi notables who were offering their services to the Spanish authorities.⁹⁰

One of Gabriel Mas's and Rena's partners was Gisbert de Santa Fe, a Catalan merchant who had already had business relations with the latter in Oran.⁹¹ Like Mas, he belonged to an old Jewish family. In fact, he was condemned (twice) by the Inquisition for Judaizing after his conversion.⁹² Santa Fe assumed his diplomatic activities in 1496, dealing with the authorities of Béjaïa in Algeria's Kabylie region. Following the escape of some Christian captives, the King of Béjaïa imprisoned all the Spanish merchants in Algiers, alleging their involvement in the escape. Ferdinand

the Catholic sent Gisbert de Santa Fe to Algiers to negotiate the merchants' release with the King of Béjaïa and his officers.⁹³ During this mission, Santa Fe met Gabriel Mas, one of the imprisoned merchants. Like him, Santa Fe came to be regarded as an expert in the complex diplomacy of the region.⁹⁴

Undoubtedly Rena, Gabriel Mas, and Gisbert de Santa Fe were experts in the difficult task of bargaining with Maghrebi notables.⁹⁵ The same can be said of two of their close associates: the brothers Nicolao and Franco Cattaneo.⁹⁶ These Genoese merchants controlled a great network that connected Maghreb ports with the Black Sea, Genoa, Marseille, Mallorca, Andalusia, London, Lisbon, and Portugal's Atlantic colonies.⁹⁷ The Cattaneo brothers had an active trading relationship with Rena in Oran.⁹⁸ Alongside their business ventures they carried out different diplomatic missions in the Maghreb on behalf of the Spanish authorities. For instance, at the beginning of 1506, Nicolao Cattaneo tried to attract the *mizwar* of Tlemcen (the highest military officer in the kingdom) and other tribal sheikhs to the service of Ferdinand the Catholic.⁹⁹ The Cattaneos had a particularly important role during the negotiations over Oran, since their informal contacts in the city bolstered their negotiating position. Being able to exert such influence in Oran had quite a profound effect, since the city operated as an independent merchant republic.¹⁰⁰ Nicolao Cattaneo's report on the city further clarifies this point: it states that the real authority remained in the hands of the religious elite, as well as an undefined officer (*catib*) considered by Cattaneo to be the "natural lord of the city."

The Cattaneo brothers offered to help the Spanish authorities navigate this complex urban network. Due to their important commercial role in the city, their influence reached the upper echelons of Oran's government, which even included some of the religious leaders, as Nicolao reported in his letter:

My brother has in his hands most of them [the alarabs] for when His Highness would have need of them, and furthermore he wrote in his letter of the fifth of this month, and he told me that he has in his hand a great Faqīh [Muslim jurisconsult], the most important of this kingdom, whom alarabs, barbars and citizens obey more than they do the king . . . and he is a great enemy of the Mizwar.¹⁰¹

These merchants were thus able to efficiently bridge the gaps between the Spanish authorities and the different groups that made up this divided local society. Moreover, these words show that the Cattaneo family had influence over a wide range of the local population.¹⁰²

Galcerán de Almenara, another member of Rena's commercial network, also acted on behalf of the Castilian authorities to secure Oran's surrender. He was a well-established merchant in the maritime trade of

the region.¹⁰³ He conducted his commercial activities in the Maghreb through his brother, Miguel de Almenara, who remained in Oran. Miguel also took part in negotiations with other Muslim cities, and like Rena, he was a member of the Alcaide de los Donceles's inner circle.¹⁰⁴ Like many other members of this network, Galcerán de Almenara took part in the negotiations for Oran's surrender. At the beginning of 1506, the Alcaide de los Donceles wrote to Zafra reporting that Almenara's associates were ready to hand over the two parts of Oran that they controlled. In exchange, the Spanish authorities had to send an army to capture and enslave the inhabitants of the other two parts and allow Almenara's associates to remain in the city, 'with their properties and houses and in their law'.¹⁰⁵ As we saw before, Rena was also involved in these negotiations. The members of this commercial network not only shared business ties; they also collaborated in the political sphere.

The key question at this point concerns the monopolization by these merchants of the negotiations between the Muslim and the Christian authorities. Merchants are frequently understood as natural go-betweens because of their supposed skills in mastering different languages.¹⁰⁶ However, in contrast to the primacy of linguistic considerations in other arenas of Spanish imperial expansion such as the Americas and the Far East, there is no indication that Rena and the others involved in these negotiations gave any consideration to the linguistic differences between the inhabitants north and south of the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, the only reference to a translator is the royal appointment of Miguel de Almenara, who was named as an interpreter due to his previous dealings with Muslim notables. Nevertheless, when he had to leave this position, the title was transferred to a courtier (the royal treasurer Francisco de Vargas) who had never actually served in that capacity.¹⁰⁸ This indicates how inessential this position was considered to be. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, only one of the messages sent from the Spanish authorities to the Maghreb had to be translated during these negotiations.¹⁰⁹ It seems that Rena and his friends were able to communicate without linguistic assistance. When Juan de Arborán described Rena's participation in the negotiations for Oran's surrender, he made reference to direct written communication between the different sides:

In Oran this witness saw letters written by the said Juan Reyna and by the Alcaide de los Donceles, which were sent from Mers el-Kébir, and brought by Moors who were servants of Micer Franco Cattaneo, about negotiations to secure the surrender of Oran.¹¹⁰

We do not know whether Rena was able to write in Arabic, but it seems much more likely that the people who conducted the negotiations shared a *lingua franca*, which would make sense considering that many of them were traders. This was underscored when Nicolao Cattaneo wrote to

Zafra about his contacts with some merchants from Oran, describing a spontaneous conversation among acquaintances.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the ship's pilot who took Rena to Vélez de la Gomera during one of his missions there stated that when Rena met with the King of Vélez they talked directly to each other.¹¹² Thus, it seems that linguistic difference was not an issue.¹¹³

Far more important than a shared language in explaining the prominent role of Rena and his colleagues was their social capital. As we have seen, Rena's personal network consisted mainly of merchants with a profile similar to his own and an agenda that combined commerce and royal service in the process of expansion undertaken by the Ferdinand the Catholic. Their profiles were grounded in the social capital that only years of work and experience in this complex society could provide. Rena expressed the importance of these contacts very clearly in one of his letters to the Crown:

And furthermore, because I want to live in this land and serve to Your Highness in the African conquest, in which I have served until now, and hereafter I can serve well, thanks to the great knowledge, and friendship, and businesses that I have accumulated throughout the Barbary Coast, from Tripoli to the Strait, especially in Oran and in the kingdom of Tlemcen.¹¹⁴

As Rena's words make clear, he and the other members of his network were able to facilitate negotiations between the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula because they were men of credit, that is, individuals with contacts and influence on both sides of the Mediterranean.¹¹⁵

On the southern shore, Rena and his colleagues knew the Muslim authorities and their officialdom, and thus were able to build the trust that they needed in order to carry out their diplomatic missions.¹¹⁶ This trust was crucial, since these merchants needed the protection of the Muslim authorities to conduct trade in the region. One illustration of the importance of these personal connections is the protection the *mizwar* of Tlemcen gave to Franco Cattaneo during an anti-Christian riot in Oran.¹¹⁷ Thanks to his commercial activity in the region, a Venetian like Rena could enjoy direct access to the local authorities because the latter also took part in external commerce.¹¹⁸ In fact, Rena was a business associate of the *mizwar* of Tlemcen.¹¹⁹ That Rena enjoyed the trust of the Maghrebi authorities like him is clear from an episode during the winter of 1505, when he was employed to resolve a commercial dispute involving the Spanish merchants in Oran. Miguel de Almenara, the merchant who acted as the Spanish consul in Oran, had fled the city and defaulted on his debts.¹²⁰ The King of Tlemcen ordered the imprisonment of his partners as well as the seizure of their goods and asked Ferdinand the Catholic to send the consul back to pay his debts.¹²¹ In the meantime,

Almenara's accounts were inspected in Oran (in an inquiry that Rena took part in) and it was discovered that Almenara owed 8,000 *doblas* to different Muslim merchants. The *mizwar* seized Almenara's associates in retribution. They asked him to allow one of them, Gonzalo de Córdoba, to return to Granada in order to collect the money—a request that the *mizwar* only accepted on account of the respect he had for Rena and the latter's pledge to act as Córdoba's guarantor. Unfortunately, instead of collecting the money and returning to Oran, Gonzalo de Córdoba fled. As a result, it was necessary to turn to Rena (once again) to solve the problem. Interestingly, he was able to secure aid from the Castilian authorities.¹²² All this shows how much the Maghrebi authorities trusted Rena, or at least considered him as someone able to mobilize political contacts in the Iberian Peninsula.¹²³

Rena's success in securing the help of the Christian authorities in this episode also demonstrates that he and his close collaborators were able to act as negotiators because they enjoyed strategic social capital on the northern shore of the Mediterranean. As we have seen, Gabriel Mas was considered an expert in the Maghrebi political landscape. He advised the Count of Tendilla and the Alcaide de los Donceles, but he was not the only one. Juan Rena and his associates showed a clear interest in maintaining close ties with the Spanish authorities who ruled Granada and oversaw African policy. For instance, when Rena was near the end of his commission as ambassador in Vélez, he approached the captain general of Granada (Tendilla) through Málaga's *corregidor*, Juan Gaitán. In order to prove his usefulness, Rena sent him a memorandum with advice about the protection of naval resources and, even more important, instructions on how to discover the spies who coordinated corsair attacks on the coast of Granada.¹²⁴ Only four days later, Nicolao Cattaneo also approached Tendilla, offering his services as informant.¹²⁵ At that moment, the Cattaneo brothers were aware of how important it was to cooperate with the Spanish authorities in the Maghreb. This can be seen in the ransom money Nicolao lent to the royal officer sent there to redeem captives on behalf of the Crown.¹²⁶ What all this tells us is that Rena and the other members of this commercial network enjoyed a good amount of social capital on both shores of the Mediterranean. At the same time, all these examples prove that these merchants were able to offer different services to different people in order to obtain prominent positions in regional trade.¹²⁷

The Making of a Frontier Society: Oran

The merchants like the ones analyzed here used to be considered as mediators who facilitated contacts between peoples allegedly separated by a vast cultural divide. Rena and the rest of his network, however, were not mediators but characters who embodied the continuities spanning

the political and religious divides of the early modern Mediterranean world.¹²⁸ It is important to bear this in mind, since one of the distinctive features of the Iberian expansion into the Maghreb was the existence of a shared culture allowing for mutual understanding, something that was lacking in other overseas contexts. Rena and his colleagues are a clear example of how this shared culture offered fertile ground for the later development of frontier politics, which is of paramount importance for understanding the final outcome of this chapter in Spain's overseas expansion.

Go-betweens in general and merchants in particular are supposed to have the linguistic skills needed to conduct negotiations like the ones analyzed here. However, much more important than a shared language is the fact that these people shared a political culture allowing them to negotiate and reach agreements.¹²⁹ This shared culture evolved from the long history of interactions between the polities of the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. Over the course of the Middle Ages, both engaged in repeated military incursions against the other.¹³⁰ It goes without saying that these interactions were frequently violent (and not only during times of war), and as a result the inhabitants of both shores shared a common language of violence and its meanings. Thus, Rena and his associates were not obliged to translate the violence, as was necessary in other spaces.¹³¹ For instance, neither Rena nor the other actors involved in these negotiations had any doubt about how the rules governing siege and conquest worked. The case of Mers el-Kébir is quite clear on this point, because the two sides were able to reach an agreement in a matter of hours, and adhere to that agreement.¹³² Again, this contrasts starkly with the military clashes in other regions, where the two sides did not share a common understanding of siege rituals or surrendering.¹³³ The negotiations led by Rena and his friends must have been familiar to the Muslims in the Maghreb, because the legal principles that the Spanish employed to negotiate a peaceful surrender were based on notions that evolved from Islamic law.¹³⁴ Hence, rather than translating the violence, Rena and his associates often simply conveyed the threats that the Spanish authorities addressed to their counterparts in the Maghreb. This was the case, for instance, of the letter that Hernando de Zafra sent to the King of Vélez de la Gomera through Juan Rena. In this letter, Zafra kindly reminds him of Ferdinand and the Catholic's power.¹³⁵ Zafra sent a similar letter to the *mizwar* of the kingdom of Tlemcen through Nicolao Cattaneo.¹³⁶ As both letters show, the merchants were not acting as translators because the message was quite clear. What Zafra expected from them was not to explain what a Spanish attack could mean. He merely employed them as messengers because they enjoyed the trust of the addressees, which helped to transmit the threat in a more efficacious way.

All these examples make clear that Rena and his associates acted according to a shared culture rather than as mediators between two

different worlds. In many ways they acted according to common codes, but at the same time they helped to shape some key aspects of the political culture on this frontier. The clearest case of this was their role in constructing and disseminating the concept of interreligious service. Put simply, Rena and his colleagues were giving form to a political culture in which service relationships between individuals of different creeds were possible and necessary. This principle was nothing new. During the Granada War, the Catholic Monarchs rewarded the Muslims and Jews who served them.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, during the expansion into the Maghreb the number of individuals from other religions serving the king increased. This cross-confessional service culture was promoted by Ferdinand and Isabella, who were willing to admit cooperative local notables into their royal service.¹³⁸ The most enthusiastic supporter of this idea of interreligious service was Hernando de Zafra, who used it frequently when approaching Maghrebi authorities. Thus, for instance, in the letter sent to the *mizwar* via Nicolao Cattaneo, Zafra tried to appeal to the *mizwar* by saying that “coming, as you should, to the service of His Highness, you will have me as a true friend and servant.”¹³⁹ A similar offer was made to the sheik Mahamet Aben Zuley by Nicolao Cattaneo. This merchant was also charged with convincing the sheikh to take “the path of His Highness service.”¹⁴⁰ Similarly, when Juan Rena took part in the negotiations with the King of Vélez de la Gomera, he relayed an interesting message on behalf of Hernando de Zafra. In it, Zafra communicated Ferdinand the Catholic’s wish to have him “as his friend and servant” and expressed his own willingness to become a servant of the Maghrebi ruler.¹⁴¹

This message is also illuminating because it shows that, beyond acting as the mere transmitters of this idea, Rena and his friends embodied this interreligious service due to their active role in these negotiations. Hernando de Zafra referred to Rena’s crucial role saying: “and the truth is that Juan Rena has been lord to you and is so great a servant to you that your lordship is indebted to him.”¹⁴² From Zafra’s point of view, the services Rena rendered to the King of Vélez had a consequence: the latter’s moral indebtedness to him. This shows that the royal secretary placed moral obligations and reciprocity above religious differences. Maybe Muslims, Christians, and Jews did not share a faith, but they had common codes regarding the meaning and implications of personal services. As we will see in the following pages, these shared ideas were of paramount importance in the construction of the new frontier society.

The strategic role of Rena and his associates in bridging the two shores of the Mediterranean not only allowed them to take part in the process of imperial expansion. They also helped to shape the new Spanish enclaves in the Maghreb by defining the shared code of interaction between individuals of different religious beliefs. They were able to do so thanks to the implications of the cross-confessional service they embodied. Together

with the notion of the frontier as a space where different rules applied, the exchange of political services among Christians, Jews, and Muslims on the ground had an enormous influence on shaping the frontier societies resulting from Spanish expansion into the Maghreb. A clear example of this can be found in the shaping of Oran's politics. This city has attracted the attention of historians of the early modern period, who believe it to be the most important Spanish outpost in the Maghreb.¹⁴³ As we will see, Oran was also the perfect example of how characters like Rena influenced the definition of the imperial frontier society. Actors like him indirectly helped to shape the local socio-political reality of this imperial bulwark by contributing to the social fabric of the city, but also by connecting it to the surrounding territories.

The influence of Rena and his colleagues in Oran was evident from the very beginning of Spanish rule. They played a crucial role in the conquest of the city. The official version emphasized God's blessing and divine intervention, but the disastrous retreat of the local troops, who were unable to get into the city, was what cinched the Spanish victory. There are different versions of this event, but all make reference to the inability of Tlemcen's troops to defend the city. Of particular interest for us here is the version of Cisneros's biographer, Alvar Gómez de Castro. Despite including the list of miracles from the official version, he pointed out the importance of a group of inhabitants who closed the city's doors and in so doing prevented the defending troops from entering. According to him, the inhabitants did so following a prearranged agreement with the leaders of the Spanish army.¹⁴⁴ This version is more in line with Oran's political reality, as well as with the previous attempts that the Spanish used to secure the city's surrender. Moreover, it was also commonly assumed by many people after the annexation that such an agreement had been arranged, and, as we will see, real or not, this agreement influenced the shaping of this frontier society.

Oran used to be described as an exception among the cities of the Spanish Empire, and in regards to its social make-up, it was a special case for two main reasons. First, this city was the only one in the entire Spanish Empire that hosted a Jewish community. Second, it maintained a fluid relationship with the surrounding Muslim territory.¹⁴⁵ Historians have explained this exceptionalism by showing that the Spanish authorities considered a peaceful relationship with their Muslim neighbors and the presence of a Jewish community as means to an end—retaining the enclave. In fact, the Jews living in Oran provided important services as spies and suppliers, and the Muslim inhabitants from the surrounding areas allowed the garrison to have access to local trade and foodstuffs.¹⁴⁶ These two factors—an authorized Jewish community and a close connection to the Muslim neighborhood—were the result of a complex interaction taking place locally during the establishment of Spanish rule. Furthermore, and more importantly to us, Rena and his associates played

a crucial role in these dynamics, as we can observe by examining their local associates.

Among these local associates there is one who deserves special attention: Symuel Zatorra, a Jewish merchant. Zatorra has attracted the attention of historians since the sixteenth century, when Alvar Gómez de Castro referred to him as one of the men involved in the surrender of Oran.¹⁴⁷ Zatorra is frequently portrayed as a reliable broker who facilitated commerce between Muslims and Christians.¹⁴⁸ He was more than that. He was also a rabbi, and as such we can consider him as a leader in the political life of the Jewish community in Oran.¹⁴⁹ Even more interestingly, Symuel Zatorra was also a member of Rena's commercial network. Unfortunately, we do not know anything about their relationship before Oran was captured. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that, after the annexation, Rena relied on Zatorra to carry out part of his commercial activities in the city.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, it seems that they were more than commercial associates because they continued to be friends for years, as is shown by the presents that Rena sent to Zatorra.¹⁵¹ This close connection between Rena and Zatorra points to the latter's involvement in the negotiations to hand over Oran, because as we already saw, it was Rena and other members of his network who conducted these negotiations. In fact, we know that Zatorra took part in the negotiations because some local witnesses described him in the following terms: "Zatorra, who is a good servant of the king our Lord, and even who gave the news and advice when this city belonged to the Moors."¹⁵² We can presume that Zatorra's involvement in the conversations leading up to Oran's surrender granted him special status in the new local society that resulted from the Spanish annexation of the city.

Zatorra's actions make sense if we view him not only as a merchant but as the head of Oran's Jewish community. The members of this religious minority were confronted with Spanish expansion in the region, a phenomenon that threatened their own presence on the Maghrebi coast.¹⁵³ It is worth noting that Symuel Zatorra was not the first or the only Jew to have dealing with the Spanish authorities. Recall that the first project to secure the surrender of a city in the Maghreb was planned by the Jews Symuel Abulafia and David Segura in 1492. They offered Mers el-Kébir to the Catholic Monarchs in exchange for a substantial amount of money and the assurance that the Jewish community would be allowed to remain in this city, as well as the other annexed territories in the kingdom of Tlemcen.¹⁵⁴ Their demands are understandable, considering that only six months before, Ferdinand and Isabella had expelled the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, and that the Jewish exiles who arrived in the Maghreb were far from being warmly welcomed by the local populations.¹⁵⁵ Taking this meaningful precedent into account, it is likely that Zatorra took part in the Oran negotiations in order to ensure the same terms for his community.

Zatorra understood that his right to live in Oran as well as his prominent position within the Jewish community was contingent upon his serving the new authorities.¹⁵⁶ As one of the men who enabled the Spanish authorities to take the city, he played a key role in the establishment of Spanish rule over Oran. In the years following the annexation, his commercial activity became one of the pillars of the city's economy.¹⁵⁷ Zatorra also served the new authorities as an efficient administrator—for example, when he worked as paymaster of the fortresses.¹⁵⁸ Zatorra frequently relied on his close connection to Rena as well as the other members of his networks to serve the new authorities. For instance, he lent money to the military administration through Rena and worked hand in hand with him in overseeing the logistics of Oran's garrison.¹⁵⁹ Zatorra was also connected with another member of Rena's network: Gisbert de Santa Fe. Both worked together administering the *parias* (tribute) paid by the King of Tlemcen and collected the custom duties on local trade as well. They also worked together on diplomacy between Oran and Tlemcen.¹⁶⁰ Considering this, we can presume that this network helped to preserve the Jewish community's presence in the city, since its members provided a vital service to the Spanish monarchs and helped to establish Spanish rule over the city. It goes without saying that Rena and his colleagues were not able to authorize the presence of Jews in Oran themselves, since this was a prerogative of the Crown. So it was Ferdinand the Catholic who issued a royal order allowing the Jews of Oran to reside in the city.¹⁶¹ The king's decision was influenced by events taking place in Oran. There, people like Rena and Zatorra contributed to the formulation and spread of the idea that Spanish rule over Oran depended on Jewish collaboration. After all, the Jews had been willing to collaborate with the Spanish authorities from the moment that they appeared in the Maghreb, and they proved to be quite helpful in the consolidation of the Spanish presence there.

Interestingly, Zatorra became an example for other Jews who were willing to offer their services to the Spanish authorities. Ten years later, two Jews offered to facilitate the surrender of Vélez de la Gomera. These men proposed to organize a coup de main to take Vélez in collaboration with some of the city's inhabitants. In exchange, they asked for a royal privilege granting the Jews the right to live in Vélez according to their laws and safe from any religious persecution. Moreover, they asked to be appointed as judges of the Jewish community and to be nominated as collectors of customs duties.¹⁶² Their offer was discussed in the War Council and their requests accepted, though the action against Vélez de la Gomera never took place. What is interesting to us here is that these two Jews were asking for the same conditions and privileges obtained by Zatorra in Oran. This shows that Zatorra, Rena, and the latter's colleagues were able to create a model that was adopted by others aiming to secure their position under Spanish rule by acting as servants of the Spanish Crown.

Rena and his close friends and associates played a key role in defining the internal social fabric of Oran. However, this was not a simple city, it was a frontier, and as studies on early modern frontiers have shown, one of the key aspects to analyze when dealing with frontier societies is the relationship of the local community to its neighbors.¹⁶³ Rena and his network also influenced the city's policies concerning the surrounding territory. Oran was practically an island in the middle of enemy territory. Even so, the prosperity of the city was logistically dependent on the surrounding territories. It was unrealistic to expect that the Spanish authorities would be able to provide Oran with all the goods it needed. Thus Spanish rule of this enclave was contingent upon maintaining good relationships with notables in the surrounding territories.¹⁶⁴ Historians used to believe that the survival of Oran and Mers el-Kébir after their annexation was due to Spanish military supremacy. However, they overlooked the important role that local actors from the surrounding territories played in the city's preservation.¹⁶⁵ Soldiers, artillery, and fortifications defended the *presidios*, but the Spanish authorities did not entrust the defense of the Maghrebi enclaves to the military alone. As we have seen, the Spanish authorities used diplomacy as a tool to expand their domains in the Maghreb. Hence, it is not surprising to find that they tried to establish good relations with the surrounding powers in order to protect their new acquisitions. Rena and his colleagues also took part in establishing the initial contacts between the Spanish outposts and the surrounding territory.

Rena and his associates continued to play a crucial role in the diplomatic arrangements that connected Oran to a complex balance of local powers. These merchants had already shown the new Spanish authorities the importance of these connections, but even after Oran had been annexed they continued to render diplomatic services. For instance, in December 1509, a few months after the fall of Oran, Franco Cattaneo and his Muslim servants informed the Alcaide de los Donceles that an enemy was planning an offensive against this city.¹⁶⁶ Zatorra also played a crucial role in the shaping of the new relationships between the Spanish *presidio* and the surrounding territory. A report about Oran's government stressed that he was vital to the preservation of the city's commercial activity because of his excellent relationships with the surrounding Muslim authorities.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, thanks to his reputation and expertise, he was the principal figure in the negotiations with the King of Tlemcen, and more importantly he also lent money to fund these diplomatic contacts.¹⁶⁸

Zatorra also worked together with Gisbert de Santa Fe advising the Spanish authorities on the diplomatic negotiations with their Muslim counterparts in the region. Thus in 1516 the royal officers that were sent to Oran to renegotiate the peace treaty with the King of Tlemcen wrote to Charles V saying that they were acting on the advice of Gisbert de Santa

Fe and Rabbi Symuel Zatorra, “who are good servants of Your Highness and experts in subjects relating to the Moors.”¹⁶⁹ Thanks to their experiences, the members of Rena’s commercial network were able to advise and support the new Spanish figures who took part in establishing these diplomatic relationships between the *presidio* and the surrounding Muslim territories. One of these new figures was Fray Jorge de Benavides, also known as Fray Jorge de Vera. This Franciscan friar was one of the *algarabiados* (Christian friars who speak Arabic) sent to Oran by Cisneros.¹⁷⁰ He successfully negotiated with the Mostaganem and Mazargan authorities for the surrender of both cities after the fall of Oran.¹⁷¹ Shortly after, Fray Jorge was engaged in similar talks with the king of Ténès, who ruled over a coastal territory near Oran.¹⁷² It seems that Fray Jorge was an effective negotiator, and other friars considered him as the most important diplomatic agent acting on behalf of Cisneros.¹⁷³

Obviously, Fray Jorge was able to act as an effective negotiator thanks to his prolonged experience dealing with Muslims communities. In fact, he was able to speak Arabic because he had spent years living in the Alpujarras (the mountains near Granada) among its Muslim inhabitants.¹⁷⁴ When working in the Maghreb he relied to a great extent on the support and advice he received from Rena and his associates. For instance, Rena’s personal accounts show that he provided Fray Jorge with the textiles that he needed in the negotiations with Muslim rulers.¹⁷⁵ He gave Fray Jorge “nine pieces of *bordates* for the king of Ténès’s ambassador’s son and his two servants.”¹⁷⁶ Rena also helped to fund one of Fray Jorge’s diplomatic operations, paying for the different luxury textiles that he distributed as gifts among the many actors involved in these negotiations.¹⁷⁷

Rena’s role in supplying these luxury textiles was an important part of the negotiation process, as these products helped the Spanish agents to forge political relationships between the Spanish outposts and the surrounding polities. For instance, in 1506, when Hernando de Zafra was notified of an alliance formed by the King of Tlemcen, the King of Fez, and the King of Dudu to attack Mers el-Kébir, rather than organizing an armed response, he sent Fernando Morales to the kings of Dudu and Fez. Morales (a Muslim merchant who had recently converted to Christianity) took them a large number of silks and French textiles in an attempt to deter the attack. This proved to be a wise decision, since it succeeded in “preventing the offensive and solved everything.”¹⁷⁸ From this anecdote we can conclude that these goods were a sort of payment to the local rulers, who helped to safeguard the Spanish outposts. To fully understand the importance of these gifts, we need to examine the political value such objects had in the eyes of Maghrebi rulers. The case of the king of Ténès underscores this point. When Ténès was attacked by local enemies, the military authorities in Oran sent him an armed contingent and a large number of textiles “to assist, favor, and empower him [the king of Ténès] in the city as well as the kingdom.”¹⁷⁹ The importance that these textiles

had in the political arena of the Maghreb permits us to reconsider Rena's role. He was not only a supplier; he was also the expert who possessed the resources and knowledge that the new authorities needed to establish relationships with the surrounding Muslim communities.

The importance of mediators such as Rena becomes even clearer when we consider that their diplomatic tactics and practices were adopted by the new authorities. After the conquest of the coastal strongholds, textiles became a means of payment for the services that the Muslims from the surrounding areas offered to the new authorities. Thus, for instance, the Alcaide de los Donceles, Rena's new patron, imitated the mediators' procedures by spending large amounts of money on textiles used in these negotiations. Furthermore, at the beginning of his rule in Mers el-Kébir, he started to invest large sums of money, creating a nexus of local informants and negotiators who worked in the surrounding territories. In 1507 alone, the Alcaide's servant in charge of this information service spent more than 1,375,000 *maravedies* paying external collaborators.¹⁸⁰ Interestingly, the book of accounts for the first royal paymaster in Oran starts with a royal order accepting similar diplomatic expenses, which were ordered by the military commanders. The same book of accounts contains a list of payments to "Moors and Jews who have come to offer themselves as servants of His Highness and have come with deals and issues relating to his service."¹⁸¹ Most of these payments were made with luxury textiles. For instance, according to this source the new authorities spent more than 1,200,000 *maravedies* paying "Moors, Jews, merchants and other persons for cloth, silks and linens and other items, which were given as gifts [in the peace negotiations with the King of Tlemcen]."¹⁸² References to similar payments pepper the military administration's official accounts during the following years.¹⁸³ The exchange of textiles for services in the surrounding territories quickly became a common transaction. For example, in the months following the conquest of Oran, several notables in the surrounding territories received gifts of textiles from the military administration. The list included religious figures like the marabout Cidi Alhacen or Cidi Buyaya, the main qadi of Tlemcen; local authorities from the surrounding area; agents of the King of Tlemcen; and tribal sheiks like the one known as Borrocaba, who ruled over the nomadic tribes of the region.¹⁸⁴ As we can see, the Alcaide and his fellow military officers adopted a true silk diplomacy.

Such payments forged the alliances needed to secure the *presidios*. For instance, in 1514, when the military authorities of Oran started the fortification works around the city, they were obliged to pay sheikh Borrocaba and others. These tribal leaders received an extraordinary number of luxury textiles in exchange for their services in securing the territory where the workers collected the materials to construct the new walls.¹⁸⁵ These examples underline how much the *presidio* depended on the collaboration of notables from the surrounding area.¹⁸⁶ These large quantities of textiles that were distributed to the actors from the surrendering

politics show the importance that the new authorities placed on maintaining good relations with their new neighbors. For them it was a necessary expense, one that was crucial in order to guarantee the survival of the strongholds.

Rena and the merchants who took part in the diplomatic negotiations leading to Oran's surrender helped to determine the internal and external contours of this Spanish enclave. Internally, they helped to create a space for the Jewish community headed by Symuel Zatorra, who assisted them in this enterprise by offering his services to secure the surrender of the city as well as after it fell under Spanish rule. These men also influenced the external policy of the *presidio*. By shaping the shared codes that made possible the diplomacy from below, they allowed the new authorities to establish vital connections with notables from the surrounding areas. Rena and his associates contributed to the creation of a Spanish enclave in the Maghreb that survived largely thanks to its connections with the surrounding Muslim territories. In conclusion, both within the enclave and beyond it, Rena and his colleagues helped to establish and sustain the supporting pillars of this crucial bulwark of the new Spanish Empire. Without a doubt, this was their most lasting contribution, but we should not forget other, less visible outcomes of their activities. Their continuous mediations between Muslim and Christian figures from both sides of the Mediterranean helped to shape the political culture of the frontier. These exceptional frontier politics allowed for the exceptional features of Oran's social and political life and, at a larger scale, of the whole frontier society resulting from Spanish empire building in the Maghreb.

Conclusion

Rena and his network played a key role in the process of Spanish expansion into the Maghreb because they were able to offer their services to the Spanish authorities, who incorporated territories not only by armed force, but also through negotiation. In sharp contrast to traditional narratives about the Iberian expansion that emphasize Spain's alleged military superiority, the analysis of the activities of Rena and his associates makes crystal clear the extent to which Spanish expansion in the Maghreb relied on a complex mixture of organized violence and negotiation. The activity of Rena's mercantile network is all the more interesting precisely because of this twofold approach to expansion. Rena and his associates were able to conduct these negotiations not only because they had contacts on both sides of the Mediterranean, but also because they were acting within a common political culture that they were also helping to shape. Hence, their activity allows us to understand not only the importance of the links between the two sides. It also forces us to reconsider the political culture bridging the gap between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

Despite the important role played by Rena and the other members of his mercantile network in the process of Spanish expansion into the

Maghreb, their mediations did not earn them a privileged position in the resulting new society. To some extent the most successful member of the group was Juan Rena but, as we will see in the following chapter, his success was more closely related to the military logistics he provided to the Alcaide de los Donceles. Something similar happened with another member of the Alcaide's circle, Miguel de Almenara, who was awarded a position in local government.¹⁸⁷ Gabriel Mas moved to the Canary Islands, where he became a land owner and a member of the local elite thanks to his success in commerce.¹⁸⁸ The Cattaneo brothers simply disappear from Oran after its conquest, showing the extent to which the annexation disrupted local trade.¹⁸⁹ Gisbert de Santa Fe suffered serious difficulties as he was prosecuted by the Inquisition and his merchandise and personal property in Oran were seized.¹⁹⁰ Symuel Zatorra faced fierce opposition from members of Oran's local government and was eventually executed by a later governor of the *presidio*, the Count of Alcaudete (son-in-law of the Alcaide de los Donceles), who also competed with him for control over local commerce.¹⁹¹ Undoubtedly, the main objective of Rena and his friends was to survive and to protect their businesses, and some of them were able to do so, but as we can see, they derived meager benefits from their mediations.

The importance of Rena and his associates for this study lies neither in the profits they made nor in the many difficulties and hardships they experienced because of their mediations. Their real significance is to be found in their contribution to the development of the political culture of this frontier. As we have seen, this political culture helped to shape the frontier society that developed out of Spanish expansion into the Maghreb. Symuel Zatorra paid a high price because of his prominent position in Oran, but he helped to procure for the Jewish community the right to live in the city. More generally, none of the members of Rena's network, nor Rena himself, managed to control or profit from the diplomacy from below. Nevertheless, they helped to connect Oran with the surrounding polities. Both the cross-confessional social fabric of this city and the fluid interactions with the surrounding communities proved to be instrumental in sustaining the Spanish presence in the Maghreb. In a broader context, they contributed to the construction of a political space on the frontier in which services and collaboration between individuals of different creeds were possible and had a deep impact on the shaping of this frontier society.¹⁹² The survival of practices similar to those used by Rena and his network shows how vital their contribution was.

Notes

1. Letter from Juan de Cazalla to Doctor Villalpando. Cartagena, May 24, 1509. See Hernández González, *Cartas de relación de la conquista de Orán*, 30–31. The miracle was represented by the painter Juan de Borgoña in his wonderful frescos in the Mozarab chapel in Toledo's cathedral. On that matter see Dolphin, "Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros," 259–73.

2. Herrera, *Istorias de la divina vitoria*, chapter 5.
3. Devereux, "North Africa in Early Modern Spanish Political Thought" and "Empire in the Old World." See also Bunes Ibarra, "El marco ideológico de la expansión española." These crusading ideas were also shared by the powerful Cardinal Cisneros. Rummel, *Jiménez de Cisneros*, 35–42; and García Oro, *La cruzada del Cardenal Cisneros*. For a general overview on the idea of the crusade and its practical applications in this period, see Housey, *The Later Crusades*, 291–321.
4. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*; Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*; and Alonso Acero, *Cisneros y la conquista española*.
5. Sharman, *Empires of the Weak*.
6. Many works have focused on individuals who bridged the cultural frontiers resulting from the process of European expansion. See, for example, Ares Queija and Gruzinski, *Entre dos mundos*; Loureiro and Gruzinski, *Passar as Fronteiras*; and Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde*, 146–48, 289–311.
7. Metcalf, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil*, 2–8 and "The Entradas of Bahia of the Sixteenth Century"; and Duffy and Metcalf, *The Return of Hans Staden*, 9–11, 55–76.
8. Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; Krstic, "Of Translation and Empire"; Van Gelder and Krstic, "Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries"; Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries"; and Pomara Saverino, "Go-Betweens, Revisited." Of particular interest for us here are the works by Claire Gilbert on the construction of a multilingual administration in the Ibero-Maghrebi frontier: *The Politics of Language*, "A Grammar of Conquest," and "Transmission, Translation, Legitimacy and Control."
9. Subrahmanyam, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place" and *Three Ways to Be Alien*, 1–22. Previous case studies on Yahya-u-Tacuft, one of the key characters in the Portuguese expansion into the Maghreb, already pointed in this direction. Racine, "Service and Honor in Sixteenth-Century Portuguese North Africa"; Cruz, "Mouro para os cristãos e cristão para os mouros."
10. On the fall of Granada, see Ladero Quesada, *Castilla y la conquista del reino de Granada*.
11. Fuchs and Liang, "A Forgotten Empire." For a recent and complete state of the art on this region, see Liang et al., "Unity and Disunity."
12. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*.
13. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 11–25; and Alonso Acero, *Cisneros y la conquista española*.
14. Salvá and Sainz de Baranda, *Colección de documentos inéditos*, 8:130–31.
15. Gómez de Castro, *De Rebus gestis*, fol. 114.
16. Dakhli, *Le divan des rois*, 298–306.
17. For an interesting case study, see Ruiz Ibáñez, *El consenso del pueblo*.
18. Thomaz, *De Ceuta a Timor*, 165–66. Ladero Quesada pointed in the same direction, underlining the importance of the *mudéjar* tradition in Castile. Ladero Quesada, *Granada*, 262–63. A brief but useful survey on this tradition can be found in Márquez Villanueva, "On the Concept of Mudejarism."
19. I borrow the concept of diplomacy from below from Morieux, "Diplomacy from Below and Belonging."
20. Far from being an exception, this case is one of many that have sparked increasing interest in diplomatic negotiations and treaty-making as a means of imperial expansion. Gibson, "Conquest, Capitulation, and Indian Treaties"; Levaggi, *Diplomacia hispano-indígena*; Vasconcelos de Saldanha, *Iustum Imperium*; Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels"; Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*, 70–99, 131–33; and Belmessous, "The Paradox of an Empire by Treaty." For recent criticism of Belmessous's approach, see Van Ittersum, "Empire by Treaty?"

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21. AGS, RGS, Leg. 149210, nos. 7, 8. Ladero Quesada believed that Abulafia was not from Granada because he does not appear in the list of Jews expelled in 1492. Ladero Quesada, "Melilla en 1494," 448. The list is published in Ladero Quesada, "De nuevo sobre los judíos granadinos." In my opinion, Abulafia was a Jew from Almería who collaborated with the Catholic Monarchs in the Granada War. AGS, RGS, 148807, no. 246 and Leg. 149102, no. 183.
22. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, July 28, 1493. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 62.
23. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 67. There are more references to this negotiation in AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Lib. 1, no. 57 and Lib. 2-1, no. 31. For further information on these negotiations, see Villalba González, *Los alguaciles de Melilla*.
24. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, February 12, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 167.
25. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, February 25, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 174. There is more information on Cazaza in Gozalbes Cravioto, "Notas sobre Cazaza."
26. Letter from Luis Peixó to the Catholic Monarchs. [. . .] AHN, Universidades, Leg. 713, fol. 180.
27. Letter from King Ferdinand the Catholic to the viceroy of Mallorca and to the royal procurator in that kingdom. Granada, August 5, 1499. Cfr. Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 6:196.
28. The official agreement with the local chiefs in BRAH, Salazar y Castro, A-11, fols. 201-5. Further information about this event can be found in Cenival and Chapelle, *Espagnols sur la Côte d'Afrique*, 37-44, 49-57.
29. Letter from Ferdinand the Catholic to Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba. Seville, May 13, 1500. Serrano y Pineda, "Correspondencia de los Reyes Católicos," 461.
30. Zurita, *Los cinco libros postreros*, 5:189, 206. Djerba had all of the elements necessary for this kind of informal diplomacy to develop: presence of foreign merchants, political autonomy, and strategic importance in the Mediterranean world. Chater, "Jerba à l'épreuve du duel Hispano-Ottoman."
31. Letter from Martín de Mendoza to the Catholic Monarchs. Tripoli, July 23, 1503. BNE, MS 18631/3.
32. The power of attorney given by Tendilla to Girolamo Vianello to carry out this negotiation on behalf of the monarchs can be found in AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 73. On Vianello, see Bellemo, *Girolamo Vianello*; and López de Coca Castañer, "Notas y documentos sobre Jerónimo Vianello."
33. See below, note 37.
34. Salvá and Sainz de Baranda, *Colección de documentos inéditos*, 8:179-80.
35. Previously, in 1506, a Muslim named Durra Hamet was paid for his services as an informant about Honaine. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 187, fol. 61. The reference to Pedro Navarro's plan to capture the city is in a letter from Cardinal Cisneros to Diego López de Ayala. Alcalá de Henares, September 15, 1508. Gayangos and Fuente, *Cartas del cardenal don Fray Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros*, 10-11. On Honaine, see Marçais, "Honaïn."
36. I will come back to this issue in the third section of this chapter.
37. Salvá and Sainz de Baranda, *Colección de documentos inéditos*, 8:179-80. On the governor who offered the surrender of Algiers, see López de Coca Castañer, "Converso, hidalgo, fraile y renegado."
38. The original treaty is not extant, but the royal chronicler Jerónimo Zurita included a transcription of it in his work on Ferdinand the Catholic. Zurita, *Los cinco libros postreros*, 6: 210, 221.

39. "Asiento entre Diego Fernández de Córdoba y la ciudad de Mostagani." AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 11, no. 154.
40. For a survey of recent scholarship on diplomatic relationships between the Spanish Empire and the Muslims, see Vozmediano and Martínez Torres, "Entre dos mundos." For a useful work on the complexity of this issue, see Bunes Ibarra, "Entre la paz y la Guerra."
41. In late March 1494, after months of negotiating with different local chiefs, Zafra was still waiting for the king's response. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, March 24, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 165.
42. Letter from Ferdinand the Catholic to Hernando de Zafra. Zaragoza, July 18, 1498. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 83.
43. Ladero Quesada, "Melilla en 1494," 446. This idea can be understood as contradicting the thesis of Villalba Gonzalez, who claims that the "peaceful occupation" of Melilla was the product of the negotiations previously quoted. Villalba González, *Los alguaciles de Melilla*.
44. For an interesting analysis of these negotiations, see Galán Sánchez, "Cristianos y musulmanes en el reino de Granada." On negotiation as a factor in Portuguese expansion, see Elbl, "Cross-Cultural Trade and Diplomacy"; and Biedermann, "Portuguese Diplomacy in Asia."
45. Ladero Quesada, *Hernando de Zafra*, 21–22, 28–29.
46. Letters from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, July 28 and August 28, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, nos. 62, 63. Zafra's correspondence is very well known and has been (partially) published several times since the nineteenth century. There is a recent, but incomplete, edition: Obra Sierra, *Correspondencia de Hernando de Zafra*.
47. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, February 12, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 167.
48. Meneses García, "Granada y el segundo conde de Tendilla" and *Correspondencia del Conde de Tendilla*, 1:234–47; and Szmolka Clares, "Granada y la política norteafricana de los Reyes Católicos" and *El Conde de Tendilla*, 291–320.
49. "Deseo paz hasta que se pueda hacer la guerra." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Miguel Pérez de Almazán. Granada, August 19, 1504. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, no. 1, fol. 58.
50. "Es la mayor locura que se vio, porque los que van a conquistar, alguna esperanza han de tener de tomar algo por trato, aquí es quita, que antes se dejarán hacer pedazos que darse a él por lo de cristiandad. De manera que pues todo se ha de tomar por fuerza no será tan sabrosa la conquista, para los que la hacen ni para los que la padecen." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Marquis of Denia. Granada, March 6, 1509. BNE, MS 10230, fol. 62.
51. I will come back to this figure in the following chapter.
52. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Ferdinand the Catholic. March 24, 1508. BNE, MS 20209/11-2.
53. Ladero Quesada, *Hernando de Zafra*, 195–97.
54. "De tratos no curemos que con la gente que ha de saltar en tierra, forzar pueden cualquier cosa de las que son de importancia." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Alonso Morales. Granada, July 9, 1505. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 187. On the Castilian army deployed in this campaign, see Ladero Quesada, "La toma de Mazalquivir."
55. Letter from Pedro de Madrid to Ferdinand the Catholic. Mers el-Kébir, September 17, 1505. BNE, MS 18547/5/14, fols. 9–10.
56. Letter from Gonzalo de Ayora to the Catholic King. Mers el-Kébir, September 15, 1505. BNE, MS 10415, fol. 3. For the payment to the new governor

- and other soldiers who collaborated in the surrender of the fortress, see AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 187, fol. 15.
57. Gonzalo de Ayora, a respected military officer, reported to Cisneros the problems involved in conquering and defending Mers el-Kébir. BNE, MS 262, no. 112.
 58. On Málaga's conquest and the enslavement of its population, see Ladero Quesada, "La esclavitud por guerra a fines del siglo XV."
 59. "De Túnez y de Bugía así mismo he sabido que se han ido todos los andaluces y la mayor parte de la gente, y que no paran en Alejandría ni en Damasco, sino que todos pasan dellos a Meca y de ellas a una gran ciudad que está en medio del Asia que se llama Bohaza y que es el temor tan grande que hay en todos y la certeza que tienen de ser prendidos, que así creen en ello como en su Mahoma." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, January 14, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 164. On exiles from Granada in the Maghreb, see López de Coca Castañer, "Granada y el Magreb."
 60. "Que todo el reino [de Tremecén] está temblando y con las llaves en la mano . . . porque [esta gente] ni tienen fuerza para defenderse ni diz que hablan en otro remedio salvo en venir al servicio de Vuestras Altezas." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, January 14, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, fol. 164. This fear not only pushed the Maghrebi authorities to negotiate with the Spanish, they also sought help from Muslim powerful allies. The draft of a letter from King Manuel to Ferdinand and the Catholic mentioned the presence in Egypt of "dos embaixadores da Berberia que forão ao Soldam a lhe pedir socorro pelos apretos da guerra que lhe mandaes fazer, no que estam tam temerosos de perderem o que senhoream." ANTT, Nucleo Antigo, Cartas, 877, no. 87.
 61. The standard reference work on this subject continues to be Laroui, *The History of the Maghrib*. See, in particular, pp. 229–42. On the Maghreb in the context of the Islamic world, see Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 319–36. The recent biography of Leo Africanus by Natalie Zemon Davis also offers a colorful description of the Maghreb at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 15–54. On the Maghrebi ruling dynasties, see Rodríguez Mediano, "The Post-Almohad Dynasties."
 62. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, April 25, 1494. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 169.
 63. "Con el favor de la armada peleará con los otros que son sus contrarios." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the Catholic Monarchs. Granada, July 28, 1493. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 62.
 64. Early modern imperial expansion depended to a great extent on local allies. Lee, "Projecting Power in the Early Modern World"; and Black, *European Warfare*, 63–65.
 65. Jostkleigrew, "Affaires étrangères?" 193. Something similar happened regarding Portuguese diplomacy in Asia. Halikowski-Smith, "The Friendship of Kings."
 66. Recent histories of diplomacy highlight actors like those analyzed here who did not act as consuls or ambassadors. See, for instance, Von Thiesen, "Diplomatie vom type ancien." This approach has already proved to be much more useful for understanding the diplomacy between European and Maghrebi polities during the early modern period. Windler, *La diplomatie comme expérience de l'autre*. The English reader can consult Windler, "Representing a State in a Segmentary Society."
 67. According to Juan Bautista de Arborán, Rena arrived in Orán in 1494. AGN, CO_PS, 1ª S, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 8.

68. On the role of "lower rank" Venetians in Mediterranean trade, see Apellániz Ruiz de Galarreta, "Venetian Trading Networks," 157–59.
69. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 8.
70. Africanus, *Della descrittione dell'Africa*, fol. 54. On the diplomatic connections between this city and Venice, see Wansbrough, "A Moroccan Amīr's Commercial Treaty with Venice." Further information about this city and its port in López de Coca Castañer, "Vélez de la Gomera."
71. This drawing and the one below of Castil de Pescadores were penned in 1523 by Juan de Guzmán, an inhabitant of Málaga, as part of his plan to capture this enclave with the support of the Duke of Arcos. To the best of my knowledge, it is the earliest representation of this place. I will come back to Guzmán's plan in the next chapter.
72. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Royal Secretary Miguel Pérez de Almazán. Granada, August 10, 1504. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 50.
73. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Juan Gaitán. Granada, October 17, 1504. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, no. 1, fol. 77. Different testimonies in the *probanza* coincide in dating Rena's first journey to Vélez to 1503. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fols. 5, 8–9. Unfortunately, we have no additional sources to confirm this information because the Count of Tendilla's book of letters for this period has dissappeared.
74. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 2.
75. For instance, Canelas took part in getting captives released in 1498, 1499, and again in 1503. AGS, RGS, Leg. 149806, no. 71, Leg. 149909, no. 462, and Leg. 149910, no. 254; Casa y Sitios Reales, Leg. 1, no. 314 and Leg. 3, no. 346. In fact, this royal servant was active along the Mediterranean frontier in other tasks. In 1504, when he was helping to organize the release of captives, he received a royal concession to organize a private raid on the African coasts. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Lib. 9, no. 121, 1. Further information in López de Coca Castañer, "Andalucía y el Norte de África."
76. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 3.
77. For instance, during his fifth journey, Rena stayed there at least three weeks. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, nos. 1–3.
78. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 2.
79. "Que de continuo estaba con el rey de Vélez." AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 6.
80. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 22.
81. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the King of Vélez. Málaga, August 7, 1505. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 134.
82. Gabriel Mas belonged to a family of Jewish merchants who had converted to Christianity. Guiral Hadziiossif, "Convers à Valence," 88. On the commerce between Valencia and the Barbary Coast, see Guiral Hadziiossif, "Les relations commerciales du Royaume de Valence avec la Berbérie." It seems that these converts inherited the role of Valencia's Jewish community in the trade with Africa. Hinojosa Montalvo, "Los judíos del reino de Valencia durante el siglo XV."
83. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sultos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 6.
84. Letter from Diego de Córdoba to Gabriel Mas. Oran, April 28, 1503. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-1.
85. See letter from Gabriel Mas to Juan Rena. Gran Canaria, November 20, 1512. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-10-1.
86. Letter from Ferdinand the Catholic to the Almoxarife of Algiers. Barcelona, August 8, 1496. Cfr. Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 5:314.
87. Letter of safe passage for Pedro de Hozes and Gabriel Mas. Ocaña, December 7, 1498. Cfr. Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 6:159.

88. Letters from Ferdinand the Catholic to the viceroy of Mallorca. Manzanares, June 9, 1499, and Granada, August 5, 1499. Cfr. Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 6:193, 196. Other Jews from Mallorca were also involved in the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb. Deyá Bauzá, "Entre la toma de Orán y los pactos con Argel," 63.
89. Letter from the Count de Tendilla to Miguel Pérez de Almazán. Granada, November 13, 1504. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 85.
90. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Hernando de Zafra. Granada, September 1505. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 228.
91. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sueltos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 2. Gisbert de Santa Fe appears here acting with his partner, Alonso de Sevilla. Both later became tax-collectors in Oran after its conquest. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200.
92. He was condemned for crypto-Judaism first in 1490 and again in 1519. AHN, Inquisición, Leg. 5311, exp. 1, fol. 2. On the role of new Christians and crypto-Jews in Spain's overseas expansion, see Uchumany, "The Participation of New Christians."
93. Letters from Ferdinand the Catholic to the King of Béjaïa, the tax collector and the governor of Algiers. Barcelona, August 8, 1496. Cfr. Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 5:311–12, 314–15. On Béjaïa, see Valérian, *Bougie, port maghrébin*.
94. For instance, in 1516 a royal officer described him as an expert in diplomatic agreements in the Maghreb ("Plático en cosas de los moros"). AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 156, no. 174.
95. On the difficulty of the negotiations with the Barbary authorities, see Kaiser, "Négociier avec l'ennemi."
96. Despite the attention that these merchants have attracted, very little is known about their business in the Maghreb beyond the fact they were two leading figures in the region's commerce. The participation of the Cattaneo family in the Maghrebi trade dated back to the Middle Ages. Balletto, "Famiglie Genovesi nel Nord-Africa," 55, 58, 59. These merchants had an important place in the regional commerce with North Africa, and they therefore attracted the attention of the expert in this subject. López de Coca Castañer, "Orán y el comercio genovés."
97. Gioffrè, "Il commercio d'importazione genovese," 5:116, 122, 132, 141, 168, 170–71, 204; and Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 5:377–78.
98. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-1 and Caj. 88, no. 3.
99. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1314, no. 76.
100. Leo Africanus described Oran as an autonomous enclave outside the sphere of influence of the king of Tlemcen. Africanus, *Della descrizione dell'Africa*, fol. 65. On Oran as an independent merchant republic, see Lespes, "Oran, ville et port," 285.
101. "Mi hermano . . . la mayor parte de ellos [los alárabes] tiene en su mano para cuando Su Alteza se quisiere servir de ellos, y así mismo lo escribe por su carta del cinco de este mes, y me dice que tiene en su mano un grande alfaquí, el mayor de este reino, al que alárabes, bárbaros y ciudadanos más obedecen que al rey . . . y es mucho enemigo del Mizwar." Letter from Nicolao Cattaneo to Hernando de Zafra. Mers el-Kébir, December 15, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 137.
102. "Conocí, señor, en los dichos moros, que los de Orán son confusos, y cansados, y que desean alguna concordia, la cual confío en Dios que no puede faltar." Letter from Nicolao Cattaneo to Hernando de Zafra. Mers el-Kébir, December 15, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 137.

103. He almost monopolized the external commerce of Almería. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150010, no. 150.
104. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 1-1. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 108.
105. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Hernando de Zafra. Mers el-Kébir, January 5, 1506. Cfr. Ladero Quesada, *Hernando de Zafra*, 195–97.
106. Burke, “The Renaissance Translator as Go-Between,” 18, 20; and Salicrú i Lluçh, “La diplomacia y las embajadas.”
107. Hein, “Portuguese Communication with Africans.”
108. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 100, 108. On this office in the following years, see Gilbert, *The Politics of Language*, 126–38.
109. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the *mizwar* of the kingdom of Tlemcen. January 1, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1314, no. 76.
110. AGN, Comptos, Papeles Sueltos, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 8.
111. Letter from Nicolao Cattaneo to Hernando de Zafra. Mers el-Kébir, December 15, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 137.
112. AGN, Comptos. Papeles Sueltos. Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 7.
113. On the shared languages in the early modern Mediterranean, see Dursteler, “Speaking in Tongues”; and Dakhli, *Lingua franca*. For a brief yet complete introduction, see Mallette, “Lingua Franca.”
114. “Así mismo porque deseo de estar en esta tierra e servir a Vuestra Alteza en la conquista de África en la cual hasta ahora he servido, e de aquí adelante puedo bien servir, por el mucho conocimiento, e amistad e trato que he tenido en toda la costa de Berbería, desde Trípoli hasta el estrecho, principalmente en Orán e en el reino de Tremecén.” AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 3.
115. Kaiser, “Les hommes de crédit.” See also an interesting case study from a completely different context, Flores, “A ‘Man of Great Credit in Those Lands’.”
116. Salicrú i Lluçh, “Más allá de la mediación de la palabra.”
117. Letter from Gonzalo de Ayora to Ferdinand the Catholic. Mers el-Kébir, September 15, 1505. BNE, MS 10415, fol. 3.
118. On the participation of Maghrebi authorities in commerce, see Valérian, “Les elites politiques.” Venetian merchants were also traditionally engaged in commercial relationships with Ottoman and Maghrebi authorities. Dursteler, “Commerce and Coexistence” and *Venetians in Constantinople*, 62–169. An earlier example can be found in Heers and Groer, *Itinéraire d’Anselme Adorno en Terre Sainte*, 136–38.
119. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 1-1.
120. He was the brother of the aforementioned Galcerán de Almenara. See notes 103–5 above.
121. Letter from Ferdinand the Catholic to Juana of Aragón. Madrid, November 20, 1502. Cfr. Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones*, 5:316.
122. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150501, no. 99. Long experience in trading in the Maghreb was useful when negotiating with Muslim authorities to solve problems related to commerce, as also was the case in Mamluk Egypt. Apellániz Ruiz de Galarreta, *Pouvoir et finance en Méditerranée pré-moderne*, 159–60, 221–24, 244–46; and Christ, *Trading Conflicts*.
123. This was the reason behind the appointment of Christian merchants as diplomatic representatives by Maghrebi rulers. Valérian, “Les agents de la diplomatie.”
124. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Juan Gaitán. Granada, May 30, 1505. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 162. It is well known that the frontier between diplomacy and espionage in the early modern era was blurred. In

- fact, some important political careers in Venice were based on the combination of trade, informal diplomacy, and espionage. Davis, "Shipping and Spying." The fear of collaboration between the internal Muslim community and external Muslim powers was a crucial factor in the policy of the Spanish Empire throughout the sixteenth century. Hess, "The Moriscos."
125. Letters from the Count of Tendilla to Nicolao Cattaneo and Ferdinand the Catholic. Granada, June 3, 1505. AHN-SN, Osuna, 3406, D. 1, fol. 163.
 126. AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales, Leg. 5, no. 5. Interestingly, in this document Nicoalo Cattaneo appears as consul of the Catholic Monarchs in Oran. On the role of consuls as political representatives dealing with captives' ransom, see Heinsen-Roach, "Consuls-of-State."
 127. On the exchange of services and commercial privileges in Mediterranean trade, see Kaiser, "L'économie de la rançon" and "La excepción permanente."
 128. For this point I rely on Dakhliia and Kaiser, "Une Méditerranée entre deux mondes ou des mondes continus."
 129. On shared political culture giving place to cross-confessional negotiations, see Planas, "Une culture en partage."
 130. Rodríguez Mediano, "The Post-Almohad dynasties," 107.
 131. Perrault, "To Fear and to Love Us."
 132. Letter from Pedro de Madrid to Ferdinand the Catholic. Mers el-Kébir, September 17, 1505. BNE, MS 18547/5/14, fols. 9–10. Interestingly, a later account mention that the Alcaide was surprised about how easy it was to secure the surrender of the fortress. BA, 50-V-21, fols. 120–22.
 133. Further information about the rules governing sieges and surrendering in early modern Europe in Pepper, "Siege Law." On the complexity of surrendering in intercultural wars, see Hassig, "How Fighting Ended"; and Campbell, "Surrender."
 134. Szásdi León-Borja, "Sobre el origen medieval del Requerimiento Indiano."
 135. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the King of Vélez de la Gomera. Málaga, August 7, 1505. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 134.
 136. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the *mizwar* of the kingdom of Tlemcen. January 1, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1314, no. 76.
 137. This was the case, for instance, of Symuel Abulafia, the Jew who offered the surrender of Mers el-Kébir in 1492. Previously, in 1488, he received a royal safe-conduct thanks to his services to the Catholic Monarchs during the Granada War. AGS, RGS, Leg. 148807, no. 246. The Muslim merchant Alí Dordux received another royal safe-conduct for his many services to the Crown. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Libros de Cédulas, 2-2, fol. 49. On this figure, see Pescador del Hoyo, "Alí Dordux, un personaje controvertido."
 138. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Libros de Cédulas, 1, no. 57; and 2-1, fol. 2.
 139. "Y en viniendo, como debéis, al servicio de Su Alteza en mi tendréis un verdadero amigo y servidor. para todo lo que mandárades." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the *mizwar* of the kingdom of Tlemcen. Málaga, January 1, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1314, no. 76.
 140. "El camino del servicio de Su Alteza." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to Sheikh Mahamet Abenzueley. Málaga, January 1, 1506. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the *mizwar* of the kingdom of Tlemcen. Málaga, January 1, 1506. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1314, no. 76.
 141. "Vos quiere por su amigo y servidor." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to the King of Vélez de la Gomera. Málaga, August 7, 1505. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 134.
 142. "Y en verdad señor Juanes de Reyna vos ha sido y es tan gran servidor que vuestra señoría le es en mucho cargo." Letter from Hernando de Zafra to

- the King of Vélez de la Gomera. Málaga, August 7, 1505. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 134.
143. On Spanish rule in Oran, see Ruff, *La domination espagnole à Oran*; Sánchez Doncel, *Presencia de España en Orán*; and Alonso Acero, *Orán-Mazalquivir*. On Oran's preeminent position in the *presidios* system, see Alonso Acero, "Las capitales mediterráneas de la Monarquía."
 144. Gómez de Castro, *De Rebus gestiis*, 114. His version was followed by authors such as Luis del Mármol Carvajal, who wrote a more detailed account of the events in which some of the city's inhabitants signed a pact with the conquerors. Mármol Carvajal, *Libro tercero*, 195.
 145. Alonso Acero, "Judíos y musulmanes"; and Bunes Ibarra, "Oran, un prototype de société de frontière."
 146. Pulido Serrano, "Consentir por necesidad"; Alonso Acero, "Judíos en un mundo de frontera."
 147. Gómez de Castro, *De Rebus gestiis*, 114.
 148. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 39–40; and Martín Corrales, "Comercio en la frontera," 264.
 149. The Jewish community in Oran has attracted the attention of several scholars. The most complete work on the subject is Schaub, *Les Juifs du Roi d'Espagne*. Despite the fact that the author pays much more attention to the internal problems of the Jewish community in the seventeenth century, the ten pages devoted to the Jewish community after the conquest are much more useful than the only article on the subject, Vilar, "Orígenes de la judería de Orán." On the medieval antecedents of this community, see Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, 2:56–58. On the Jews' role in the Portuguese expansion into the Maghreb, see Tavim, *Os judeus na expansão portuguesa*.
 150. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, nos. 3-1, 5-1, fol. 8.
 151. AGN, APFR, Caj. 39, no. 1. On interfaith friendship in the early modern period, see Jütte, "Interfaith Encounters Between Jews and Christians."
 152. "Zatorra, que es muy servidor del rey nuestro señor y aun el que dio avisos desta ciudad cuando era de moros." AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 14, no. 308, s.f.
 153. In addition to this threat, the Maghrebi Jews were already experiencing increasing hostility from Muslim populations. Hunwick, *Jews of a Saharan Oasis*, 61–66.
 154. AGS, RGS, Leg. 149210, nos. 7, 8.
 155. Pérez, *History of a Tragedy*; and Fenton and Littman, *Exile in the Maghreb*, 63.
 156. A similar case is that of Abraão Benzamerro, a Jew who played a key role in the conquest and government of Safi in Portuguese Morocco, which has been analyzed in Tavim, "Abraão Benzamerro." Michel Abitol has made use of the same case to explain the socio-political predominance of Sephardic Jews in Morocco during the same period. Abitol, "Juifs d'Afrique du nord." A precedent can be seen in the case of Alí Dordux, the merchant who negotiated the delivery of Málaga in 1487 and became the head of the Muslim community in that city after the conquest. López de Coca Castañer, "Alí Dordux y la morería de Málaga."
 157. Zatorra's business became the most important source of customs revenue. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 232, fols. 44–54.
 158. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 285, fol. 32.
 159. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, nos. 3-1, 5-1.
 160. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 187, s.f.
 161. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 39.

162. AGS, Estado, Leg. 2-2, fol. 338. The influence of Oran's agreement becomes even clearer when we consider the differences between the conditions that these figures placed upon their collaboration with the Spanish authorities, and those granted by the Portuguese king to the Jews of Safi, from where the Jews offering to secure Vélez came. Letter patent of Dom Manuel to the Jews of Safi. Évora, May 4, 1509. Cfr. Newitt, *The Portuguese in West-Africa*, 36–37.
163. Bertrand and Planas, "Introduction," 7. See also Kaiser, "Penser la frontière."
164. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 47–59. These relationships refute the traditional understanding of the *presidios* as isolated spaces. See the classic study Ricard, "Le problème de l'occupation restreinte dans l'Afrique du Nord."
165. On the importance of local forces, see Gourdin, "Pour une réévaluation des phénomènes de colonisation en Méditerranée occidentale."
166. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 232, s.f.
167. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Diversos de Castilla, Leg. 6, no. 108.
168. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, s.f.
169. "Gisbert de Santa Fe y Rabí Symuel Zatorra, que son pláticos en las cosas de los moros y muy servidores de Vuestras Altezas." AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 156, no. 174, fol. 1.
170. Letters from the Count of Tendilla to Miguel Pérez de Almazán and Fray Jorge. February 17 and March 10, 1509. BNE, MS 10230, fols. 53, 65.
171. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 232.
172. AGS, Contaduría Mayor del Sueldo, Leg. 74, s.f.
173. Actually, another friar defined Fray Jorge as someone "who in these parts of Africa, and even in the Sahara, has credit . . . and the Moors trust him. [With him] you could achieve even the house of Jerusalem" (En estas partes africanas, y hasta la zahara, tiene crédito, . . . y los moros se confían de él, [con él] podréis conseguir hasta la casa de Jerusalén). Letter from Fray Diego to Cardinal Cisneros. Oran, July 1, 1510. AHN, Universidades, Leg. 713, fol. 65.
174. On his experience working there, see Calero Palacios, "Nuevos datos sobre el adoctrinamiento de los moriscos."
175. Only recently have historians started to pay attention to the figures who shaped the particular language of textile cross-cultural exchange for diplomatic purposes. Anderson, "Material Mediators."
176. "Nueve piezas [de bordates] para dar al hijo del embajador del rey de Tenes y a los dos sus criados." AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 5-1. On the role of textiles as gifts in the framework of cross-confessional diplomacy, see Reindl-Kiel, "East Is East and West Is West."
177. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 4.
178. "Con esto se embarazó la ida de los reyes y se remedió todo." AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 139. On the messenger, a former Muslim merchant recently baptized as Fernando de Morales, see Harvey, *Muslims in Spain*, 39–41.
179. "Para lo socorrer [al rey de Tenes], y favorecer y apoderar en la ciudad y reino." AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 187, s.f.
180. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 187, fol. 71.
181. "A moros y judíos que se han venido a dar por servidores de Su Alteza e han venido con tratos e cosas tocantes a su servicio." AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Legs. 232, 319, s.f.
182. "Moros y judíos e a mercaderes e a otras personas por los paños e sedas e lienzo e otras cosas que para esto [la contratación de la paz del rey de Tremecén] se dieron." AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 232, fol. 1.
183. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Legs. 200, 319.

184. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 232.
185. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 285, fol. 29.
186. For an interesting take on these relationships based on the Muslim sources, see Mezzine, "Les relations entre les places occupées et les localités de la région de Fes."
187. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 108.
188. Letter from Gabriel Mas to Juan Rena. Gran Canaria, November 20, 1512. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 10-1.
189. López de Coca Castañer, "Orán y el comercio genovés," 285.
190. AHN, Inquisición, Leg. 5311, exp. 51, fol. 2; and AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 285.
191. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Pueblos, Leg. 14, no. 312; and Estado, Leg. 461, no. 9. On Zatorra's death, see Schaub, "El lado oscuro de la epopeya." Other sources mention that Zatorra was executed by Barbarossa in 1518. Letter from Antonio Rico to Lope Hurtado de Mendoza. Oran, February 27, 1518. Primaudie, *Documents inédits*, 24.
192. Later examples of negotiations similar to the ones analyzed here can be found in Planas, "Diplomacy from Below"; and García Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El Hour, *Cartas marruecas*, 47–134.

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2 The Making of a Frontier

Noble Authority and Jurisdictional Pluralism Between Southern Iberia and the Maghreb

Introduction

In 1506 the Alcaide de los Donceles, captain general of Tlemcen, received a royal order commanding him to reward Rena's services to the Crown in the Maghreb. By that time, the Alcaide was assembling the administration he needed to fulfil his new duties as protector of the realm's southern frontier, so he decided to employ Rena in military logistics.¹ At a time of political and military turmoil in the Mediterranean, this was a very attractive opportunity for a merchant like Rena, so he accepted the offer. This was the reason why Rena, unlike the rest of his former colleagues, continued collaborating with the Castilian authorities in the region. The complementarity between the aims and needs of the king, the Alcaide de los Donceles, and Rena would prove to be crucial in the political career of the latter and, even more important, in the main process under analysis in this chapter: the making of a political frontier between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. While combining his activity as a merchant with his new duties serving the Alcaide de los Donceles, Rena actively contributed to the construction of a homogeneous political space spanning the Iberian and Maghrebi shores of the Mediterranean. Focusing on him, we can gain new insights into how this political space took shape from below out of the personal connections, institutional synergies, and interactions of a wide array of actors.

This chapter focuses on how the new internal politics of the frontier worked. The political history of border regions has been analyzed mainly through a center-periphery approach in which it is assumed that politics and policies are dictated from above and imposed over a distant (and resistant) periphery.² A similar approach has been adopted in works on the prominent role of the noblemen who served the Crown by protecting and governing the frontier.³ This is hardly surprising considering that protection of the realm in general, and the defense of the frontiers in particular, offered an opportune sphere of activity for merging the agendas of noblemen and the Crown in the framework of empire- or

state-building processes.⁴ However, recent works on the history of frontier societies during the early modern period have shown the need to widen the scope of analysis to include other actors beyond noblemen government officials.⁵ In addition, recent scholarship on protection and empire has emphasized how claims of protection provided opportunities for individuals outside the circle of aristocratic officialdom (merchants, soldiers, maritime workers, etc.) to advance their own agendas, which only partly overlapped with the objectives of the kings and their agents.⁶ It is my contention that in order to fully understand how this political frontier was shaped, it is necessary to transcend this binary approach and analyze how the challenge of protecting the frontiers demanded the strategic cooperation of different actors. By focusing on Rena's activities in the service of the Alcaide de los Donceles, we will see that the interactions between a wide array of individuals to protect the imperial borders were crucial in defining the political frontier.

It is difficult to draw the precise limits of the frontier analyzed here. Following the terminology of early modern sources, scholars today use the term *frontier* to refer to the dominions under Spanish rule in the Maghreb.⁷ Legally speaking, the Alcaide's jurisdiction was limited to the kingdom of Tlemcen (which in reality only included Oran, since no significant territory was incorporated after the conquest of that city). However, the small size of the Maghrebi territory controlled by the general captaincy should not blind us to its huge impact elsewhere. Hence, the geographical scope of this chapter transcends the space of these coastal strongholds in the Maghreb to include cities in Andalusia (Málaga, Córdoba, Lucena, el Puerto de Santa María) as well as the territories and sea routes connecting them. This is not only because most of Rena's activities serving the Alcaide took place there. All these places have something in common: their local politics were strongly influenced by the incorporation of and the need to defend the Maghrebi strongholds under Spanish rule, since they all fell under the jurisdiction of the new general captaincy of the kingdom of Tlemcen. Originally intended as a military tool, this jurisdiction turned out to be a political tool, as well as a means to access maritime trade, tax exemptions, and so forth. This is only one example of the profound transformations in local norms and power relations between different individuals (noblemen, local authorities, tax farmers, merchants, etc.) that resulted from the incorporation of the Maghrebi strongholds into the Catholic Monarchs' realms. This is the process that I refer to as the shaping of a frontier or the shaping of a liminal political space. In order to reconstruct this process, I will examine the political networks in which Rena was embedded as a member of the Alcaide de los Donceles's staff, the overlapping jurisdictions resulting from the Alcaide's alliance with the king, and how different individuals used and contested the new political environment in the region to create a new set of political practices on the frontier.

A King, a Knight, and a Pawn on the Chessboard of Castilian Politics

Before analyzing the contours of the political space resulting from Castilian expansion into the Maghreb, it is necessary to place frontier politics in the wider context of the complex politics of early sixteenth-century Castile. It is easy to conceive of the frontier as a remote corner of the map of Castilian politics. After all, Oran and Mers el-Kébir were just two overseas strongholds at the periphery of the periphery. However, as we will see, this new frontier played a central role in the chess game of Castilian politics. In fact, the close connection between frontier politics and the debates and struggles taking place at the very heart of the Castilian body politic is crucial for understanding the complex forces shaping the new political frontier.

It might be useful to look at the southern frontier in light of the objectives and needs of the different actors involved in its construction, one of them being the king. Having conquered a series of important port cities on the Maghrebi coast, Ferdinand the Catholic faced a new challenge: retaining them. Keeping these coastal enclaves was crucial to ensuring the protection of the southern domains of the empire, since Muslim corsairs threatened the sea routes connecting the Iberian and the Italian peninsulas, as well as access to the new hub of the Atlantic trade: Seville. Beyond their strategic usefulness, the Maghrebi strongholds were of paramount importance from a political perspective. They symbolized the continuity of the long-standing struggle against Islam, one of the pillars of the Catholic Monarchs' political legitimacy. In fact, persisting in the conquest of Africa was one of the duties Queen Isabella included in her last will and testament. In clear contrast to the war against France (a goal of King Ferdinand's Aragonese agenda that was financed with Castilian resources), the conquest and defense of the Maghrebi port cities had the advantage of coinciding with the interests of both the Castilian and Aragonese elites. As a consequence, safeguarding and expanding the new frontier was one of the best strategies for Ferdinand the Catholic to maintain his political legitimacy in the face of increasing opposition to his rule in Castile after the queen's death.⁸ Maintaining the recently acquired cities in the Maghreb paid political dividends, but it was a very demanding venture. The king adopted a defensive strategy focused mainly on fortifying the recently conquered port cities, and in so doing configuring a system of strongholds to control the Maghrebi coast.⁹ He decided to hand over the administration of his African possessions to different noblemen, who used their mandates as a source of power and profits. As early as 1497, the Catholic Monarchs signed an *asiento* with the Duke of Medina Sidonia, giving him administrative authority over Melilla. The fact that the monarchs continued to leave Melilla's defense in his hands, even though they were well aware of his fraudulent methods

of provisioning the garrison, reveals the extent to which they depended on him.¹⁰ In many ways, these noblemen were a necessary evil, as the royal administration was unable to adequately provision and safeguard the African territories. The existing royal administration in the region was more an obstacle than a useful tool. In 1510, Pedro Navarro had to suspend his successful campaign in the Maghreb because the royal officials did not obey the king's orders commanding them to supply Navarro's navy.¹¹ Even the urban governments of Andalusia made it difficult to plan and execute armed operations. For example, in 1516 a revolt in Málaga prevented the Crown from sending relief to the besieged garrison in Algiers.¹² Clearly, delegating the defense of the African *presidios* to a nobleman was the only way to guarantee their survival.

This kind of indirect administration offered a merchant like Juan Rena the opportunity to be involved in the construction of the political frontier. However, the main factor explaining his role in this process was the service relation he established with the person charged with safeguarding the new frontier. The main issue for the Crown was deciding which nobleman to entrust with the difficult task of defending the strongholds. Following intense negotiations between Ferdinand the Catholic and several noblemen, the king named the Alcaide de los Donceles as governor of Oran and Mers el-Kébir. This appointment has been seen as a technical decision, given that the nobleman was an experienced paladin in the war against the Muslims.¹³ Juan Rena's new patron, Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba y Arellano, known as the Alcaide de los Donceles, was a nobleman who had achieved fame and royal favor during the Granada War.¹⁴ He received the title of "Don" when he inherited his office as the Alcaide de los Donceles and some economic favors when he captured the Nasrid king, Boabdil, in 1483 during his offensive against Lucena.¹⁵ Following his participation in the conquest of Granada, he became a distinguished leader in the suppression of the Muslim revolt in Granada in 1500.¹⁶ As a reward for these services, the Catholic Monarchs enlarged the Alcaide's seigniorial estates, giving him jurisdiction over Sedella, a little village near Málaga.¹⁷ In light of this resumé, it comes as no surprise that the Count of Tendilla considered the Alcaide one of the best candidates to lead the offensive against Mers el-Kébir.¹⁸

Beyond his reputation as a reliable military commander, there were also political motives for the Alcaide's appointment as defender of the southern frontier. In fact, this appointment needs to be placed in the context of the conflicting politics of the day. The Alcaide's appointment as captain general of Tlemcen was very closely linked to the prolonged struggle between Ferdinand the Catholic and Córdoba's aristocracy. This conflict has been analyzed in the debate over the role of the Spanish nobility in the state-building process. John Edwards has described the open revolt of Córdoba's nobility in 1508 as a clear example of the local aristocracy's opposition to Ferdinand the Catholic's increasing

power.¹⁹ However, in his study of Córdoba's social conflicts, Bartolomé Yun uses the Alcaide as an example to refute Edwards's assertion and shows that the nobility was not unanimously opposed to the king. According to Yun, the appointment of the Alcaide as captain general by King Ferdinand was an attempt to counter the increasing influence of the Andalusian nobility and to attract other nobles with the promise of rewards from the war in Africa. Moreover, Yun points out that the Alcaide had been engaged in a long-standing feud with senior members of his family, and accepting the appointment gave him the opportunity to reinforce his position through a political alliance with the king.²⁰ Yun's interpretation is rejected by Edwards, who argues that the Alcaide only played a small part during the Córdoba revolt of 1508.²¹ Nevertheless, reading the correspondence between Ferdinand the Catholic and the Alcaide makes clear that the latter understood that safeguarding the frontier and fighting against Córdoba's nobility amounted to the same thing: they both demonstrated his commitment to serving the king.²² We will see later how the Alcaide's appointment as defender of the new frontier had a profound impact on Córdoba's political life, but what I want to emphasize here is the close connection between frontier politics and the political struggle taking place at the heart of the Castilian body politic.

From the very beginning, the Alcaide had to combine his duties as defender of the frontier with his extremely important role in Castilian politics. It can be argued that when Juan Rena entered the service of the Alcaide de los Donceles, he was also joining a political faction. The Alcaide's position was strengthened shortly after the conquest of Mers el-Kébir, when he became one of Ferdinand the Catholic's most reliable servants during the political crisis that followed Queen Isabella's death in late 1504.²³ The strong political alliance between the Alcaide and Ferdinand was made manifest during the latter's meeting with the new monarchs, Juana and Philip, and during his later journey to Aragon after losing power in Castile: the Alcaide was the only reliable nobleman to accompany him during this time of trials.²⁴ The Alcaide continued gaining in political clout after the short reign of Philip I.²⁵ In October 1506, just a couple of weeks after Philip's death, the Alcaide was at court as a leading figure in the political faction known as the *partido fernandino* that argued for the return of King Ferdinand to the Castilian government.²⁶ According to Fray Diego de Deza, the Archbishop of Seville and one of King Ferdinand's main supporters, the Alcaide:

Has always been a true and loyal servant of Your Highness . . . and one of those in whom the faith has truly prevailed, and when I was called from Toro to the court about the issues that should be not mentioned in a letter, he joined me and accompanied me without embarrassment, something that others would not do.²⁷

This unconditional loyalty to Ferdinand the Catholic's political cause earned the Alcaide a prominent position in political life in the following years. In 1507, when Ferdinand returned to the Castilian government, he faced hostile opposition from the Castilian aristocracy. In Andalusia, this opposition was led by powerful nobles such as the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who had the support of a good part of Córdoba's nobility. During this dynastic crisis the Andalusian aristocracy saw an opportunity to create dissent and anarchy.²⁸ To counter the influence of this aristocratic league, Ferdinand relied on the combined forces of the Archbishop of Seville, the Count of Tendilla, and the Alcaide de los Donceles, who could defeat a divided opposition.²⁹ In helping Ferdinand to reinforce his position in Castile, the Alcaide hitched his own rise to prominence to the king. Once again, Tendilla, with his characteristic sense of humor, expressed the close partnership between the king and the Alcaide in one of his letters to the latter:

The king, our lord, is the most noble creature in this world and . . . always loves his people very well and he wants to sustain them in their positions and help them to save face in everything, even better if they serve him well. Your Lordship . . . with the king, you have the bed made.³⁰

The alliance between the Alcaide and King Ferdinand allowed the former to secure more appointments. Working to hold the frontier against the Muslim enemy was considered one of the best ways to render service to the king. This was underlined by the fierce competition the Alcaide faced in the summer of 1509 for the governorship of Oran. Within a couple of months after the conquest of the city, powerful noblemen from Murcia and Andalusia had sent letters to King Ferdinand, hoping to be granted the contract for the defense of this stronghold.³¹ Their eagerness to obtain the contract was such that rumors about the negotiations became a point of gossip in the correspondence among the regional nobility.³² However, the Alcaide, who was already governor of Mers el-Kébir, needed to extend his military authority over the neighboring city of Oran, since otherwise the defense of Mers el-Kébir was at risk.³³ In other words, the Alcaide's reputation and career as one of the most important servants of the Crown depended on becoming governor of this second frontier city. In the end, the Alcaide obtained the contract to defend Oran. Other candidates may have had more resources to commit to safeguarding this city, but none of them had the Alcaide's record of political services.

The influence between Castilian politics and the frontier also went in the opposite direction: frontier politics had a profound impact on Castile. Thanks to his position as defender of the southern frontier, the Alcaide de los Donceles obtained important political benefits. First of all, he improved his position vis-à-vis Córdoba's aristocracy. As early

as October 1506, only a year after the conquest of Mers el-Kébir, the Alcaide used his position as captain general to obtain a royal order for the revenue from local taxes to be used first to fund the frontier garrison under his command, and only secondarily the benefits enjoyed by local knights.³⁴ This royal order makes crystal clear that, in the Crown's eyes, the Alcaide enjoyed a pre-eminent position among the local nobility. The Alcaide also enhanced his influence over the management of the local economy thanks to his new role as defender of the frontier. In December 1508 he obtained from the Crown the formal appointment as heir to one of his father's government offices in Córdoba: the title of Alcaide de las Dehesas (governor of the city's meadow).³⁵ This strategic position allowed him to exercise an enormous influence over the common pastures, a key asset in the local economy whose control was fiercely contested.³⁶ This was an important victory for the Alcaide, because it allowed him to maintain his influence over the city's government—a difficult task considering the nobility's long-standing power struggles.³⁷ The position was far from being merely honorific. In fact, seven years after the concession, the Crown forbade any other judge to interfere in his jurisdiction.³⁸ As we can see, the Alcaide's appointment as captain general had a profound impact far from the frontier he was charged with defending.

The Alcaide de los Donceles also improved his position among the Castilian aristocracy thanks to his new position as protector of the frontier. His exploits in Africa were celebrated by different chroniclers.³⁹ In addition to fame and prestige, his services to the Crown on the frontier entitled him to other benefits. First and foremost were the titles of "lieutenant of the fortresses" of Mers el-Kébir and Oran, which were highly honorable positions with an attractive salary of 550,000 *maravedies* per year.⁴⁰ As a reward for his services, the king also granted him the possession of and jurisdiction over strategic places in the Maghreb. Interestingly, the official document granting these favors makes explicit reference to the Alcaide's role in the war against the Muslims:

Taking into account the good and loyal services that you, Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba, Alcaide de los Donceles and my captain general in the kingdom of Tlemcen, have done me and do me every day, especially in the war that I order you to make against the African Moors, enemies of our holy Catholic faith, and in all the previous Moors' wars in these my kingdoms, and to give you some remuneration because of your services.⁴¹

The Alcaide was granted jurisdiction over the coast of Tlemcen, as well as the right to collect duties from Canastell and Arzew and their ports and saltworks.⁴² It seems that Ferdinand the Catholic promised the Alcaide similar concessions in Honaine, another of Tlemcen's port

cities.⁴³ The king also gave him two other coastal towns in Tlemcen: Mostaganem and Mazagran.⁴⁴ All these favors were relatively unimportant from a material point of view, but they had an additional value: they made the Alcaide one of a select group of nobles who had possessions *allende*—that is, in lands conquered from the enemies of the faith beyond the Mediterranean Sea—a distinction that only he and the Duke of Medina Sidonia enjoyed.⁴⁵ For his outstanding military services, in 1512 he received the land of Comares (in exchange for Sedella, also near Málaga) together with the title of marquis.⁴⁶ In addition to this, the Alcaide received the privilege of transferring some of his positions and titles to his son Luis, which was crucial to his lineage's continued political ascendancy.⁴⁷ Finally, his appointment as captain general of the kingdom of Tlemcen launched the Alcaide to the highest tier of royal service. In 1512, after three years defending the southern frontier, he was appointed as the first viceroy of Navarre, a key frontier kingdom where he continued to work hand in hand with Juan Rena. With this appointment, the Alcaide became a *de facto* member of the highest ranks of the Castilian aristocracy, because with it he became a proxy for the monarch in Navarre.⁴⁸ As we can see, the defense of the frontier improved the Alcaide's position within the power structure at the heart of the realm.

At this point we can conclude that the agreement between Ferdinand the Catholic and the Alcaide de los Donceles on the defense of the frontier should be understood within the wider context of Spanish politics. By relying on the Alcaide's support, the king was able to ensure the protection of the realm's southern frontier. Moreover, by entrusting this honorable task to the Alcaide, Ferdinand strengthened the position of his main ally in Córdoba, which was crucial to bolstering his authority over the Andalusian nobility. From the Alcaide's perspective, taking charge of Oran's defense proved to be a shrewd decision. In doing so he consolidated his position in the war against the Muslims, which granted him prestige but also political capital. Safeguarding the southern frontier allowed the Alcaide to improve his position not only in Córdoba (one of his main concerns) but also in the chess game of Spanish politics, due to the multiple rewards that he received in exchange for his services. The appointment of the Alcaide as captain general of Oran and Mers el-Kébir offers a good example of how local, regional, nobiliary, and dynastic politics had a direct connection with the remote southern frontier. Only by considering the relationship between Ferdinand the Catholic and the Alcaide, the competition between regional noblemen, and the fight for local power can we fully understand the forces that shaped the political frontier. However, in order to do that, we have to widen the scope of analysis to include all the actors participating in this process. Juan Rena was one of them.

Inside the *Asiento*: The Alcaide de los Donceles and His Service Networks

One of the royal favors that the Alcaide received contained an interesting reference to the Alcaide's services on the frontier as a collective effort: "considering . . . [the] work of your person and the losses of your relatives and servants . . . it is my mercy and will that you will be my governor and tenant of the aforementioned city and fortress of Mers el-Kébir."⁴⁹ As these words suggest, the defense of Oran and Mers el-Kébir should be analyzed as a collective enterprise. In this section I will show how the challenges the Alcaide faced as protector of the frontier obliged him to rely on effective collaborators like Juan Rena. The latter's incorporation into the collective enterprise of the frontier's defense was the grounds for his later role in the shaping of the political frontier.

The Alcaide was an experienced military officer with a long record in the struggle against the Muslims, and as such he was at the center of an important clientele network. The Alcaide recruited administrative staff from among his kin and clients in order to provision and control the military machinery under his command. As a matter of fact, his mother, Leonor de Arellano, managed the administrative staff of her son's military enterprise on their seigniorial estates.⁵⁰ On the frontier, the Alcaide ruled Oran and all its military machinery with the help of other members of his household, such as his kinsman Martín de Argote or his chamberlain, Sancho de Contreras.⁵¹ The importance of this team was such that when Martín de Argote was banished from Oran, the Alcaide asked for the revocation of his expulsion. In his petition he argued that he needed Argote to manage military affairs on the frontier, thus he needed to take with him "all his clients and servants, especially the ones who can serve better there [in Oran] than here."⁵² Moreover, the Alcaide actively tried to incorporate a team of experts in frontier warfare into his household. This is evident in the appointment of Lope de Sosa—a knight from Córdoba who had worked as a spy in the Maghreb for years—as tutor of the Alcaide's son, the future governor of Oran.⁵³

When the nobleman took up his role as defender of the new frontier's strongholds in the Maghreb, he required more than clients and servants. The *asiento* (the Alcaide's contract to defend the new frontier) was a logistical and financial challenge to its holder. To ensure that the men safeguarding this frontier had the necessary resources to do so successfully, the Alcaide was obliged to act as the leader of a wide network whose cohesion depended on his capacity to obtain and manage resources. As any other nobleman, the Alcaide was forced to manage his income and expenses according to the codes that legitimized his dominant position over a social network.⁵⁴ The troops employed by the Alcaide were mainly recruited from among his clientele and precisely because of that he had

to act as an effective patron to maintain his leadership.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the Alcaide was also a military entrepreneur, and as such he needed to see to the welfare of his most valuable resource: his soldiers.⁵⁶ Both factors compelled him to ensure that his troops were paid and provisioned adequately, since their affection towards him was contingent upon it. Gonzalo de Ayora, an experienced military officer, made reference to this “communion” between the troops and the Alcaide in his reports to King Ferdinand after the conquest of Mers el-Kébir. According to him, after the Alcaide repelled the enemy’s first attempt to recover the fortress, he earned the troops’ adoration by paying them additional wages and distributing abundant food supplies.⁵⁷ To fulfill these obligations was a common duty for all military commanders, but it was even more advisable to someone like the Alcaide because in so doing he could keep the soldiers from deserting or conspiring with the enemy. When Tendilla made reference to the financial risks of the *asiento*, he underlined this problem in a meaningful way:

Some soldiers, because faith was not kept with them regarding their pay, had not kept the faith that they took from the baptismal font, and they have gone to see if Muhammad pays what Christ owes, and they will become informants, and even make way for some evil deed.⁵⁸

The logistics and funding demands of the *asiento* are crucial to fully understanding the forces shaping this political frontier. The Alcaide needed to adequately pay and supply his garrisons if he wished to maintain command over the frontier’s strongholds and, most importantly, his honor. However, that was anything but easy. Once again, the Count of Tendilla was quite explicit on this point. In one of his letters to a fellow nobleman, Tendilla admitted that he did not take part in the bidding for Oran’s *asiento*, because the enterprise was a risky prospect logistically, and he feared that the official payment system to sustain this African *presidio* might fail. Even more, Tendilla confessed that he regretted that the Alcaide decided to take this appointment.⁵⁹ Moreover, in another letter, he underlined this tension between the financial risks of the *asiento* and its political rewards: “That charge [the defense of Oran] is something honorable, if the world is always calm, but if it turns, who can sustain the cost of nearly 30 million [*maravedíes*] in a place where they can cut off supply by sea?”⁶⁰ In another missive he was even clearer:

I consider it harsh for a nobleman (even one with an estate) to have to sustain a cost that needs 26 million [*maravedíes*] in payment. Because if [the payment] fails he is lost and dishonored, as this noble people (the soldiers) do not hesitate in mutiny if they are not paid.⁶¹

Tendilla's words were not in jest. The threat of the soldier's mutiny was real and the only way to prevent it was to continue paying their salaries.⁶² Tendilla was well aware of how risky investing in royal service was, because his expenses as captain general of Granada led him to the edge of ruin.⁶³

The first contract signed by the Alcaide to defend Mers el-Kébir (1506) included an article on how the garrison's salaries and supplies would be funded. It stated that the king was obliged to provide the Alcaide with 6,340,400 *maravedies* from Córdoba's taxes each year to defray both costs. Furthermore, the contract also included an emergency mechanism if the taxes collected were not enough to cover the expenses.⁶⁴ The payment system seemed robust enough, but the Alcaide quickly realized how difficult obtaining the money could be.⁶⁵ The king had the power to order payments from the money that was raised from tax collectors and cities. The procedure went as follows: first, the king delegated the right to collect specific taxes to the cities or tax farmers; then, when the monarch needed to make a payment, such as those agreed upon with the Alcaide, a *libranza* (payment order) was sent to the local authorities or tax farmers; the payment would later be discounted from the money that the collectors owed the king. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Castile's fiscal system was dominated by the cities and the tax farmers, and they used all manner of contrivance to avoid or postpone payment.⁶⁶ Funding the *asiento* by this means spared the royal administration the hassle of dealing with the cities and tax farmers directly by leaving this task to the Alcaide.

Dealing with the tax farmers in charge of royal rents in Córdoba became a difficult task for the Alcaide because they frequently did not accept the payment orders. This was true, for instance, of Alonso de Alanís, a tax farmer who fled the city, leaving his debts with the Alcaide unpaid.⁶⁷ Alanís's example was followed by other tax collectors who fled to different jurisdictions, preventing the Alcaide from having them prosecuted.⁶⁸ In light of such obstacles, the Alcaide secured the aid of a specially appointed judge to address this problem.⁶⁹ The judge took swift action and ordered the seizure of goods from all these tax farmers. Nevertheless, the court cases arising from these seizures dragged on for years, due to the sentences being appealed.⁷⁰ What made matters worse was that the local *justicias* (first-instance judges) refused to cooperate to alleviate the problem, and sometimes they openly obstructed the orders of the royal judges.⁷¹ If recovering the money from the tax collectors was difficult, recovering it from their pledges was harder still, as the trials against them illustrate.⁷² Moreover, sometimes the Alcaide could not obtain the money simply because a natural disaster or an epidemic made tax collection in a specific area impossible.⁷³ In addition to the difficulties of collecting money from the tax system, the royal administration also failed to provide the provisions that it had promised the Alcaide.⁷⁴ In

sum, the combination of jurisdictional fragmentation, distance, and the outsized influence of local authorities over the tax system made collecting the resources a nightmare.

The Alcaide could not rely on the resources that the monarch promised to pay. According to the *asiento* drawn up for Oran (1509), the amount that the king was supposed to invest was almost 23 million *maravedíes*. But in light of the problems mentioned in the previous paragraph, this new contract allowed the Alcaide to seek out sources of credit on behalf of the king.⁷⁵ Despite this innovation, this credit method ultimately proved useless. This problem pushed the Alcaide to look for alternative solutions. Historians used to consider the Alcaide de los Donceles as the last representative of a time-honored tradition of medieval knights who served their king by mobilizing retainers.⁷⁶ This interpretation rested on the common assumption that the indirect mobilization of resources was a sort of backward version of the “modern” method of conducting war through state administration.⁷⁷ However, by looking at the internal functioning of the *asiento*, we can see that the Alcaide was more than a mere feudal lord leading his vassals into war. Above all, he was a successful military entrepreneur.⁷⁸ In fact, he proved to be much more effective than the royal administration in funding the frontier’s defense. Most of the African campaigns were funded by private resources such as loans from Cardinal Cisneros, the Bishop of Martos, the Count of Miranda, or the Constable of Castile, or the loans brokered by Hernando de Zafra.⁷⁹

From the very beginning, the Alcaide needed to find a means of paying for his military ventures. In fact, even before the expedition to conquer Mers el-Kébir, in the summer of 1505, the Alcaide was looking for loans to fund his own participation in the operation.⁸⁰ After his appointment as captain general of Tlemcen, as was discussed earlier, the failure of the official payments stipulated in the *asientos* to materialize obliged him to look for credit to pay his garrisons’ salaries. The Alcaide referred to this in a petition he sent to the king asking for compensation.⁸¹ Beset by financial problems, the Alcaide mortgaged some of his patrimonial estates, such as Sedella.⁸² Even this measure did not solve the problem, and the Alcaide was forced to rely on the collaboration of Genoese merchants, businessmen with an important role in the regional economy such as Agustín Italian, Agustín de Grimaldo, and Agustín de Bivaldo, who lent money to the Alcaide to finance the defense of the new frontier under his command.⁸³

The Alcaide undoubtedly knew how to handle himself in the financial world. In fact, he not only contracted loans with these Genoese merchants. He also employed them as lobbyists, harnessing their influence in the fiscal apparatus of the monarchy to collect the money owed him by the king according to the *asiento*.⁸⁴ The relationship between the Alcaide and the Genoese merchants was not unique.⁸⁵ Like many other members of the Andalusian aristocracy, the Alcaide employed these businessmen as

agents in his mercantile activities. The close interaction between Genoese merchants and aristocrats was one of the key factors in the politics and economy of the region.⁸⁶ For instance, the Alcaide made use of the Genoese trade networks to obtain the commodities needed to supply his clientele in his dominions in Córdoba during the famines of 1506.⁸⁷ Hence, the problems in funding the defense of the frontier with the king's resources, as well as his previous contacts with the Genoese merchants, explain why the Alcaide incorporated them into his military enterprise. In so doing, he was just acting as an effective military entrepreneur seeking financial services. As we will see, the collaboration between the Alcaide and the businessmen who funded the defense of the imperial bulwarks under his command helped to shape the political frontier.

The Alcaide also filled out the administrative staff of his military enterprise with men experienced in fields such as maritime shipping and logistics and, most importantly, with "persons of trustworthiness and wealth" who were able to deal with the local merchants.⁸⁸ The most interesting case is Juan Rena. As a merchant, he was able to help the Alcaide in the difficult task of supplying and otherwise sustaining Oran and Mers el-Kébir. According to his personal accounts, on the Alcaide's orders Rena lent money to soldiers and to some captains under his command.⁸⁹ Rena also used his reputation to obtain loans from other merchants, to lend it to military officers.⁹⁰ Rena's mediation was also employed by some of the Alcaide's household servants to buy goods during their time in Oran.⁹¹ Moreover, by leveraging his reputation in the mercantile community, Rena was able to obtain many products on credit, which contributed to provisioning Oran's garrison. It is difficult to calculate the volume of these operations, but, for instance, an account drafted by Rena shows that at the beginning of 1512 the Alcaide's debt to Rena was upwards of 500,000 *maravedíes*.⁹² The sum indicates the importance of Rena's contribution to the Alcaide's military enterprise. It should also be noted that Rena lent his money and that of his associates at a time when the Alcaide was struggling to sustain the *presidios* because the Genoese bankers did not trust the financial system sustaining them. The problems in funding Mers el-Kébir started just after its conquest when the Genoese financiers Agustín de Bivaldo and Agustín de Grimaldo were unwilling to advance money to the Alcaide in exchange for the orders of payment issued by the Crown.⁹³ By 1507 the king had personally ensured the payment of the Alcaide's *libranzas* but the problems in funding the *presidios* continued.⁹⁴ This difficult situation made Rena's services indispensable for a military entrepreneur like the Alcaide.

Rena's services to the Alcaide went beyond financial assistance. He also had the skills needed to deal with maritime transport and other logistical problems.⁹⁵ One of Juan Rena's first tasks for the Alcaide (when they were still at court) was to negotiate good prices with merchants from Valencia in order to create a supply chain for the Alcaide's garrisons.

Frequently, the price for this sort of service was not fixed upfront in a previous contract; instead, it was agreed upon by “two persons of good conscience” (one chosen by the Alcaide and another by the ship’s owner). Thus when the Alcaide chose Rena as a person “of good conscience,” he was not only selecting someone who was knowledgeable about the costs of goods and maritime transport, but he was also choosing someone who was well regarded among the local commercial community.⁹⁶ This was crucial, as one of Rena’s main tasks was to deal with the mercantile community of this region.

Rena also worked for the Alcaide de los Donceles as a sort of mercantile broker with local merchants. After his stay at court with the Alcaide, he moved on to Puerto de Santa María. Situated on the Bay of Cadiz, this town was an important logistical center for the Iberian settlements in the Maghreb.⁹⁷ From there, Rena coordinated the provisioning of the garrison of Mers el-Kébir. During the seven months that he spent there (from late October 1506 until May 1507) he bought large amounts of not only foodstuffs but also arms and gunpowder. Once these items were purchased, he sent them directly to the Maghrebi strongholds under the Alcaide’s command. However, Rena’s task was by no means simple, because in 1507 Castile suffered one the worst agrarian and demographic crisis in its history. One account describes an apocalyptic scene, with lost harvests, rising prices, and illness that “spread like wildfire,” killing a large part of the population.⁹⁸ Organizing the logistics for any military activity was never an easy task, but during a period of famine and epidemic it was much more difficult, since the war effort only inflamed the situation, provoking violent opposition from the local population.⁹⁹ In this adverse context, Rena proved to be a competent agent for the Alcaide. Not only did he manage to carry out his duties, but he did so under mortal danger. He escaped death twice: first when he was stabbed, and second when he caught the pestilence that devastated the region in 1507. Rena spent three months fighting for his life and in the end he survived. During this time, the Alcaide kept paying Rena and also paid for his care.¹⁰⁰ After his miraculous recovery, Rena returned to managing the logistics of the *asiento* in Málaga and its surrounding area.¹⁰¹ Shortly after, he moved to Mers el-Kébir, where he continued working on logistics. He was in charge of receiving the different supplies sent there by the Alcaide’s administration and distributing them among the garrison’s soldiers.¹⁰²

Rena’s importance in the administrative apparatus grew during the following years, especially after the conquest of Oran. From then onwards, the Alcaide employed Rena as his agent in Málaga (the main staging area for the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb) while he was in Oran or negotiating at court.¹⁰³ Thus the nobleman gave Rena power of attorney, the ability to buy all the provisions needed to maintain the garrison, and receiving and managing the money sent by the Crown for military

expenses.¹⁰⁴ The different duties that the Alcaide gave to Rena show not only that he trusted him but also how much his ability to control and maintain the enclaves depended on Rena's services. As time passed, Rena's service became much broader and more complex. When the Alcaide left Oran and traveled to the royal court, he entrusted Rena to collect his payments in Seville, which required negotiating with the local bankers and tax farmers who managed the royal rents. Hence, in September 1510, Rena traveled to Seville to secure the payment of the money the king granted to the Alcaide through one of his local treasurers.¹⁰⁵ Once again, Rena was able to secure these payments by mobilizing his private network of commercial associates.¹⁰⁶ Rena's network also became useful in several other ways. At the same time that he was buying supplies for the garrisons, maintaining and repairing the ships used to connect the *presidios* with the Iberian Peninsula, and managing the artillery and the ammunitions, he was responding to reports sent from the Maghrebi strongholds and supervising the transit of troops en route to Málaga, where they embarked for Oran.¹⁰⁷ Finally, it is noteworthy that Rena was able to do all these things "without a *blanca*"—that is, at a time when the Alcaide's finances were in the red.¹⁰⁸ To sum up, the functioning of the Alcaide's military machinery depended to a great extent on Rena's economic and social capital, which made Rena an indispensable asset.

Considering that the Alcaide's political strategy was based on his capacity to provide military services to Ferdinand the Catholic and tackle the problems in maintaining the frontier strongholds, we can conclude that actors like the aforementioned Genoese merchants and Rena were an essential element of his plan. These businessmen played a prominent role in the administrative apparatus that the Alcaide constructed in order to maintain the military machinery and safeguard the realm's southern frontier. Rena and many other merchants collaborated with the Alcaide by funding and supplying the garrisons of Oran and Mers el-Kébir, and in so doing they became a significant part of his military enterprise. It is precisely because of their importance that these actors were able to influence the shaping of the new political space created under the umbrella of the *asiento*.

Jurisdictional Pluralism and the Construction of the Frontier

The alliance between Ferdinand the Catholic and the Alcaide de los Donceles, together with the service relationship between the latter and Juan Rena, are crucial to understanding the making of the new frontier. However, to fully understand how these interactions resulted in norms and practices, we have to take into consideration the jurisdictional aspect of this liminal space. When the Alcaide and Ferdinand the Catholic signed their agreement for the defense of Mers el-Kébir, a new jurisdiction was

created. This new jurisdiction was another layer adding more complexity to the already complex jurisdictional pluralism that characterized the internal politics of the Spanish Empire.¹⁰⁹ Different authors have shown how the interplay of different jurisdictions was crucial to the configuration of the colonial regime in frontier regions of the Americas.¹¹⁰ As we will see, the military jurisdiction created under the *asiento* provided the legal foundation that the Alcaide and Rena needed to make their interactions a driving force in shaping the liminal political space between southern Iberia and the Maghreb. The activities of Juan Rena in the service of the Alcaide illustrate how a military appointment and the jurisdiction deriving from it evolved into a set of norms governing frontier politics.

Compared to the large territories over which other captaincies general were established, the Captaincy General of the Kingdom of Tlemcen was tiny; in a sense, it was a legal fiction, since in reality only the city of Oran had been taken.¹¹¹ However, the new jurisdiction of the Alcaide as captain general of the kingdom of Tlemcen had far-reaching consequences for the southern corner of the Iberian Peninsula. The first transformation of this frontier region took place within the Alcaide's seigniorial estates, which included Sedella (exchanged for Comares in 1512), Espejo, and most importantly, Lucena, all of which were located in the region between Córdoba and Málaga (see Figure 2.1). He inherited the jurisdictional domain over his estates from his ancestors, but he transformed them into the powerhouse of his military enterprise. Well aware of how important it was to have a logistical base for his military services to the Crown, when he started to ascend in the royal service he transformed his patrimonial domains to support his military enterprises. He invested large sums of money in acquiring lands to increase his agricultural production and improve his infrastructure in order to produce foodstuffs, transforming Lucena, the capital of his seigniorial states, into a breadbasket for feeding the garrisons under his command.¹¹² For example, in the autumn of 1511, the Alcaide asked Rena to send 2,000 *fanegas* of wheat from Lucena to supply Oran.¹¹³ According to the Alcaide's calculations, by that time, Lucena was able to produce enough foodstuffs to supply Oran for three months.¹¹⁴ The importance of this logistical base was clear still 20 years later when the Alcaide's son, the next governor of Oran, profited from the logistical structure that his father had built on their seigniorial estates. For instance, he was able to provide around 9,000 *fanegas* of wheat to Oran during the crisis of 1530.¹¹⁵ The Alcaide also protected the backbone of his military enterprise by securing preferential tax treatment for his vassals. Thus, an inquiry during the reign of Charles V revealed that the 2,000 taxpayers living in Lucena paid about 50% less taxes than the average taxpayer in the region.¹¹⁶ This huge productive capacity was seconded by the Alcaide's urban infrastructure in Málaga, where the Alcaide could ship the supply to the Maghrebi strongholds. As early as December 1505 he obtained a facility to house his servants and supplies in this city.¹¹⁷

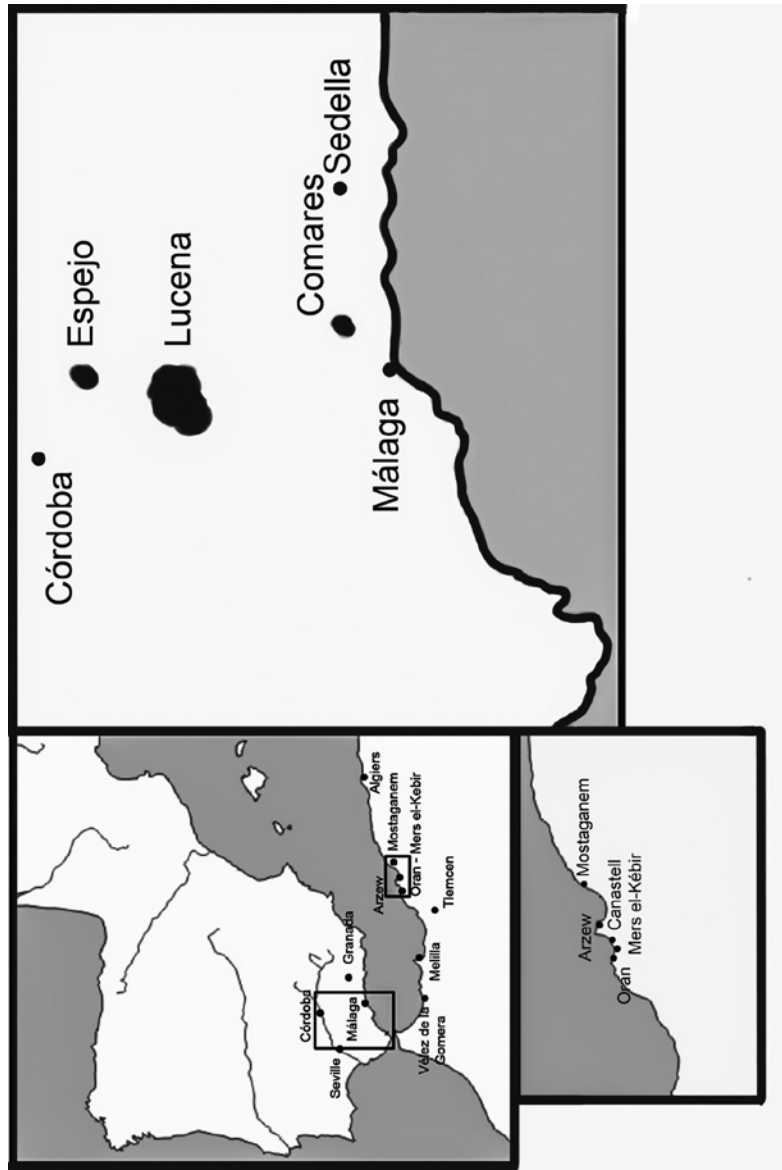


Figure 2.1 Map of the Alcaide de los Donceles's Dominions

Source: Map by author.

Soon after signing the *asiento* contract, Ferdinand ordered the Alcaide to be given a shipyard in Málaga's port, as well as more houses and warehouses.¹¹⁸ All of this, together with the Alcaide's seigniorial estates, constituted the infrastructure supporting the *asiento*'s logistics. It seems that Rena played no significant part in setting up this physical infrastructure, since his role was limited to organizing the mobilization of manpower and consumables to maintain the Alcaide's war machine. However, his activity moving supplies had a large impact on shaping the political space in the region between Córdoba, Málaga, and the Maghreb.

Overlying this physical space was another, even more interesting one: the jurisdictional space of the *asientos*. This jurisdictional facet affected all the activities related to the authority of the Alcaide as captain general of the new frontier, but its most interesting effect was the creation of a set of rules relating to military logistics. The contracts signed by the Alcaide and Ferdinand the Catholic contained a set of articles regulating the logistics required to sustain Mers el-Kébir and Oran. According to them, the Alcaide was obliged to furnish the *presidios* with all the necessary goods, and more importantly, all local authorities were obliged to assist and facilitate the Alcaide's staff in their logistical tasks.¹¹⁹ This could only lead to friction between the Alcaide and the local authorities obligated to help him, since, the Alcaide's privileges gave him priority over them.¹²⁰ In Málaga, they tried to avoid the implementation of any measures that reinforced the authority of the Alcaide because these measures implied a direct threat to the city's influence over the circulation of goods across this vast hinterland and the seas surrounding it.¹²¹ The royal orders commanding Málaga's authorities to support the Alcaide in the production and transport of the goods needed to maintain the *presidios* may seem trivial to us, but they endangered the city's mediating role between the interior of the Iberian peninsula and the rest of the world. Despite the open opposition of the city council, time and again the king supported the Alcaide by sending royal orders that allowed the Alcaide to overcome any legal obstacle or interference affecting military logistics.¹²² The Crown's orders for the local authorities to assist and facilitate the Alcaide's staff in their logistical duties were a clear expression of his increasing political authority in this region, which became evident once again in 1509 when the city authorities were ordered to help the Alcaide in the military logistics to sustain Mers el-Kébir and to host him for free.¹²³ As we can see, beyond the explicit terms of the *asiento*'s text, the contours of its jurisdiction were defined by the support that the king to the Alcaide—through royal orders—in his struggle against other local actors who contested his privileges. As a result of this support, authority and jurisdiction merged and overlapped. Nevertheless, the consolidation of the Alcaide's privileges and influence over the city was far from being a straightforward process, as a close analysis of Rena's service to the Alcaide will show.

The alliance between the king and the Alcaide provided the latter with privileges, but it was the exercise of these privileges on the ground that constituted the *sine qua non* for the effective recognition and implementation of his rights. Juan Rena played a crucial role in implementing the new rules derived from the *asiento*, as is made clear by his efforts to shore up the Alcaide's authority over the waters off Málaga's coast. As captain general of Tlemcen, the Alcaide was one of the most important military figures in the maritime sphere connecting southern Iberia and the Maghreb. He owned naval resources, and even more important, he held sway over maritime activities in Málaga. He used both assets to become an active figure in the campaigns against Maghrebi corsairs, an activity that afforded him important benefits, since he was able to sell off the seized goods. Such was the case with a Muslim corsair's ship that his men captured in 1511 and whose booty was sold off in Málaga. The distribution of booty shares was frequently drawn out into long lawsuits in the local tribunals, and this case was no exception, since one of the participants in the seizure of the vessel, Juan de Almenara, tried to claim a larger portion of the booty than he was originally allotted.¹²⁴ The dispute was far from trivial for the Alcaide, though the issue at stake was not his right to the lion's share of the corsair's booty but his rights and authority over the campaign against North African piracy and, by extension, over Málaga's waters. This was the reason why the Alcaide needed to uphold his privileges in the litigation over the seized booty. Interestingly, he commissioned Juan Rena for that mission.¹²⁵ By entrusting him to defend his rights over the booty, the Alcaide demonstrated that he considered Rena capable of enforcing the exercise of his authority in the region. As a merchant, Rena was supposed to be familiar with the basics of law and politics regarding maritime activities.¹²⁶ However, when the suit went to the Royal Chancellery of Granada (after a first sentence against the Alcaide), Rena relinquished the Alcaide's power of attorney to two professional court agents so they could act on his behalf during the rest of the litigation.¹²⁷ We can thus conclude that Rena's main duty was not to advocate for his patron's interest in the courts.

Rena's main task was to defend the Alcaide's interests on the ground. It was in doing precisely that on a day-to-day basis that he helped to shape the fiscal arrangements that developed on the political frontier. The most interesting and conflictive rule of the new jurisdictional space was the tax exemption for resources sent to Oran and Mers el-Kébir. All the goods sent to the frontier strongholds in the Maghreb were free of taxes, rights, or custom duties since they were intended for the defense of the realm.¹²⁸ This privilege had a profound impact on local politics, and the local authorities in Málaga tried to avoid its implementation. As early as 1507, Ferdinand the Catholic compelled Málaga's authorities to respect this article of the *asiento* after they tried to collect taxes on the goods that the Alcaide wanted to send to Mers el-Kébir.¹²⁹ Just a month later,

the king had to send a similar order to Málaga's authorities because they were trying to charge taxes on the wheat bought by the Alcaide to supply his garrison.¹³⁰ Similar problems arose time and again, and in response the king continued ordering the authorities to respect the *asiento*'s tax exemption.¹³¹ The stipulations included in the *asiento* and the subsequent royal orders confirming them against the opposition of the local authorities provided the foundation for the creation of a jurisdictional space free from taxes between the south of the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. However, it was necessary to defend and perform this tax exemption on the ground, and that was precisely Rena's area of expertise.

During his stay in Málaga, Rena proved able to execute and implement the Alcaide's privileges in the fiscal sphere against the agents of the local tax system. In the winter of 1511 Rena had to buy 1,000 pigs to be converted into salted pork on behalf of the Alcaide, who needed to feed Oran's garrison for the whole winter.¹³² The extraordinary size of the operation drew the attention of the local tax farmer in charge of the salt tax. Alleging his right to collect tax on the salt, he tried to force Rena to pay taxes on the enormous amount of salt needed to preserve the meat.¹³³ Rena considered this a clear threat to one of the pillars of the Alcaide's privileged position in the region: his tax exemption. Unsurprisingly, his refusal to pay the salt tax ignited a dispute that eventually resulted in a formal complaint before the royal administration. This issue was finally resolved by a royal order condemning the tax farmer's attempt to undermine the Alcaide's privileges.¹³⁴ The anecdote shows how important it was to entrust logistical tasks to men like Rena, who were capable of detecting and dealing with challenges to the Alcaide's privileges. Nevertheless, what is really interesting is that, through his actions, Rena helped to implement the *asiento*'s tax exemption. In other words, Rena had a hand in establishing one of the key rules of this new jurisdictional space.

The Alcaide's power depended to a great extent on his capacity to reward the services of someone like Rena. The multiple rewards Rena received show that the contours of frontier politics were defined to a large extent by the protection the Alcaide offered to his close collaborators. The same sense of reciprocity that governed the relationship between the king and this nobleman applied to those between the Alcaide and the many merchants who supported his military enterprise.¹³⁵ The first and most important asset that the Alcaide offered Rena in exchange for his crucial services was protection.¹³⁶ In order to understand how important the Alcaide's protection was for Rena, it is necessary to look at the situation through his own eyes. The western Mediterranean was a hazardous place for someone like Rena for a variety of reasons, but especially because of his Venetian origins. From September 1507 to December 1508, Venetian state galleys were prohibited from trading in the region, but thanks to the Alcaide's protection, Rena was able to continue his trade operations without the threat of an attack by the Castilian

Navy.¹³⁷ Rena also avoided the attacks that fellow Venetian merchants in the Maghreb suffered at the hands of Castilian soldiers.¹³⁸ Beginning in 1509, when Ferdinand and the Catholic joined the League of Cambrai against Venice, the Alcaide's protection became even more important.¹³⁹ From that point onwards, the king forbade his subjects to trade with Venetians and allowed them to seize the latter's goods.¹⁴⁰ Rena escaped this treatment thanks to the Alcaide's protection.¹⁴¹ Rena was able to keep trading at a time when, in the words of the Venetian writer Girolamo Priuli, "these poor unfortunate Venetians were persecuted all around the world worse than the Jews."¹⁴² International rivalries obliged Rena to look for new political patrons, and the services he offered to the Alcaide granted him a safe place in the new frontier.

Rena's service to the Alcaide was an adaptation to the changing power dynamics in this part of the Mediterranean. After the conquest of Mers el-Kébir, the Venetians began to portend a new era in Mediterranean trade marked by the presence of the Spanish army in the Maghreb.¹⁴³ The Spanish not only controlled Mers el-Kébir (something crucial for commerce in the region); Venetians also considered the fall of Oran (one of their principal trading places in the Maghreb) as imminent. In fact, it was commonly assumed in Venice that in their next expedition the Spanish would conquer most of the Maghreb.¹⁴⁴ The Venetian diarist Marino Sanuto alludes to this when he refers to the rumors of a Spanish attack against Tunis, the most important city of the Maghreb. When he received the news of Oran's conquest, Sanuto noted that merchants from the Rialto feared that, after this new victory in Africa, Venetian interests would be the next target of the unstoppable Spanish army.¹⁴⁵ In sum, at a time of sinking prospects for Venetian commerce in the Maghreb, Rena was establishing a service relationship with the new powers in the region.

One of the unwritten rules of the new political space stated the importance of being close to the Alcaide, considering how influential he was in the commercial life of the frontier. Oran and Mers el-Kébir were an important hub for trade between the Mediterranean powers and the Maghreb.¹⁴⁶ Castilian rule over the strongholds in the Maghreb crippled the merchants trading there. The economic demands of the garrison frequently obliged the military authorities to seize merchants' money and goods. This happened, for instance, with a group of French merchants who lost 400,000 *maravedies* when the authorities "borrowed" it from them in order to pay the salaries of the Mers el-Kébir's garrison.¹⁴⁷ A later inquiry into the activities of the Alcaide revealed that his agents in Mers el-Kébir collected duties from the merchants who sought to trade with the Muslims. Important Genoese merchants such as Benito Negrone and the Venetian merchants of the state galleys were obliged to pay, but not Rena.¹⁴⁸ Rena did not suffer any abuse at the hands of any of the Alcaide's agents. He was fortunate to have such a good patron, but the French merchant Esteban de Andrea was not so lucky; in addition to paying the

new duties imposed by the Alcaide, he also lost his money and merchandise, notwithstanding his royal safe-conduct.¹⁴⁹ Rena did not suffer these kinds of damages; in fact, it was just the opposite: thanks to his relationship with the Alcaide, he obtained privileged access to local trade.

These informal norms worked in conjunction with the special provisions in the *asiento* to shape frontier economics. As we saw before, the Alcaide needed to obtain alternative sources of funding in order to maintain the two garrisons under his command, and trade was one of them. The preferential treatment stipulated by the *asiento* provided an excellent legal regime for conducting trade under the umbrella of its tax exemption.¹⁵⁰ The authorities seem to have been alert to the potential for abuse in the provisioning of the garrisons, and the ships transporting supplies to the strongholds were subjected to inspections, but their main purpose was to intercept forbidden products such as weapons or metals.¹⁵¹ Despite these controls, the merchants who supported the Alcaide by supplying the Maghrebi strongholds were able to profit from the privileges derived from the *asiento* while conducting their own business. This is confirmed by Rena's activities. In September 1510 he traveled to Seville, where he arranged the payment for the merchandise the Alcaide was shipping to the Maghreb through Oran.¹⁵² When he was working for the Alcaide on the logistics of maintaining Oran and Mers el-Kébir, Rena sent other merchandise along with the supplies needed to feed the garrisons, making use of the Alcaide's ships but also taking advantage of the tax exemption.¹⁵³ Just before a voyage to Mers el-Kébir the *almojarifes* (collectors of the customs duty on maritime trade) discovered Rena's scheme and proceeded to impose a tax on his merchandise. Rena paid the taxes, but since he loaded the merchandise "in the name of the Alcaide," the tax collectors were obliged to return the money when the king sent a royal order about the tax exemption.¹⁵⁴ Rena's ability to profit from the *asiento*'s jurisdiction increased when he started conducting business in association with the Alcaide. Their businesses attracted the attention of the *almojarifes*, who protested against the Alcaide's staff's attempts to avoid paying customs duties through irregular practices.¹⁵⁵ Once again, Rena's private accounts confirm these practices.¹⁵⁶ However, the real issue at stake was not the tax fraud but the transformation of the territory under the Alcaide's jurisdiction into an attractive space for trade.¹⁵⁷ Through their collaboration, the Alcaide and Rena were transforming an outpost like Oran into a vibrant bazaar, and that would be extremely significant for the shaping of the frontier politics.

The bazaar that the Alcaide and Rena were creating functioned according to its own rules, the most important of which was that access depended on the Alcaide's favor. Rena's privileged position is a clear example of this. In order to properly understand the extent to which Rena profited from his relationship with the Alcaide we can compare Rena's position in regional trade with that of other commercial actors

such as the brothers Agustín and Pantaleón Italian. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, these Genoese merchants enjoyed an advantageous position in Iberian trade thanks to the financial services they offered to the Catholic Monarchs, which provided them with commercial licenses to trade in the Maghreb.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, they improved their position by lending money to the Alcaide during the African campaigns. However, when his financial situation became precarious, they withdrew their funding from his military enterprise. In 1507 they refused to pay his bills of exchange, creating chaos in the garrisons' finances and enraging the Alcaide. The issue ended up in court, as both parties blamed each other for not respecting their previous agreements.¹⁵⁹ The Italian brothers' dispute with the Alcaide had a detrimental effect on their business in the Maghreb. In 1511 the Alcaide's tenant in Oran seized the merchandise that they had sent there, in violation of the royal monopoly on the African trade. They employed their influence at court to get a royal order to have the goods returned, but the Alcaide's tenant ignored the order.¹⁶⁰ The Italians may have enjoyed royal favor due to the financial services they offered to the Catholic Monarchs, but as their incident with the Alcaide's staff shows, the latter held the key to trade in the Maghreb. While the Italian brothers lost their privileged access to this commerce, Juan Rena was able to continue trading in Oran, thanks to his commercial activities in the service of the Alcaide. The lesson that we can extract here is that the Alcaide and the local tradesmen were giving form to a code in which the African market could only be accessed by merchants who had the Alcaide's approval.

The influence of the Alcaide and Rena on the configuration of the new political space between both shores of the Mediterranean becomes even more evident if we analyze how they were able to resist the Crown's plans regarding the African trade. In February 1510, King Ferdinand tried to centralize and monopolize trade with the Maghreb by creating a *casa de contratación* (house of trade) in Oran. After the creation of this institution, all merchants wanting to trade in the kingdom of Tlemcen were obliged to send their merchandise to Oran and, once there, to sell it to Alfonso Sánchez, the deputy of the king's treasurer.¹⁶¹ He and his agents were the only ones allowed to trade with Jews and Muslims from Tlemcen, which implied that there was a prohibition against direct trade between the Iberian Peninsula and Tlemcen. Furthermore, according to the legal provisions that governed the institution, the Alcaide, as captain general, had to help Sánchez to enforce the monopoly, principally by prosecuting merchants who conducted trade outside of the house of trade.¹⁶² Interestingly, the king wrote to the city of Málaga and to the Alcaide emphasizing this last point, but apparently these royal orders fell on deaf ears.¹⁶³

Obviously, the new monopoly threatened the Alcaide's interests and those of his associates like Rena. By the time of its implementation,

Rena and the Alcaide had a profitable partnership introducing massive amounts of merchandise into the African market via Oran.¹⁶⁴ An examination of Rena's private accounts shows that in November 1510 he sent to the Alcaide 1,200 shoes and almost 200 shirts (goods that could easily be sold to the soldiers), as well as luxury goods such as 25 pieces of *cordelates* from Flanders and 104 pieces of *floretes* from Córdoba.¹⁶⁵ The fact that Rena was trading this merchandise in Oran via the Alcaide is obvious, but what is even more obvious is that their commercial activities went against the new monopoly. By asking the Alcaide to protect Sánchez's interests, the Crown was entrusting the implementation of the new monopoly to its most dangerous enemy. The Alcaide not only enjoyed an enormous degree of autonomy in Oran, where he was the main authority, he also had the infrastructure and the contacts to conduct trade on a large scale, which could break the monopoly. This is evident from the fact that Rena introduced more than 4,000 pieces of *bordates* (a luxury textile highly valued in the Maghreb) into the African market via Oran.¹⁶⁶ Interestingly, Alfonso Sánchez, the beneficiary of this monopoly, had difficulty exploiting it, but while he sued and prosecuted merchants who conducted trade outside the monopoly, he did nothing against the Alcaide's businesses. Finally, in 1516, Sánchez abandoned the project because of its failure in imposing an effective monopoly over Oran's trade.¹⁶⁷ The enormous volume of trade that Rena and the Alcaide conducted in Oran outside the royal monopoly in 1510–11 shows the extent to which these two actors were able to supplant royal orders by their own interests.

However, we should not overemphasize the power of frontier actors to the point of thinking that the king played no role in the Alcaide's maneuvers to gain control over the frontier trade. In the spring of 1512, the Alcaide made a move to enhance his position as military entrepreneur by improving the commercial linkages of the militarized bazaar under his command. Having established effective control over the frontier trade between Oran and the Iberian Peninsula, he now wanted to send ships from Oran to different commercial hubs under Muslim rule like Tunis, Annaba, and Algiers. But for this he needed a commercial license from the king, which the latter granted. The text of the royal concession granting this privilege made reference to the Alcaide's aim to "open up commerce between the aforementioned city of Tunis and the city of Oran."¹⁶⁸ The license was quite generous and comprehended "any merchandise, or merchants, or persons, either Christians or Moors or Jews . . . from whatever kingdom."¹⁶⁹ More interesting, the royal privilege also included safe-conduct to "all the merchants, Moors and Jews, from whatever kingdom, neighborhoods or inhabitants of the city of Tunis or of whatever Moorish city to come to Oran to trade."¹⁷⁰ Clearly, the Alcaide was extending his protection and authority over non-Christian merchants. The full significance of the Alcaide's petition becomes clear when seen in the context

of the fluid jurisdictions of frontier trade, since it shows how actors on the ground first established favorable terms for their interests and only later relied on the Crown to legitimize their rights.

The generosity of the aforementioned royal license shows that the monarch supported the Alcaide's aims, which allows us to discard any conjecture that the king and the Alcaide competed for control over frontier trade. Unfortunately, the new direction of King Ferdinand's foreign policy prevents us from discovering what the effects of this measure were, as the Alcaide and Rena relocated to Navarre shortly after. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Alcaide aimed to improve the commercial prospects of the strongholds under his authority. In 1512, the Alcaide and Rena were ordered by the king to remove to Navarre. When the Alcaide left Navarre in 1515, he tried to take Rena with him, since the man was his personal link to the world of trade.¹⁷¹ However, the death of Ferdinand the Catholic and the resulting political crisis cut short their plans, as Rena was obliged to stay in Navarre. Because of this, we cannot know how the internal dynamics of the *asiento* functioned from then onward, but the little evidence that we do have indicates that the commercial activity continued. A report from 1516 denounced the Alcaide's agents for "sending the soldiers to Mostaganem and Mazagran to deal with traders and others to Habibas to collect orchil."¹⁷² The fact that trade was being conducted in the Alcaide's African domains, and that orchil (lichen used to produce a dyestuff highly valued in Italy) was involved, confirms that the Alcaide and his agents continued to make use of their privileged position and conduct international trade.¹⁷³

The Alcaide de los Donceles and the merchants like Rena orbiting around him were also constructing a frontier space in which the Alcaide could impose his will not only in military affairs but also in the commercial sphere. The result of their interaction was the progressive imposition of unwritten rules dictating that only merchants connected to the Alcaide's interests would have access to the frontier trade. As we saw before, he enjoyed a strong position vis-à-vis the merchants because he, as the captain general, held the key to African trade through Oran. The businessmen who collaborated with him in sustaining the *presidios* like Rena were able to keep trading there but they had to accept his terms. This was evident in the Alcaide's commercial partnership with Rena; though Rena was in charge of acquiring (on his credit) and transporting all the merchandise, he only earned 10% of the profits, while the rest went to the Alcaide. This unfair distribution of profits was dictated by the Alcaide to Rena's agent in Oran, Juan Bautista de Arborán, who advised Rena to accept the Alcaide's terms without too much haggling.¹⁷⁴ Rena could not have felt disappointed by the unfair distribution of the profits, since he had already helped to create a frontier politics where access to commercial privileges was closely tied to collaboration with the Alcaide. This, and Rena's influence on the frontier's commerce, was

underscored in a letter that the Genoese merchant Francisco Franco sent to him in 1515. Franco told Rena that the Genoese merchants were abandoning Oran, which would cripple the local economy because “among the businessmen living there, they had the best houses.” In order to solve the problem, Franco offered his services, asking to be nominated as collector of customs in Oran:

And to remedy that the marquis [the Alcaide], my lord, does not lose in customs it is necessary to place in charge of the rents a wise person who is loved by the Genoese. . . . And because this is something that would give me great honor, and the marquis great profit, and also because you know my ability and the desire that I have always had and continue to have for benefitting the marquis’s treasury. . . . I would be grateful if you would touch upon this with the marquis, and give him to understand the profit that he could obtain from it. Because if my relations and friends in Genoa know that I am in such a position, many of them will come with the hope that I could give them favorable trading terms as I would do, and as such the customs would yield a great profit, and that would stoke trade, which at the moment is nearly dead.¹⁷⁵

Franco’s offer was an attractive one. He proposed using his own social capital to improve the connections between Oran and one of the most important commercial centers in the Mediterranean: Genoa. But what is really interesting to us here is that he presented his plan by arguing that it would boost the Alcaide’s revenues. In the same letter he tried to show his commitment to the Alcaide by expressing his concerns about how the misconduct of the latter’s servants was damaging his treasury. In his next letter, Franco referred to his efforts to solve the problems of the Alcaide’s treasury while estimating that his offer would give the Alcaide 1 million *maravedies* per year.¹⁷⁶ The fact that Franco tried to obtain his appointment as a customs duties collector in Oran by presenting himself as a selfless servant of the Alcaide and underlining the economic benefits that would accrue to the Alcaide from this appointment illustrates that the commercial community of this region was well aware that winning the Alcaide’s favor was the safest way to access the African trade through Oran. Rena helped to shape a political space with its own rules. One of these rules (maybe the golden one) for traders like him or Francisco Franco was that their commercial activities needed to complement the Alcaide’s interests.

It is difficult to measure the success of their formula because both Rena and the Alcaide left the region, as I mentioned before. However, we know that their way of combining royal service, frontier defense, and commerce was imitated by others.¹⁷⁷ For instance, in 1523, Juan de Guzmán, an inhabitant of Málaga and one of Rena’s acquaintances, presented to

Rodrigo Ponce de León, the Duke of Arcos, a plan to capture Castil de Pescadores, a coastal town near Vélez de la Gomera.¹⁷⁸ In an earlier version of the plan, Guzmán mentioned that by taking and holding this enclave the duke would earn not only honor but also a great deal of money.¹⁷⁹ The parallel with Oran's model is even more evident in Guzmán's later version. This time, Guzmán mentioned that the customs duties would allow the duke to maintain a garrison while making a profit for himself. Moreover, Guzmán suggested to the duke that in time Castil de Pescadores could possibly compete with Oran as a hub of Afro-Mediterranean trade by adopting the commercial status and regulations of the latter city.¹⁸⁰ The duke rejected Guzmán's offer, but it shows that the formula advanced by the Alcaide de los Donceles and Rena was seen as a successful one. As a result, their method began to circulate beyond the political frontier that they had shaped. Obviously, this was never their intention, but the Alcaide and Rena had provided an example for others in similar frontier situations. Needless to say, they were not the inventors of this political formula: the granting of privileges in exchange for military services is a venerable strategy. Nevertheless, Rena and the Alcaide adapted it to their ends and to the frontier context. This adaption helped to keep the system alive and gave it the strength to deal with the new challenge of defending the empire's frontiers. And they set a clear precedent: more than a century later, the governors of Oran continued to combine military and political service with the same commercial activities as a means to ensure Spanish rule over the Maghrebi strongholds. Even more important, they justified this by citing the traditions going back to the early sixteenth century.¹⁸¹ As we can see, the Alcaide's and Rena's activities established some of the key practices of the political culture of this frontier.

Conclusions

In 1512, Juan Rena left Málaga to join the Alcaide de los Donceles in Navarre, where he was serving the king in the conquest of this kingdom. He left behind a region that had very little in common with the one he had found when he arrived years before. At the beginning of the century, the Mediterranean Sea had been the clear limit of Spain's dominions. Now they stretched beyond this natural boundary to include the stronghold of Mers el-Kébir and the city of Oran. The incorporation of these overseas territories had far-reaching consequences for the politics of southern Iberia and the sea routes connecting the two regions. Through his deft navigation of the power struggles among the nobility, the practicalities of military logistics, and the jurisdictional pluralism of the *asiento* system, Juan Rena had had an active role in shaping this frontier.

The alliance between the Alcaide de los Donceles and King Ferdinand the Catholic was the foundation for the Alcaide's political influence in the

region. His commitment to serve the king in defending the new imperial frontier involved a huge logistical challenge. And it was this challenge that constituted the occasion for his relationship with Juan Rena. By exploiting the possibilities that the jurisdictional pluralism of the *asiento* offered, they worked hand in hand both to preserve military control of the Maghrebi strongholds and to advance their own agendas. The resulting commercial activity across the frontier is clear proof not only of the overwhelming power of the Alcaide in the region but also of how the need to protect the frontier made room for the emergence of a political scene with its own rules and power relationships. The complex configuration of this liminal political space shows how it was closely connected to royal and noble politics, the competition for local power, the shifting geopolitics of the Mediterranean world, and the practical challenges of frontier defense. Last but not least, this political space proved to be vibrant and flexible enough to allow for the active participation in its making of someone like Rena. His activities in the service of the Alcaide were just a contribution to a multifaceted process: the shaping of the political culture of this frontier region. However, they also provided him with invaluable experience in frontier politics. Undoubtedly, this experience was more than useful in his next destination, Navarre, a kingdom that he helped to transform into one of the most stable military frontiers of the Spanish Empire.

Notes

1. AGN, CO_PS, Leg. 23, no. 23, fol. 9.
2. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*.
3. Moral, *El virrey don Pedro de Toledo*; Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI*, 384–435; and Jiménez Estrella, *Poder, ejército y gobierno*. On the Dukes of Medina Sidonia and the General Captaincy of the Ocean Sea, see Salas Almela, *Colaboración y conflicto* and *Medina Sidonia*.
4. On the role of the nobility in the state building process, see Reinhard, “Élites du pouvoir.” Some scholars also assert that the aristocracy, and not the Crown, was the main force behind the construction of the state in some cases. Wheeler, “The Noble Enterprise of State Building.” On the aristocratic ethic of service to the Crown, see Contamine, “Noblesse et service”; Smith, *The Culture of Merit*, 93–123; and Monteiro, “O ‘ethos’ da aristocracia portuguesa sob a dinastia de Bragança.”
5. Bertrand and Planas, “Introduction”; and Merluzzi and Sabatini, “Introduction,” 16–18.
6. Avilez Rocha, “Plunder and Profit in the Name of Protection.” For a general discussion of protection, see Benton and Ford, *Rage for Order*, 85–116.
7. Alonso Acero, *Orán-Mazalquivir*; and Bunes Ibarra, “Orán, primera frontera Hispano-Turca del Mediterráneo.”
8. A recent re-assessment of Ferdinand the Catholic’s policy without Isabella can be found in Abulafia, “Ferdinand the Catholic.” For an updated synthesis of the final years of his reign, see Ladero Quesada, *Los últimos años de Fernando el Católico*.

9. Braudel, "Les Espagnols et l'Afrique du nord"; and Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*.
10. Thompson, *War and Government*, 5; and Letter from Ferdinand the Catholic to Hernando de Zafra. Zaragoza, July 18, 1498. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 84.
11. Letter from Pedro Navarro to Ferdinand the Catholic. Bougie, May 5, 1510; and Letter from Pedro Navarro to Cardinal Cisneros. Pantalleria, December 21 [. . .]. BRAH, SyC, A-10, fol. 27 and 2/Ms. Caj. 7, no. 43.
12. Letter from Juan del Río to Royal Secretary Calçena. Cartagena, September 1, 1516. BRAH, SyC, A-16, fol. 179.
13. Alonso Acero, *Cisneros y la conquista española*, 135.
14. For a recent and complete portrait of the Alcaide, see Liang, *Family and Empire*, 55–79. On his lineage, see Quintanilla Raso, *Nobleza y señorío en el reino de Córdoba*, 166–72. On the Comares marquisate, see Núñez-Hidalgo, "El Marquesado de Comares."
15. AGS, RGS, Leg. 148311, nos. 2–4; and AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 20, no. 20.
16. BNE, Res, 226/138; and AGS, RGS, 150010, no. 407.
17. AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 37, no. 12.
18. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Hernando de Zafra. Granada, July 9, 1505. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 187.
19. Edwards, "La Révolte du Marquis de Priego à Cordoue en 1508."
20. Yun Casalilla, *Crisis de subsistencias*, 196, 203, 205. Liang shares Yun's view in his recent study on the Fernández de Córdoba. Liang, *Family and Empire*, 70–77.
21. Edwards, *Christian Córdoba*, 160.
22. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Ferdinand the Catholic. March 24, 1508. BNE, MS 20.209/11-2.
23. The crisis precipitated by the absence of a real and clear monarchical authority has been analyzed in Aram, *Juana the Mad*; and Fleming, *Juana I*, 81–173. On the cultural conflict behind this crisis, see Aram, "Voyages from Burgundy to Castile." The factions struggle around the royal court has been studied in Martínez Millán, "De la muerte" and "La evolución de la corte castellana."
24. "De lo que sucedió en España en cosas particulares desde la venida de Rey Felipe 1º hasta su muerte," BNE, MS 13.127, fols. 190–91, 193, 195.
25. On his brief regin, see Calderón Ortega, *Felipe el hermoso*. And taking a broader perspective, Cauchies, "Un príncipe para los Países Bajos."
26. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Ferdinand the Catholic. Burgos, October 10, 1506. BRAH, SyC, A-12, fols. 77–78. On this political faction in conflict at court, see Martínez Millán, "De la muerte," 50–59, 63–72.
27. "Que ha sido siempre y es verdadero y fidelísimo servidor de Vuestra Alteza . . . y que uno de aquellos en que verdaderamente quedó la fe fue el, y que cuando yo fui llamado de Toro a la corte sobre lo que no es para en carta el me iba y me acompañaba sin empacho, lo que otros no hacían." Letter from Fray Diego Deza to Ferdinand the Catholic. Seville, January 11, 1507. BRAH, SyC, A-12, fols. 116–18.
28. On the aristocratic anarchy in Andalusia during the fifteenth century, see Ladero Quesada, *Andalucía en el siglo XV*, 98, 129–48.
29. Yun Casalilla, *Crisis de subsistencias*, 221–24. The correspondence of the Count of Tendilla points in the same direction. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the duchess of Cadiz. Granada, November 18, 1508; and Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Ferdinand the Catholic. Antequera, December 15, 1508. BNE, MS 10.230, fols. 35–36, 38–39. See also Cepeda Adán,

- "Andalucía en 1508"; and Szmolka Clares, "Nobleza y autoritarismo en Andalucía."
30. "El rey, Nuestro Señor, es la más noble criatura que hay en el mundo y . . . quiere siempre muy bien a los suyos y a gana de sostenerlos en sus cargos y guardarles la cara en todo, y mucho mejor si bien le sirven. Vuestra Merced . . . que con el rey hecha tenéis la cama." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Alcaide de los Donceles. Madrid, June 17, 1510. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 171. On the Count of Tendilla and his role in the political life of this period, see Nader, *The Mendoza Family*, 150–79.
 31. The first offer was presented by the Marquis of los Vélez. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to Íñigo Manrique. Granada, June 22, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 97.
 32. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Alcaide de los Donceles. Granada, July 2, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 99. The rumors from the court about this issue appeared also in the correspondence of the captain general of Granada with the Duke of Alburquerque and with the Marquis of Cenete. Granada, July 6 and 12, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fols. 100, 104.
 33. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Alcaide de los Donceles. Granada, July 30, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 116.
 34. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150610, no. 966.
 35. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150812, no. 544.
 36. AMC, Fondo Histórico del Concejo, Leg. 177, no. 4. An accurate reconstruction of Córdoba's rural landscape and its economic exploitation can be found in López Rider, "The Vegetal Landscape of the Southwest of Córdoba."
 37. Quintanilla Raso, "El dominio de las ciudades por la nobleza."
 38. AMC, Fondo Histórico del Concejo, Leg. 1297, no. 6.
 39. BRAH, SyC, A-12, fol. 91 and ff. Some of the Alcaide's achievements in Africa attracted the attention of authors beyond the boundaries of Castile. BA, 50-X-21, fols. 120–22. His career as a soldier in the fight against the Muslims and his role as conqueror and protector of the African *presidios* were also celebrated by local historiographers in the following century. BNE, MS 3.269, T. I, fols. 410–12. The most-prominent example is chronicle written by the Count of Alcaudete, who inherited the Alcaide's post as governor of Oran. Martínez Góngora, "Between a Frontier Hero and Scipio Africanus."
 40. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150804, no. 93 and Leg. 151002, no. 84. On the benefits that this position brought with it, see the recent in-depth study by Jiménez Estrella, "Linajes y alcaides en el Reino de Granada."
 41. "Acatando los muchos e buenos e leales servicios que vos Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba, alcaide de los Donceles e mi capitán general del reino de Tremecén me habéis hecho e hacéis cada día especialmente en la guerra que yo mando hacer a los moros de África enemigos de nuestra santa fe católica e en todas las otras guerras de moros que ha habido en estos mis reinos e porque recibáis alguna remuneración en aquello que habéis servido e servís." AGS, RGS, Leg. 151206, no. 62.
 42. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151206, no. 62, fols. 62, 66; AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 37, nos. 13, 14.
 43. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151209, no. 510.
 44. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151212, no. 457; and AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 37, no. 15.
 45. In the whole Spanish Empire only a grandee, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, enjoyed a similar privilege. Salas Almela, *Colaboración y conflicto*, 26, 29–32.
 46. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151212, no. 458. Comares was a key part of the Alcaide's seigniorial domains. AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 13.

47. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151209, nos. 1, 60 and Leg. 151212, no. 458.
48. I will come back to the Alcaide's activity as viceroy of Navarre in Chapter 3.
49. "Acatando con cuanto trabajo de vuestra persona e perdida de vuestros parientes y criados . . . es mi merced e voluntad que seáis mi alcaide e tenedor de la dicha villa y fortaleza de Mazalquivir." AGS, RGS, Leg. 150804, no. 93.
50. AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 43, no. 53.
51. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 81–84, 104. See also Molina Recio, "Redes clientelares, redes económicas."
52. "Con todos sus deudos y criados en especial los que pueden servir más allá que no acá." AGS, Camara de Castilla, Leg. 129, no. 103.
53. AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 43, no. 52.
54. Yun Casalilla, *La gestión del poder*, 13–23.
55. The payroll of the troops deployed in Oran in 1510 in AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, s.f. The Alcaide also employed troops from the royal army to fill out the garrison. AGS, Contaduría Mayor del Sueldo, 1ª serie, Leg. 71-1, s.f. Shortly after the Alcaide's appointment as governor of Oran, the Tendilla advised him that, in order to keep his troops in line, he needed to be an effective military patron. Letter from the Tendilla to the Alcaide de los Donceles. Madrid, June 17, 1510. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 171.
56. Parrott, *The Business of War*, 152–56, 162–65.
57. Letter from Gonzalo de Ayora to Ferdinand the Catholic. Mers el-Kébir, September 18, 1505. BRAH, 2/Ms. Caj. 5, no. 14. The additional payments in AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 187, fol. 15. Similar examples can be found in the records of the military administration. See, for instance, AGS, Contaduría Mayor del Sueldo, 1ª serie, Leg. 70, fols. 146–49.
58. "Que algunos soldados, porque no les guardan la fe que les dieron en la paga, no han guardado la que tomaron en la pila, y son idos a probar si Mahomad paga lo que Cristo debe, que aquellos darán avisos, y aún camino a alguna mala hazaña." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Archbishop of Seville. Granada, September 20, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 144. On the desertion of Spanish soldiers deployed in Oran, see Fé Cantó, "El fenómeno de la desertión."
59. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Marquis of Denia. Granada, August 5, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 120.
60. "Honrada cosa es aquel cargo [Orán] si está siempre el mundo sosegado, más si se revolviere, quien puede sostener costa de cerca de 30 cuentos [de maravedies], y en lugar que le pueden quitar la provision por la mar." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Marquis of Cenete. Granada, July 12, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 104.
61. "Que yo por recia cosa he que un caballero, aunque tenga estado, tome a sostener costa que ha menester veintiseis cuentos [de maravedies] de paga, que si un año le yerra es perdido y deshonorado, pues monta que esta gente noble de soldados no están inosados en amotinarse si no les pagan." Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Marquis of Cenete. Granada, August 10, 1509. BNE, MS 10.230, fol. 121.
62. The poor conditions in these *presidios* have been described in Bunes Ibarra, "La vida en los presidios del Norte de África." A mutiny in the African *presidios* has been studied in Martínez, "The Spell of National Identity." See also the classic article Parker, "Mutiny and Discontent in the Spanish Army."
63. In order to pay for the military defense of Granada, Tendilla ate up almost all of his own estate. Nader, "Noble Income in Sixteenth Century Castile."
64. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, fol. 1.

65. He was not the only one. The Duke of Medina Sidonia faced similar problems in providing for Melilla. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150408, no. 88.
66. Carretero Zamora, "Los servicios de Cortes" and "Los arrendadores de la hacienda de Castilla."
67. AGS, Contaduría Mayor del Suelo, 1ª Serie, Leg. 70, fol. 206. Further information on the activity of this important tax collector in Ortega Cera, "Arrendar el dinero del rey."
68. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150805, no. 397.
69. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150805, no. 460.
70. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150805, no. 462; and RGS, Leg. 150811, nos. 450, 613. Later, in the trial against the tax farmers in Jaen, things also became quite complicated. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151005, no. 378. As the issue became increasingly complex, the Alcaide's judicial maneuvering reached León, in northern Castile, following the flight of the fugitive tax collectors. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150811, no. 243.
71. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150810, no. 517 and Leg. 150811, no. 680.
72. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151001, no. 710.
73. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150805, no. 461.
74. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150703, no. 270.
75. AGS, Contaduría de Mercedes, Tenencias de Fortalezas, Leg. 3, no. 3.
76. Liang, *Family and Empire*, 55–60.
77. Thompson, *War and Government*, 146–59.
78. On the connections between war entrepreneurs and private financiers, see Parrott, *The Business of War*, 229–32.
79. Alonso Acero, *Cisneros y la conquista española*, 160–62; AGS, RGS, Leg. 151006, nos. 65, 90, 96; and AHN-SN, Frías, C. 363, D. 7–8. Letter from Hernando de Zafra to Ferdinand the Catholic [Málaga, May 10, 1506]. AGS, GyM, Leg. 1315, no. 182. Zafra's debts to fund the garrison reached upwards of 500,000 *maravedies*. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, fol. 19. Financing wars with loans from the nobility and churchmen was something that the Spanish monarchs were used to doing. Ladero Quesada, "Ejército, logística y financiación."
80. Letter from the Count of Tendilla to the Alcaide de los Donceles. Granada, August 21, 1505. AHN-SN, Osuna, C. 3406, D. 1, fol. 226.
81. King Ferdinand the Catholic ordered the Alcaide to be paid, but the latter's son was still seeking reimbursement in 1526. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Lib. 71, fol. 347.
82. AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 14, no. 5.
83. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 254–55. In a later period many other noblemen were obliged to rely on loans from professional bankers, especially Italian financiers, as a result of their new obligations as royal servants. Yun Casalilla, *La gestión del poder*, 112.
84. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151001, no. 711, and Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, fol. 133.
85. Sanz Ayán, "La presencia del capitalismo cosmopolita."
86. Edwards, "Oligarchy and Merchant Capitalism." 21–26.
87. AGS, RGS, 150610, no. 296; and Edwards, "Oligarchy and Merchant Capitalism," 30.
88. "Personas de confianza e de hacienda." AGS, Contaduría Mayor del Suelo, 1ª Serie, Leg. 74, s.f.
89. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-2, fols. 2, 20.
90. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-2, fols. 3, 7.
91. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-2, fols. 19, 20, 25.

92. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-2, fol. 9.
93. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, s.f.
94. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Lib. 14, no. 33.
95. Supplying the *presidios* was always a difficult task. Rosenberger, "O pão, preocupação constante." On the specific case of Oran, see Alonso Acero, "Trenes de avituallamiento en las plazas españolas de Berbería"; and Lomas Cortés, "Las galeras en el aprovisionamiento marítimo de Orán-Mazalquivir."
96. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, fol. 20. These kinds of practices were quite common during the African campaigns. Several examples in AGS, Contaduría Mayor del Suelo, 1ª Serie, Leg. 70.
97. Ricard, "Les facteurs portugais d'Andalusie."
98. Bernáldez, *Historia de los Reyes Católicos*, 291-99.
99. Yun Casalilla, *Crisis de subsistencias*, 63-79, 103-13. To the best of my knowledge, a study on the effects of the crisis on el Puerto de Santa María is lacking, but there is a brief study, following Yun's analysis and pointing in the same direction, on Jerez de la Frontera, a neighboring town. Martín Gutiérrez, "La crisis de 1503-1507 en Andalucía."
100. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 187, fol. 67.
101. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, s.f.
102. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, 330, s.f.
103. Cruces Blanco, "La ciudad de Málaga, base militar." The English reader can consult the brief synthesis on Málaga as a frontier city in Tedoldi, "The Sea as a Frontier."
104. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 2-2.
105. AHPM, Protocolos, 9111, fol. 411.
106. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-2, fol. 11 and Caj. 88, no. 4-2.
107. Letter from Diego Fernández de Córdoba to Juan Rena. Oran, August 21, 1511. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 3-3.
108. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 4-3. In one of the lists of payments, Rena refers to the lack of money in a very explicit way. According to him, it was impossible to carry out these tasks in a different way because there was not a "blanca" (a coin of very little value) in the Alcaide's coffers. The captain general had to resort to private loans to supply the periodic shortages of money to maintain the garrisons. Gutiérrez Cruz, *Los presidios españoles*, 254-55.
109. On jurisdictional pluralism, see Hespanha, *As vésperas do Leviathan*; Schaub, *Le Portugal au temps du Comte-Duc d'Olivares*; and Cardim, "La jurisdicción real."
110. Benton, "Making Order Out of Trouble." See also Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures*, 80-126; and Díaz Ceballos, "Las comunidades urbanas de la Monarquía Hispánica," 85-126 and "New World Civitas."
111. Roughly speaking, the captain general of Granada ruled over the territory of the former kingdom of Granada, to the east of the Strait of Gibraltar, while the general captaincy of the Andalusian coasts and the Ocean Sea covered all the coasts (and nearby waters) from the strait westwards, as well as the Moroccan *presidios*. Later on, the latter even incorporated the Portuguese Algarve. Jiménez Estrella, *Poder, ejército y gobierno*; and Salas Almela, "Un cargo para el duque de Medina Sidonia" and "O Algarve tutelado."
112. AGA, Medinaceli, Comares, Leg. 6, no. 4. On Lucena, see Molina Recio, "El señorío de Lucena."
113. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Juan Rena. Cartagena, October 29, 1511. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 3-2.
114. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Juan Rena. Burgos, December 20, 1511. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 33.

115. AGS, Contaduría del Suelo, Leg. 160, s.f.
116. Carretero Zamora, *Gobernar es gastar*, 111, 123, 216.
117. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Lib. 7, no. 129-1.
118. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150611, no. 452.
119. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, fol. 1, and Contaduría de Mercedes, Tenencias de Fortalezas, Leg. 3, no. 3.
120. On similar conflicts, see Casals, "Frontera, guerra, jurisdicció i plet"; and Jiménez Estrella, "Mondéjar Versus los Vélez." The Alcaide's rising influence in the region was a direct threat for Malaga. The city and the nobleman competed for jurisdiction over Sedella and Comares, which the king granted to the Alcaide as payment for his services, and which were previously under the jurisdiction of Málaga. AMM, Provisiones, Lib. 4, fols. 66-67, 113; Lib. 67, fols. 237-38.
121. On the local politics around the jurisdictional plurality of ports, see Avilez Rocha, "Politics of the Hinterland."
122. This was especially important regarding the restrictive regulation on the grain trade. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150611, nos. 297, 298 and Leg. 150806, no. 263. The same can be said about land and maritime transportation. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150610, no. 785 and Leg. 150806, no. 494.
123. AMM, Provisiones, 65, fols. 104-6, 162.
124. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151103, no. 567. On these disputes, see Coleman, "Of Corsairs, Converts and Renegades."
125. AGN, APFR, Caj. 88, no. 2-2.
126. Caracausi, "Formazione mercantile, conoscenza del diritto e idiomi politici."
127. AHPM, Protocolos Notariales, Leg. 13, fols. 279v-280r.
128. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 200, fol. 1, and Contaduría de Mercedes, Tenencias de Fortalezas, Leg. 3, no. 3.
129. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150702, no. 320.
130. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150703, no. 270.
131. The Alcaide was still facing this kind of problem in 1512. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151208, no. 333.
132. Letter from Juan Bautista de Arborán a Juan Rena. Oran, November 16, 1511. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 7-3.
133. The local tax on salt already created tensions among different social groups in the city. In particular, the exemption from it for certain privileged groups was considered a clear grievance against the interests and status of those who were not exempted. Municipal Deliberation of 16th July 1509. AMM, Actas Capitulares, Book 3, fol. 59.
134. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151203, no. 228.
135. This is expressed in a letter from Andrea Paravesyn to Juan Rena about their businesses and activity on the Alcaide's behalf. Letter from Andrea Paravesyn to Juan Rena. Valladolid, September 3, 1513. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 5-1, fol. 3.
136. On the need for protection in early modern trade, see the classic works by Lane, "Oceanic Expansion" and "The Economic Consequences of Organized Violence."
137. Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 7:180, 197, 237, 618-19, 621, 640, 671, 681. The more recent and complete study on Venetian state galleys is Judde de Larivière, *Naviguer, commercer, gouverner*. On the Venetian trade in the Maghreb, see Doumerc, *Venise et la Barbarie*.
138. Letter from Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba to Ferdinand the Catholic. Medina del Campo, June 11, 1512. BRAH, SyC, A-14, fol. 13.

139. Gilbert, "Venice in the Crisis of the League of Cambrai." See also Finlay, "Crisis and Crusade in the Mediterranean."
140. BRAH, Mss. 9/629, fols. 271–72.
141. Rena's privileged position under the Alcaide's protection deeply contrasted with the royal order that prohibited Venetian trade in the whole region. Priuli, *I diarii di Girolamo Priulii*, 4:115.
142. "Et questi poveri et sventurati Venetiani heranno perseguitati per tuto il mondo pegio che iudei." Priuli, *I diarii di Girolamo Priulii*, 4:374.
143. On the impact of the Spanish conquest on the Venetian trade in the Maghreb, see Doumerc, "Vénetiens et espagnols en Afrique du nord." However, Venetian traders were generally highly skilled at establishing close (and profitable) ties to the authorities in the territories where they carried out their business. Apellániz Ruiz de Galarreta, *Pouvoir et finance en Méditerranée pré-moderne*, 159–60, 221–24, 244–46; Faugeron, "The Venetian 'Nation' in Sicily."
144. Priuli, *I diarii di Girolamo*, 2:400, 392.
145. Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 7:180, 401.
146. A brief overview, mainly focused on the eighteenth century, can be found in Martín Corrales, "Orán."
147. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época. Leg. 187, s.f. Apparently, these practices were frequent in the Spanish *presidios*. BRAH, SyC, A-8, fols. 168–69.
148. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 187, fol. 74.
149. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150611, no. 220 and Leg. 150612, no. 137.
150. The use of these kinds of favors by noblemen to attract merchants was frequent. See Salas Almela, "Poder señorial, espacio fiscal y comercio."
151. AGS, RGS, Leg. 150704, no. 92. López de Coca Castañer, "Relaciones mercantiles," 305–6; and López Beltrán, "Corso y piratería," 384–85.
152. AHPS, Protocolos, 9111, fol. 382.
153. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 2, fol. 32.
154. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 2, fol. 34. On these customs duties and the agents who collected them, see Ladero Quesada, "Almojarifazgo sevillano"; and González Arce, "Las rentas del almojarifazgo de Sevilla."
155. This time the Crown ordered an inquiry to shed light on the issue. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151007, no. 297 and Leg. 151010, no. 235.
156. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 3-1. I will come back to this issue later.
157. A similar example can be found in Salas Almela, "Los antepuertos de Sevilla."
158. BRAH, MS 9/629, fol. 54. Their mercantile activities as well as their rise and decline in the service of the Catholic Monarchs have been studied in López de Coca Castañer, "Genoveses en la corte de los Reyes Católicos."
159. ARChGr, Pleitos, Caj. 1312, expediente 1. The trial lasted until 1512 and was matter of discussion in different royal institutions. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Lib. 25, no. 355; and AGS, RGS, Leg. 151209, no. 423 and Leg. 151210, no. 128.
160. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151110, no. 534 and Leg. 151112, no. 307. Their situation was exacerbated when the Crown got word of Agustín Italian's travels to the Maghreb in violation of the royal monopoly. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151110, no. 430.
161. Díaz Borrás, "La casa de contratación."
162. Díaz Borrás, "La casa de contratación," 23; and López de Coca Castañer, "Relaciones mercantiles," 304–5.
163. AGS, RGS, Leg. 151002, no. 168; and AMM, Provisiones, 65, fols. 189–90.

164. Many noblemen tried to fix their incomes to their expenses derived from royal service through commercial activities. Yun Casalilla, *La gestión del poder*, 18–20, 23.
165. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105-4.
166. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 3-1. The commercialization of this product was so profitable that the most important members of the Genoese community fought, unsuccessfully, to control it. López de Coca Castañer, "Genoveses en la corte de los Reyes Católicos," 478.
167. Díaz Borrás, "La casa de contratación," 25–28.
168. "Porque el trato de la mercadería de la dicha ciudad de Túnez y ciudad de Orán se comuniquen." AGS, RGS, Leg. 151206, no. 649.
169. "Cualesquier mercaderías e mercaderes e otras personas, cristianos o moros o judíos . . . de cualesquier reinos que sean." AGS, RGS, Leg. 151206, no. 649.
170. "A todos los mercaderes moros e judíos de cualesquier reinos que sean vecinos e moradores de la dicha ciudad de Túnez e de otras cualesquier ciudades de moros." AGS, RGS, Leg. 151206, no. 649.
171. Letter from the Alcaide de los Donceles to Juan Rena. Plasencia, December 4, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, nos. 2–4.
172. "Envían los soldados a Mostaganem y a Mazagran a tratar en sus mercaderías y a otros al Habibas a coger orchilla." AGS, Estado, Leg. 461, no. 9. The Habibas ("beloved" in Arabic) Islands are a small volcanic archipelago located about 12 kilometers from Oran.
173. Orchil was a highly valued product, as we can see from the clash between Genoese and Florentine merchants and Spanish political figures over its exportation from the Canary Islands. Fernández-Armesto, *The Canary Islands After the Conquest*, 70–74, 166–69. On the Genoese demand for this product, see Gómez Galtier, "El genovés Francisco Lerca."
174. Letter from Juan Bautista de Arborán to Juan Rena. Oran, November 16, 1511. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 7-3.
175. "E porque para remediar que el marqués, mi señor, no perdiese en los derechos es menester que a esas rentas esté persona que sea muy hábil e a quien los genoveses tengan amor. E porque es cosa a donde a mi se seguiría mucha honra e al marqués harto provecho, e también porque conoce el habilidad mía e deseo que he siempre he tenido y tengo de servir e aprovechar a su hacienda mucho quisiera ir allá a ese cargo . . . merced recibiré que platicando con el marqués mi señor le toque en alguna manera sobre ello dándole a entender el provecho que de ello se le seguiría porque sabiendo en Génova mis parientes y amigos que estoy a ese cargo, muchos acudirían con esperanza que yo hubiese de hacerles cortesía en el fuero de sus ropas como lo haría. E a los derechos se seguiría mucho provecho e se avivaría la negociación, la cual está casi muerta." Letter from Francisco Franco to Juan Rena. Málaga, June 18, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, no. 5-1.
176. Letter from Francisco Franco to Juan Rena. Málaga, June 26, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, no. 5-3.
177. The parallels with the strategy adopted by the Duke of Medina Sidonia to maintain and exploit the African *presidios* under his command in the seventeenth century are astonishing. Salas Almela, *Colaboración y conflicto*, 214–20 and *El poder de la aristocracia*, 274–89.
178. AHN-SN, Osuna, Caj. 1635, no. 68. His relationship with Rena began at least as early as 1511. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 2, fol. 1.
179. AHN-SN, Osuna, Caj. 1635, no. 72.
180. AHN-SN, Osuna, Caj. 1635, no. 76.
181. Alonso Acero, "Tratos y contratos en la frontera de Berbería."

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3 Political Incorporation From Below

Juan Rena and the Integration of Navarre Into the Spanish Empire

Introduction

In the summer of 1512, Ferdinand the Catholic's troops, under the command of the Duke of Alba, conquered the kingdom of Navarre. The initial invasion was relatively easy. Pamplona (the capital city) surrendered without resistance within six days of the invasion, but the situation soon deteriorated. The successful conquest was challenged by a counterattack led by the Navarrese monarchs and the French army in the autumn of the same year, and if the Duke of Alba had not mounted an effective defense of Pamplona, the Castilian authorities would have quickly lost control of Navarre. Four years later, during the dynastic crisis that followed the death of Ferdinand the Catholic, the Navarrese king, Juan of Albret, bolstered by a group of Navarrese nobles, made another attempt to recover his kingdom, but this push also ended in failure. In 1521, the French king had better luck. With the crisis of the Revolt of the Comuneros as a backdrop, a French offensive actively supported by many Navarrese notables conquered the kingdom. The imperial army of Charles V quickly recovered most of these lands, but it was not until 1524 that the border was pushed back to its 1512 position, due to the fierce resistance of a group of Navarrese rebels who controlled the key strongholds of Maya and Fuenterrabía with the help of the French army.¹ All of these events underline the difficulty of incorporating a conquered kingdom into an empire. The fact that, for years, Navarre became one of the main theaters where the Spanish and the French kings fought for European hegemony, as well as Navarre's privileged position between France, Castile, and Aragon, made it a frontier kingdom. Even more important for us here, Rena served the Crown in this frontier kingdom for years. He stayed in Navarre from his arrival in Pamplona just after the conquest in the summer of 1512 until 1525, when Charles V summoned him to court. Even after leaving the kingdom, Rena continued to have a close connection with Navarre, and he influenced Navarrese politics right up to the end of his life. His time in Navarre coincided with the major challenge of incorporating this

kingdom into the Spanish Empire. Hence, in this chapter, I will examine the role that he played in this process.

One of the key challenges that the Spanish authorities faced during the early decades of the sixteenth century was the incorporation of the various autonomous political kingdoms (Granada, Navarre, Naples, etc.) that were conquered by military force. In each of these cases, conquest was followed by a much more complex period of political integration.² Conquering territory proved easier than assimilating it and securing its permanence within the empire.³ Internecine divisions had facilitated the conquests, but they made governing the new kingdoms more difficult. In the case of a frontier kingdom like Navarre there was an added difficulty: the proximity of the Spanish king's archenemy, the French king and his powerful army.⁴ Beyond the need to ensure an effective military defense of the new territory, the real challenge was to gain the local community's support after the conquest. In Navarre, success in both of these tasks depended on two important factors. The first was the place that the conquered entity occupied in the empire, and the second, the re-construction of the community's internal cohesion after the war and conquest.⁵ As an agent of the king, Rena played a meaningful role in this complex process. By following Rena's experiences in Navarre we can gain a better sense of the delicate and complicated task the king's agents had in integrating new Spanish territories into the empire.

Historians of early modern state-building have pointed out the importance of these agents in the process of conquest and assimilation of frontier territories, but they have always restricted their analysis to the role that such men played in the distribution of royal patronage among the local elites.⁶ This is because these authors share a top-down perspective of the processes of political incorporation centered on the Crown. Despite the obvious value of such an approach, it tells us very little about how the processes of political incorporation worked on the ground. This is precisely what I aim to achieve in this chapter by analyzing the incorporation of Navarre from Rena's vantage point. During the 13 years he spent in this frontier kingdom, Rena acted as a perfect agent on behalf of the Crown, and as such he became a key figure in Navarrese politics. However, as we will see, Rena's contribution to the incorporation of Navarre went beyond his role implementing the orders from the imperial court. He also helped to define the privileged position of this frontier kingdom in the network of polities making up the Spanish empire, and also in the reshaping of Navarrese society after its conquest. In so doing, he contributed to the work of incorporating this frontier kingdom from below.

Making Oneself Indispensable in a Frontier Kingdom

It is impossible to fully understand the role that Juan Rena played in merging this new political community into the Spanish Empire if we do

not first explain how he was able to accomplish the tasks he was given. Moreover, by examining how Rena interacted with the conquered community we can gain a better understanding of how Navarrese society was assimilated. Thus, in the following pages I will describe how Rena became a key player in the defensive system of Navarre, as well as one of the leading actors in the political incorporation of this frontier kingdom into the Spanish Empire.⁷ Rena reached Navarre at the end of the summer of 1512, just a few weeks after the kingdom had been conquered by Ferdinand the Catholic. He arrived in Pamplona as a humble bureaucrat in the military administration and was appointed to oversee the transport of the money that was used to pay the Castilian troops deployed there. Though he started as a lower-rank bureaucrat, he became one of the most prominent figures in Navarrese political life after the conquest and had a key role in Navarre's integration into the new Spanish Empire. In fact, when Rena left Navarre 13 years later, in 1525, he was considered one of the most important men of the Spanish military administration and had fully established himself as an agent of the king. Between 1512 and 1525, Rena's political clout grew along with his importance in the configuration of the military frontier. At first glance, Rena's Navarrese years seem to be a period of political advancement. However, during this time he was actually engaged in a fierce battle for survival under very difficult circumstances.

The years following the conquest were characterized by great instability, since Navarre became one of the theaters in which the French and Spanish monarchies battled each other for European supremacy.⁸ This situation made it necessary to create a new military frontier practically *ex novo* in Navarre, since the kingdom had no defensive system beyond a set of derelict medieval castles. The new military frontier was not just designed to protect the kingdom from the French. The crisis of 1512, 1516, and 1521 showed that Spanish control of Navarre was also contested by a large proportion of its native population. Before the conquest, the divisions within Navarrese society had been a boon to the Spanish. The civil war that raged between the *agramonteses* and *beamon-teses* going back to the previous century had given them an opening and they allied themselves with the latter.⁹ However, this internecine conflict became a major problem after the conquest, when the *agramonteses* faction won the support of the French monarch for its attempts to resist the Spanish rule.

Both the ongoing threat of the external enemy embodied by the powerful French army and the fear of the internal enemy (a significant number of prominent Navarrese) contributed to a perpetual state of alarm in the kingdom. The presence of Castilian troops and the construction of a new belt of modern fortresses did not help to ease these tensions, and in fact the presence of these troops in Navarre led to further problems about how to supply and pay them. Shortly after his arrival, Juan Rena became

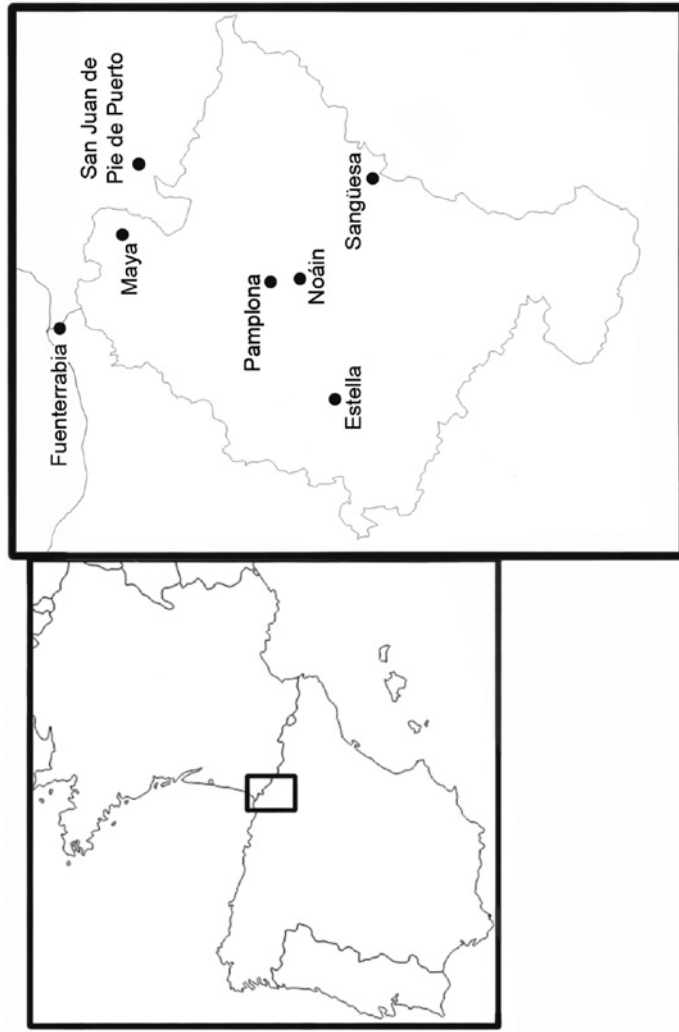


Figure 3.1 Map of Navarre
Source: Map by author.

the head of the new administrative apparatus for the Navarrese frontier. It was Rena's previous experience in the southern frontier that allowed him to become a key player in Navarre. Rena's move to Navarre may seem to have been unplanned, but there was nothing haphazard about his position there. During this period, the Spanish authorities began discreetly placing men like Rena in Navarre who were experienced in frontier defense. In the letter Ferdinand the Catholic wrote to his ambassador in the Holy Roman Empire to inform him of his victory against the French, Ferdinand made reference to his men in Pamplona, stressing that, despite their small numbers, "the [people] could not be better."¹⁰ The king's confidence was well placed, as the agents deployed to the Pyrenean frontier were experts in managing a military defense on a newly formed frontier. A great deal of such expertise came from the southern frontier, where the Alcaide de los Donceles assembled his own team of "frontier builders." He was sent to Navarre to reinforce the Spanish army against the French counterattack in the autumn of 1512, but he stayed there as the first viceroy of the conquered kingdom. The arrival of the Alcaide and his men signaled a transfer of experienced men to the new northern frontier. In fact, the Alcaide's men were able to use the same tactics that they had developed in North Africa, as several of them were given similar positions in Navarre. For example, the captains who led the troops in the Maghreb also led them in Navarre. Sancho de Contreras, the Alcaide's chamberlain who managed intelligence gathering in Oran, was put in charge of espionage in Navarre, and Juan Rena was to manage the logistics.¹¹ Despite the fact that Rena arrived in Navarre from Vizcaya, where he had briefly worked to help prepare the Spanish navy to transport English troops for their invasion of Guyenne, Rena's appointment cannot be understood except in light of his previous administrative and logistical services to the Alcaide.¹²

By providing similar services in Navarre, Rena showed that he had the necessary skills to organize and manage the military's logistics in a hostile frontier, where it was often necessary to conduct a defensive war without many resources. Thus, it is not surprising that Rena was given a position in the military administration of Navarre. However, Rena got his most important position, that of paymaster, almost by chance, since he replaced the official paymaster, Álvaro Vázquez de Noguero, who was captured and imprisoned by the French army.¹³ As general paymaster, Rena's role was, in theory, very limited and simple. He was in charge of receiving money from the general treasurer at court and was tasked to spend it in accordance with the decisions made by the military authorities while also adhering to the state's bureaucratic accounting procedure that ensured the king's money was being spent in a cost-effective manner and as directed by the court.¹⁴ However, in reality, his responsibilities were much broader. He oversaw defense strategy in Navarre and ensured that it ran efficiently. Thus, Rena became a nerve center for military logistics

in the kingdom. As early as 1524, when Emperor Charles V ordered the invasion of French territory from Navarre, Rena supplied the imperial army through a local network that he had created for that purpose.¹⁵ The correspondence between the emperor and the Count of Miranda during the siege of Fuenterrabía highlighted how influential Rena had become: by that winter, Rena had become a key player who discussed military logistics directly with Charles V.¹⁶ Indeed, the plan for the invasion of the French territories was influenced by Rena's advice.¹⁷ Rena's opinion on this matter was valued so highly that he had the power to contest and correct the viceroy's orders.¹⁸ At the end of the campaign, the emperor continued to trust Rena and followed his guidance on administrative issues.¹⁹ These examples show how, from 1524 onwards, Rena became an uncontested authority in the administration of the new military frontier.

Rena's activities were not just limited to logistics; he also began to take a leading role in the fortification works of the frontier. Rena arrived in Navarre just before France's siege of Pamplona, so he was able to take part in the defense of the city against the French army. His presence during the siege and his experience working on the maintenance of the city walls served as a useful initiation for the work he would subsequently do as part of a team ordered to reinforce Pamplona's defenses (in the geopolitical imagination of the time, Pamplona was seen as the "key and wall defending this kingdom [of Navarre] as well as Spain").²⁰ For that reason, the new authorities undertook an ambitious program of fortification. The plan consisted of a new fortress as well as a thorough remodeling of the city's urban defenses to bring them in line with new developments in modern warfare.²¹ As a frontier city, Pamplona remained on full alert as the city's defenses would only hold for a few days in case of attack. The medieval fortification had sustained such significant damage in the French siege that rebuilding was difficult, given the logistical, structural, and financial hurdles to be overcome.²² For example, the new walls and bulwarks needed to be able to withstand the force of modern artillery, but they also needed to be built quicker, cheaper, and with fewer resources than normal. This was made possible by employing a combination of earth works to reinforce the fortresses' weak points and by building rough bulwarks of earth and wood in strategic places to guarantee that defensive artillery could be used to prevent assaults and strikes from enemy cannons.

These types of defenses were new on the Pyrenean frontier but had frequently been employed in the Italian Wars, especially by Venice.²³ In Pamplona, construction was directed by Pedro de Malpaso, but Rena also played an important role, and it seems not unlikely that Rena contributed to the adoption of this new fortification strategy.²⁴ This is suggested by the fact that Rena was in charge of updating the War Council about the construction. His ideas and opinions were also highly valued

at court, and even the king changed his fortification plans in deference to Rena's advice.²⁵ So we can conclude that Juan Rena not only employed the skills that he had acquired in the North African campaigns; he also transmitted new ideas about modern forms of warfare from Italy. His personal archive contains detailed plans on how to fortify Pamplona according to the most up-to-date techniques, including drafts of the bulwarks that needed to be constructed.²⁶ Furthermore, some of the detailed plans and drafts of Pamplona's defenses were drawn by Rena himself (see Figure 3.2). His involvement in the re-fortification of Pamplona shows his commitment to continue gaining areas of expertise and influence in the construction of the new frontier.

Over time, Rena became the key figure in building the new frontier fortifications. As shown by several reports, it was generally believed that Rena was the only one able to reliably secure the funding needed for this work.²⁷ He also knew how to manage the large numbers of workers who were needed.²⁸ Indeed, it was Rena who kept fortification construction on track thanks to his influence over the workers. They trusted him because he had supported them against the abuses of the contractors who oversaw the new fortification.²⁹ The importance of this became clear in November 1515, when Rena ran out of money. He gave the men two options: they could either continue working with the promise of future

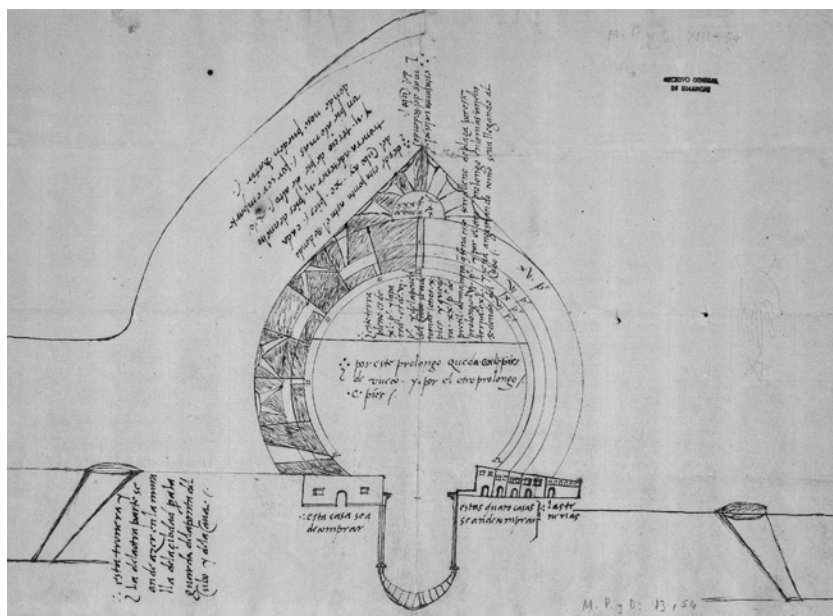


Figure 3.2 A Drawing of One of Pamplona's Bulwarks with Rena's Annotations

Source: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. Archivo General de Simancas, MPD, 13,054.

payment or they could go home, and most decided to stay.³⁰ This ability to earn the trust of people involved in the construction of the frontier was to become crucial in the near future.

Rena's most important role in Navarre was to support and maintain the new military frontier. If, during the first few years, Rena found this to be relatively easy (despite all the ordinary problems), it was because the court sent payments to Rena in a timely fashion. However, this situation quickly changed. The death of Ferdinand the Catholic at the beginning of 1516 led to a dynastic crisis, ushering in a period of political turbulence in all his domains. This period was especially complicated in Navarre, since it had only been conquered four years earlier. Rumors of a French attack began to circulate soon after the news of Ferdinand's death was announced, and the future of the kingdom became a central issue in the political and diplomatic discussions of the day.³¹ The future was especially obscure for Rena. His main political ally, the Alcaide de los Donceles, had left Navarre and resigned his position as viceroy, leaving him without a patron. Rena's precarious situation was dramatically depicted by Juan de Vergara, his agent at court, during a conversation with the Alcaide that he reported in one of his letters to Rena:

His Lordship asked me if Your Grace thought it wrong for him to ask for license to come home, and I replied to him that Your Grace had found it so right that you wanted to do the same, because there [in Navarre] you do not serve anyone, and you think that your person is in great danger, and His Lordship is the cause. I told him that Your Grace begs His Lordship to rescue you from captivity because you thought that if you were in the land of the Moors you could be rescued by paying money, but here, you think you'll only pay with your head.³²

These words vividly describe Rena's sense of abandonment and the risks of remaining in a frontier territory that was under constant threat. As subsequent events would show, the danger was real, but Rena kept his head. In the absence of his lord and mentor, his role in Navarre did not decrease over subsequent years: in fact, it grew. According to one of Rena's friends at court, when Don Fadrique de Acuña replaced the Alcaide de los Donceles as viceroy of Navarre, the latter asked the former to protect Rena; but the common opinion at court was that the new viceroy would need Rena's help more than Rena would need Acuña's protection.³³ It might be argued that the author of this statement was going too far, exaggerating his friend's importance, but further evidence clearly shows the extent to which Rena was perceived as crucial to the defense of the Navarrese frontier. In 1521, the Duke of Nájera, the nobleman who replaced Acuña as viceroy of Navarre, asked one of the governors to send Rena (who was

working for them fighting the Revolt of the Comuneros in Castile) back to Navarre:

According to the news that I have written to Your Lordship that I have from France and Bearn, it is convenient, by all means, to put this kingdom on defense. And because some of it cannot be done without the person of Micer Juan Rena, because of his great experience, and because of his good head and industry, I beg Your Lordship to order to give him license to come here right now, which, in addition to being a great service for His Majesty, I will consider a big favor from Your Lordship.³⁴

Why was Rena so important to the viceroys of Navarre? Rena's most important attribute in terms of his service to the Crown was his capacity to keep the military administration of the new frontier in working order, including the construction of the new military frontier. To provide the military apparatus with everything it needed was always a difficult task, but Rena showed an extraordinary ability to obtain loans from the local community.³⁵ This was evident from the moment of his arrival in the region, as he was able to finance the Alcaide de los Donceles's campaign to recover the remaining posts held by the French army after the first counterattack in 1512. He also was able to secure the funds to pay the Navarrese nobility substantial sums for their military service and to give succor to the new Spanish troops in the kingdom.³⁶ This first loan marked the beginning of an almost continuous line of private credit. In fact, in one of his letters to the general treasurer, Rena said: "My duty here has been nothing but to take loaned money to satisfy necessities."³⁷ As early as 1515, Pedro de Malpaso, the royal engineer who had directed the fortification works in Navarre, informed the king directly about the credit that Rena had obtained to ensure that the works were not halted, earning Rena the king's appreciation.³⁸ Rena's fundraising abilities became increasingly important during the dynastic crisis after the death of Ferdinand in 1516. During this period, the amount of money being sent from the court decreased dramatically, just when the enemies were preparing an offensive to recover Navarre. Rena provided the necessary credit to prevent any disruption to Pamplona's fortification works.³⁹ He also secured financial support from some local merchants to pay the Spanish troops. Thus, instead of running away, as his friends (including his agent at court) advised him, Rena decided to run up a line of credit, without knowing whether he would be able to repay the loans.⁴⁰ As I said before, Rena had no special reason to remain in Navarre after the departure of the Alcaide de los Donceles, but he found himself stuck in a difficult situation. Between the news that the French army was preparing to attack, an inexperienced viceroy who had only recently arrived in Navarre, and a local nobility conspiring to defeat the Castilian troops, Rena was needed more than ever.

Rena's ability to sustain the military frontier became clearer during periods of crisis. In the spring of 1516, the uprising of the local nobility under the Marshal of Navarre and the subsequent siege of San Juan de Pie de Puerto (a strategically important position on the northern frontier) was dealt with swiftly by summoning the local citizenry to arms and mobilizing the Castilian troops quickly. Once again, the viceroy faced a difficult obstacle: the Spanish administration in Navarre had run out of money. Worse still, the Navarrese refused to move without being paid in advance. So once again, the viceroy turned to Rena, asking him to secure the credit to pay them. Fortunately, Rena was able to do so, and under the leadership of Colonel Cristóbal de Villalba these troops staged a counter-attack against the rebels. Their ability to act quickly not only prevented the enemy from advancing further into Navarre but also ended with the capture of the rebel leaders. Thus, Rena played an important role in pacifying the kingdom, a role that is attested by several witnesses. According to Ruiz de Enebro, inspector of the royal guards, Rena's help was crucial and helped to ensure victory. Another witness said that "Micer Johan did His Majesty a great service in those times because, thanks to the capture of the Marshal, all the kingdom was pacified."⁴¹ These testimonies make clear that Rena was able to facilitate the military campaign in the region because of his local connections. In fact, all the reports to the court make reference to Rena's image as a "public and well-known" figure, not only in the local context but also in France.⁴² Rena's skill earned him recognition outside of Navarre, and the higher authorities at court also became aware of him. In fact, the role that Rena played in the socio-political arena of post-conquest Navarre was defined by his ability to mobilize private credit in the service of the monarchy.

It was not only during local crises that Juan Rena proved himself to be key to the defense of the northern frontier, but also during periods of political turbulence affecting the heart of the empire: Castile. In 1521, during Charles V's worse political crisis in Spain, the Revolt of the Comuneros, Rena wrote to the War Council offering to help fund, along with his friends, the defense of Navarre against the French army.⁴³ On this occasion his proposal was not accepted, as the War Council had other plans for Rena: Castile. The crisis occasioned by the Revolt of the Comuneros made it necessary to place Castile's limited military resources in the hands of the local governors. For that reason, Rena was ordered to transport Pamplona's artillery to the imperial army in Castile. Thus, he left Navarre just before the French invasion. When he returned, after the Castilian victory over the French army and the Navarrese rebels at the battle of Noáin, he resumed his role in Navarre, but this time his task was rather more difficult. The revolt in Castile had almost completely destroyed the fiscal system that sustained the Spanish army. According to the royal treasurer, nobody had been willing to get involved in the finances of the army.⁴⁴ The situation was worse for the businessmen in

charge of Crown finances.⁴⁵ The Constable of Castile, one of the governors appointed by Charles V to rule Castile during his absence, bitterly noted that the royal treasurer, Francisco de Vargas, was not able to continue obtaining loans through duplicitous means, promising reimbursement with nonexistent resources.⁴⁶ Given these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Spanish troops in Navarre went unpaid for months. Another governor, Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, wrote to the members of the military administration urging them to find a way, "even if it entailed usury," to pay the troops, since losing Navarre could lead to further troubles in Castile.⁴⁷ This was the background against which Juan Rena would carry out one of his most important services to the monarchy. In 1522, Rena organized a collective loan from himself and his Navarrese friends for a military campaign against the fortress of Maya and the northwestern region of Navarre, which was still under enemy control.⁴⁸ The money and supplies raised by Rena were for a brief offensive culminating in the capture of Maya, the last Navarrese stronghold under the enemy's control. Though the last rebels did not surrender until 1524, this victory gave the governors effective control over Navarre.⁴⁹

Rena not only contributed to the defense of the frontier kingdom by helping to finance the campaign but he also served in key negotiations with multiple Navarre officials. As previous campaigns had shown, the security of the whole kingdom depended on defending the capital. During the crisis of 1516, when the viceroy sought to concentrate his troops within Pamplona's walls, the local government claimed that the city's privileges required him to pay for the troops' lodging.⁵⁰ When the viceroy revealed that he did not have enough money, Pamplona's authorities agreed to quarter the troops without payment on one condition: Juan Rena would be designated as a guarantor for the debt.⁵¹ The viceroy accepted the deal and obliged Rena to act as *fiador* in the payment of the loan. This service seems minor, but the troops' inspector acknowledged that Rena's involvement in this deal averted a violent confrontation between the city and the military authorities.⁵² We should recall that, before serving the Spanish Crown, Rena was ordained in Venice, and his ecclesiastic position proved quite useful in his work constructing and sustaining the new frontier, as he was able to efficiently negotiate with the powerful members of the Navarrese church. In 1516 the viceroy ordered Rena to persuade the friars of Saint Francis to abandon their monastery, which needed to be demolished to make space for the new fortress of Pamplona.⁵³ Furthermore, because of Rena's ecclesiastic status, he acted as a judge in the trials of Navarrese clergymen who supported the French invasion.⁵⁴ Even more important, after being appointed vicar general of the see of Pamplona, Rena played a crucial role in the negotiations with the Navarrese clergy over the payment of the taxes that churchmen owed the Spanish Crown.⁵⁵ As he asserted in some of his reports, the resources of the Navarrese church were crucial to the defense of the frontier.⁵⁶ It

seems that his idea was taken seriously in the inner circles of the imperial government and, in order to facilitate access to church revenues, the War Council convinced Adrian of Utrecht to have Rena appointed vicar general.⁵⁷

Rena also helped to ease tensions in the negotiations between the new Spanish authorities and the assembly of the Navarrese estates.⁵⁸ From the very beginning, he showed that he was aware of the need to avoid tensions with the assembly for the sake of defending of the frontier and maintaining the peace internally. Therefore, in 1516, he ordered his agent at court to lobby the inner circle of the government to get the funds to pay off his debts to Navarre's elites, since the Navarrese assembly, which had the power to approve or deny payment of kingdom's taxes to the imperial government, refused to vote for financial services to the Crown until these debts were paid.⁵⁹ He also echoed the grievances of the assembly about the troops' debts with their hosts in the memorandums that he sent to the governors of Castile.⁶⁰ After Rena's appointment as vicar general, he got direct access to the negotiations with the estates because this position allowed him to participate as a member of the ecclesiastic estate. The viceroy emphasized Rena's role during the meetings in his reports to the emperor.⁶¹ Charles V was very appreciative of Rena's services and wrote to thank him and urge him to continue his good work in the assembly meetings.⁶² Rena took his commitment seriously: when some noblemen abandoned the sessions of the assembly in September 1523 to prevent the conclusion of the negotiations, Rena responded quickly to resolve the dispute and in so doing gained greater favor with Charles V.⁶³ Rena continued to act as a mediator between the Navarrese estates and the Crown even after leaving Navarre. Even a full year after his departure, the regent of the Council of Navarre believed that his remote involvement was crucial to the negotiations with the estates.⁶⁴ As we can see, Rena considered the assembly of the estates to be another key sphere where he had to fight for the defense of the new frontier.

We can conclude that Rena became a central figure of post-conquest Navarrese politics. To a great extent he benefited from the temporary status of the different viceroys in the years after the conquest, since this compelled the imperial authorities to rely directly on him. He knew the right people in Navarre and was able to get things done. Moreover, Rena was in a prime position to become a reliable agent of the king in post-conquest Navarre. His ecclesiastical status gave him a strategic position in the Navarrese church, allowing him to take part in the Navarrese estates. Even so, it was in the field of military administration that he made the most significant impact. In this sphere, Rena's services far exceeded his role as military treasurer. In the years after the conquest, he managed the military logistics and took part in formulating the strategies to defend the frontier. However, what distinguished Rena most was his capacity to keep the military machinery in Navarre working whatever the cost. All of

this earned Rena a prominent position in Navarre, a position he wielded to help incorporate this frontier kingdom into the Spanish Empire.

Juan Rena and the Reconfiguration of Post-Conquest Navarrese Society

One of the requirements for the successful incorporation of Navarre into the Spanish Empire was cohesion within Navarrese society. Internal cohesion and local support are crucial to consolidating any political regime, but they were even more important in a frontier kingdom like Navarre. The king of neighboring France was powerful enough to challenge Spanish rule over the kingdom, and the surest way to counter that threat was to unite rival factions. The Crown adopted different strategies to integrate both aristocratic factions.⁶⁵ As we will see, Juan Rena played some role in the implementation of this policy. However, he also played a key role in the integration of different peoples through his own day-to-day activities following his own agenda. As we will see in this section, the multiple favors and mediations Rena provided in his daily interactions with local figures constituted an intense effort at integration from below, which complemented the top-down integration strategy adopted by the Crown.

To a great extent, Juan Rena could play a prominent role in the integration process and in the shaping of the new social order in general, because he acted as a bridge between the royal administration and the local elite, filling the “structural hole” between them.⁶⁶ True, by the time of the conquest, there was a long history of ties between the Navarrese nobility and the Castilian aristocracy and the Crown. A large part of the local nobility was closely connected with the Catholic Monarchs, such as the Constable of Navarre, leader of the *beamontese* faction. In fact, both local factions, the *beamonteses* and *agramonteses*, were closely connected to the most prestigious lineages of the Castilian nobility. As a result, many of the local noblemen had direct access to the inner circle of the imperial government.⁶⁷ However, many others in this frontier society needed to find new communication channels with the authorities as well as with other important parts of the empire’s body politic, and Rena was in a privileged position to satisfy this need. As we saw in the previous section, he was able to mobilize private capital from locals to fund the military defense of the kingdom. Rena had access to local credit networks because he was known as a trustworthy and reliable person among the Navarrese elite. He was, in the words of the paymaster of the artillery, “a person who has a lot of credit in the kingdom of Navarre.”⁶⁸ During the early modern period, access to credit networks was contingent on the borrowers’ reputation.⁶⁹ When deciding who to appoint as military treasurers, Crown officials often employed wealthy local merchants of good repute within their communities.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Rena’s good reputation

transcended the economic sphere.⁷¹ To fully understand Rena's importance we should also consider his political capital, which he was able to accumulate as a result of the turbulent politics of this society as it was being incorporated into the wider empire.

When considering the political facet of Rena's reputation as a man of credit, we should not forget that the concept of credit worked as a kind of social solvency, and was measured not only by economic or material wealth but also by intangible qualities.⁷² The loans that Rena received were favors from his Navarrese friends, and as such they implied a moral obligation for him.⁷³ Assisting someone like Rena was a very interesting option for the Navarrese elite, since the size of the line of credit extended to royal officials was proportional to the political favors that they could offer.⁷⁴ To a great extent, Rena's success in his tasks depended on his capacity to exchange multiple favors and services with a wide array of local actors. His credit was the result of the locals' need to bridge the political distance between themselves and their new rulers. Precisely because of this, the mediation Rena could offer influenced the place that many different people occupied in the social fabric that was being shaped after the conquest.

Rena was able to pay his moral and political debts due largely to his connection to the highest authority in Navarre: the viceroy. Rena arrived in the kingdom with a complete résumé in the service of the first viceroy.⁷⁵ In the faraway southern frontier, he had been the Alcaide de los Donceles's right-hand man, and one of his most important tasks was to negotiate with the merchant community. This responsibility made him the channel of access to the Alcaide for local tradesmen.⁷⁶ Rena took an identical approach in Navarre. Here, he had a more important intermediary role because of the political ambitions of the local merchants and the greater authority of his lord. As the proxy for the king in Navarre, the Alcaide had the power to appoint local authorities. With this in mind, we can understand how some of Rena's "friends" were appointed as mayors of Pamplona. For example, in 1515, Pedro Marcilla de Caparoso, a member of an important merchant family, was given this post.⁷⁷ Rena continued to enjoy this influential position between the local Navarrese community and the viceroys after the departure of his mentor. For instance, he was considered as a sort of "favorite" of another viceroy, the Duke of Nájera, who appointed another of Rena's closest collaborators, Juan de Redín, as mayor of Pamplona.⁷⁸ Moreover, Rena's credit within the local society should be understood in relation to his capacity to mediate between many different actors beyond and below the viceroys. The example of the Caparoso family is useful for demonstrating this point. Among the lenders who contributed to the financing of the siege of Maya in 1522 were Antón de Caparoso and two other members of his family.⁷⁹ In 1516, this family had helped Rena to organize and supply the defense of the frontier against the rebels' attempt to repulse

the Castilians.⁸⁰ In exchange, the members of this family benefited from Rena's support many times. He employed his network of contacts to get official approval for them to transfer their political appointments to their heirs.⁸¹ Furthermore, Rena put Juan de Caparrosa in contact with the Archbishop of Toledo, which made it possible for the family to promote the ecclesiastical career of one of their members.⁸² In short, collaborating with Rena was very important in the political arena of post-conquest Navarre.

Rena's most important asset was his capacity to confer upon local figures the distinction of being known as loyal servants of the king. A reputation gained through service to the Crown provided access to offices and generally determined one's social status.⁸³ In a recently conquered frontier kingdom, this symbolic capital became even more important not only because the new political order was based on loyalty to the new king, but also because of the loyalty of frontier peoples was traditionally suspect.⁸⁴ Furthermore, in Navarre, this symbolic capital became even more important due to the internal divisions: the obvious support for the dethroned monarchs and the king of France led to a division amongst the political community into *servidores* and *deservidores* (literally "servers" and "non-servers"). Thus, after the recovery of the kingdom in 1522, the Count of Miranda (Navarre's new viceroy) advised Charles V to distribute royal favors within the kingdom according to the services and disservices (*deservicios*) of each individual.⁸⁵ Interestingly, one's reputation as a *servidor* or *deservidor* depended not only on the facts and one's actions but also on the mediation of people like Rena.

Enjoying a reputation as good servant of the new monarch was crucial for every single member of Navarre's political body, but it was especially so for prominent groups such as the families of financiers. The Navarrese tradesmen knew that financial service to the Crown was a good way to position themselves advantageously in the kingdom's economy as well as to secure appointments in local government. However, unlike the situation before the conquest, they were not able to serve the king directly. After the conquest, they were little more than tradesmen on one of the empire's multiple frontiers. For this reason, lending money to the Crown's agents was essential for obtaining the Crown's favor. As a consequence, Rena's creditors were often members of the most important Navarrese mercantile families, such as the Añués, the Cruzats, and the Eguías.⁸⁶ Providing financial services to the Spanish Empire was not a new burden for these families, since the majority had been doing the same for the Navarrese Crown since the Middle Ages.⁸⁷ However, what was completely new was the need to rely on reliable mediators to profit from this activity. To illustrate this point, let us look at Rena's relationship with the Cruzat family, his most important financial supporters. In 1521, Rena designed a strategy for the conquest and defense of Navarre after the French invasion.⁸⁸ We know that the Cruzat family played a role

in his strategy because their names are referenced in Rena's memorandum. Moreover, he recommended them for certain privileges and went further still when he nominated a member of the Cruzat family as a tax collector, stating: "I beg that this collector be Martín Cruzat, who, in addition to being a good servant of His Majesty, is a wealthy person and of credit who in time of necessity can come to our aid with his own [resources]." ⁸⁹ Rena is making a direct connection between the defense of the frontier and the rewards meted out to the people who collaborated with him in this difficult task.

Rena worked hard to ensure proper compensation for his most important local supporters. The fact that Martín Cruzat was appointed shortly after Rena's recommendation underscores the influence that he wielded at court and in Navarre. ⁹⁰ Martín's appointment was not an isolated event. To the contrary, it was the beginning of a long list of rewards for the Cruzat family in appreciation for their services in helping to sustain the frontier. During Charles V's visit to Pamplona in 1523, several members of the Cruzat family received a number of royal favors, and it is no coincidence that the payment on the sizeable loan that Rena facilitated with their collaboration was being negotiated at the same time. ⁹¹ All these rewards were granted as compensation for the family's financial services. Since lending money to the Crown's agents proved a successful strategy to obtain royal grants, for years the family would continue to refer to their past services "with his person and estate" in their petitions to the Crown. ⁹² These services offered a competitive advantage over disloyal merchants who did not show active support for the king's cause. For instance, Diego Cruzat was appointed tax collector in the eastern region of Navarre because the previous holder of this office was declared a "disloyal person to the royal Crown." ⁹³ What really matters for us here is that Rena played a key role securing gratitude for their financial contributions. When the widow of Martín Cruzat asked for patronage as a reward for her family's financial services, she wrote:

My sons and I . . . have served, in the name of Your Majesty, your viceroys, captains general, and people of war, lending them large amounts of money without any interest, but only because of our great affection to serve Your Majesty, as Your Majesty can learn from your viceroys and from Micer Johan Rena. ⁹⁴

Thus, thanks to their relationship with Rena, the Cruzat family earned a profitable reputation as servants of the king in the eyes of the new authorities, something of paramount importance for prominent political figures and tradesmen in this frontier kingdom.

Many different members of the local society were aware that it was through Rena that services to the Crown were reported. His ability to intercede with the imperial authorities was important for local bureaucrats,

such as Martín de Echaide, who asked Rena for help in a conflict over his powers as secretary of state.⁹⁵ According to him, his problem with the members of the Royal Council of Navarre was simple: “most of these lords are new in this kingdom and they do not know me, and do not know my fidelity and my services.”⁹⁶ His desperate attempt to defend his powers and status shows how important it was for a bureaucrat serving in a distant outpost to remind the king of his services. Rena also played a role in the distribution of royal favors among the Navarrese aristocracy. For instance, the Lord of Guendulayn, a member of the middle ranks of Navarre’s nobility, asked Rena for help in obtaining an appointment as commander of one of the fortresses.⁹⁷ Even more interesting is the case of the Lord of Orcoyen. During the crisis of 1516, this nobleman took part in the expedition against the Navarrese rebels that was organized and funded by Rena.⁹⁸ More than ten years later, he asked Rena to help him recover his privileges and salary as a *continuo real*. This was an honorific office granted to local elites for their “continuous” service to the Crown, but it was also a status that opened the door to further privileges, such as participation in the Navarrese estates.⁹⁹ Interestingly, Orcoyen argued in his petition that Rena was a witness of his past services defending the frontier, which was why he was requesting his help in this matter.¹⁰⁰ Rena’s influence also allowed him to reward friends who wanted to enter the privileged order of the nobility. In 1515, Jimeno López became Rena’s agent in Puente La Reina, near Pamplona, and helped him to supply the army.¹⁰¹ Together with his relatives, López lent money to Rena and provided the army with large quantities of wine on credit.¹⁰² Years later, when López petitioned for his family’s noble status to be confirmed, he turned to Rena.¹⁰³ Interestingly, not only did López want to have access to Rena’s contacts at the imperial court, but he also sought his advice in drafting his petition.¹⁰⁴ López relied on Rena’s knowledge of the formal elements of the process, which illustrates the huge distance between the frontier and the court in matters of political culture. All these examples show that Rena was becoming a living repository of the records of all the merits and services that local figures had contributed to the defense of the new frontier.

Rena’s role as a mediator granted him a seat at the most important political negotiations during the incorporation of Navarre into the empire, such as the complex discussions with the capital of the kingdom, Pamplona.¹⁰⁵ A clear example of this is the negotiation of lodging for the Castilian troops in Pamplona during the crisis of 1516. The leaders of Pamplona refused to quarter the troops for free, citing one of the city’s privileges, but they proposed an alternative solution: they would house the troops if Rena was appointed as the guarantor of this loan.¹⁰⁶ By choosing a guarantor, they not only obtained a surety; they were also choosing a mediator who would be forced to negotiate the payment of the debt with the central administration. In so doing, they showed

considerable confidence in Rena's ability to obtain the reimbursements, but above all this demonstrates that they were adapting themselves to the realities of imperial administration. Rena was obliged to employ all the resources at his disposal in order to secure the money to compensate the leaders of Pamplona. In fact, Rena's network of contacts proved to be a suitable way to obtain payment for quartering the troops, since through it the city's authorities gained access to the heart of empire's financial management system. According to a member of the local oligarchy, Rena was known as someone who could intercede with the powerful Francisco de Vargas, the royal treasurer.¹⁰⁷ Rena used his connection with Vargas to obtain the repayment, and the royal treasurer presented Rena's petitions to both Cardinal Cisneros and Adrian of Utrecht, the two highest authorities in Castile.¹⁰⁸ Rena made use of the channels of influence that he had built over his years of service to the Crown, but he also employed the connections of his associates, such as when he wrote a letter to Cardinal Cisneros in Colonel Cristóbal de Villalba's name, Cisneros's right-hand man in military affairs.¹⁰⁹ This intense activity of political mediation shows Rena's attempt to fulfill the expectations of the local elite of a frontier city trying to gain access to the faraway center of the imperial government.

Over time, Rena became a key ally the city could rely on when negotiating with the imperial authorities. During his stay in Castile, the authorities in Pamplona asked Rena to obtain a letter from the governors to testify to their previous and current services.¹¹⁰ Rena took the commitment quite seriously and included it in his list of issues when he negotiated with the governors.¹¹¹ Rena's role went beyond simple mediation with the imperial authorities, as he also advised the local elite on how to negotiate with the new rulers. Hence, on his advice the representatives of the city wrote a petition to Charles V in 1521. At a first glance, Rena's help was explicit and simple: he added a specific solicitation for grants for the local authorities in remuneration for their services.¹¹² However, a close reading shows that Rena went beyond that. The whole document is suffused with frontier rhetoric, which is evident in sentences like "this city is on the frontier, and so close to the enemies." Rena took special care to underscore Pamplona's status as frontier city by including a final coda in his own hand: "[The city] begs Your Majesty to always . . . take special care of this city and its defense since it is something so important for your Royal Service."¹¹³ This frontier rhetoric allowed the local authorities to justify a list of requests (privileges for notable citizens, tax exemptions, etc.) while outlining their previous services. However, some of the rewards they requested were for dubious services. The petition references the enormous expense the authorities of Pamplona made to fortify the city before the French invasion, for which they thought that the city deserved a reward, such as a tax exemption. Obviously, such a service would have merited a reward, but the city authorities were being

rather disingenuous. The only expense made before the French conquest was by the viceroy prior to his hurried flight to Castile: the city, rather than serve the king, promoted an insurrection that expelled the last Castilian troops and delivered the city to the French army.¹¹⁴ By advising the Navarrese on how to word this petition, Rena was also constructing a record of their past services based on a partial truth. His intercession in favor of the city was based on a shrewd strategy to transform the services of some members of the local elite into a collective campaign on the part of the city as a whole. And this was hardly a one-off affair: local notables continued to refer to the private services of some of their number as if they had amounted to collective effort to defend the city. This move proved successful, as is obvious from the fact that it continued to be used as a precedent by the city council in subsequent negotiations. Indeed, this very strategy was denounced by Juan de Vergara (who had inherited Rena's appointments after his death) in 1540, during later negotiations over Pamplona's fiscal status:

The city has no justification for claiming that it lent some money to Micer Juan Rena to conquer Maya . . . , even if they have the royal order by His Majesty to be paid, because the city of Pamplona never gave or lent money to Micer Juan in exchange or in any other way. Rather, some specific inhabitants of the city, his friends, lent to him without charge or interest, and after that they were paid. Hence the city should not ask, and His Majesty should not pay, what it never gave or lent at interest or in exchange or any other way.¹¹⁵

Vergara's words clearly show that Rena's mediation had long-term consequences for political negotiations regarding Pamplona's new status as a frontier city. By collaborating in the drafting of this tendentious document, Rena was attempting to help restore the reputation of Pamplona as a loyal city. This might seem like dubious behavior for a king's agent like Rena, but to what extent was he acting alone in so doing?

Rena did not just use his influence to ensure the placement of good servants in the new political landscape, he was also helping to erase the political sins of some key members of the local community. Interestingly, in so doing he was acting in line with Charles V's new policy in the frontier kingdom. To a certain extent, Charles V's policy on Navarre was much more ambitious than Ferdinand the Catholic's had been, as he aimed to include the whole body politic into the Spanish Empire in order to ensure his rule over this strategic territory. In other words, he was conscious that his dominion over Navarre would never be complete without the support of both local factions.¹¹⁶ Gaining this support was easier said than done: the *agramonteses* not only led the revolts against Ferdinand the Catholic (1516) and Charles V (1521), but they were also traditionally at loggerheads with the other faction, the *beamonteses*. After the

surrender of Fuenterrabía (1524), the frontier fortress where the *agramonteses* staged their last stand against the Spanish army with the help of the French, Charles V granted a royal pardon, forgiving the political sins of the rebels.¹¹⁷ However, forgiveness was not enough. It was necessary to guarantee the real inclusion of this faction in Navarrese political life.

The emperor ordered the viceroy of Navarre to negotiate with the Constable of Navarre, the leader of the *beamonteses*, in order to gain his consent for the reincorporation of the opposing faction.¹¹⁸ The viceroy entrusted this complicated mission to someone whom the Navarrese trusted: Juan Rena. Rena met the Constable of Navarre and transmitted Charles V's orders about the inclusion of the *agramonteses* and the emperor's desire to rule over a Navarre free from factional strife. After a tense conversation with Rena, he agreed to accept the political reincorporation of his rivals.¹¹⁹ The emperor celebrated Rena's success in his letter to the viceroy with the following words: "I have enjoyed seeing the response that the Constable of that kingdom gave to Micer Juan Rena."¹²⁰ Months later, Rena had a leading role in the ceremony that made official the incorporation of the rebels back into Navarre's politics. The oldest son of the Marquis of Falces, leader of the *agramontese* faction, and other rebels pledged reverence and submission to Charles V before Rena.¹²¹ It goes without saying that this ceremony did not put an end to the factional struggle and, in fact, the conflict between the two factions continued to have an effect on Navarrese politics for decades. However, the choice of Rena to preside over this ceremony reflected his active role in shaping local society.

Juan Rena also had a role in the process of pardoning individual *agramonteses* after the recovery of the kingdom. The aim of Charles V's general pardon was to restore peace by forgiving past offenses to the Crown. Nevertheless, it could not include all the rebels, as some of them had proven to be irreconcilable enemies of Spanish rule and needed to be punished accordingly. Being a newcomer, the viceroy sought the advice of experienced people like Rena to draw up a list of the people who should be excluded from the royal pardon. This new task allowed Rena to determine who deserved a place in Navarrese society and who should be excluded. We do not have the complete list penned by Rena, but according to the viceroy, he adopted a rather generous strategy and excluded very few people from the list.¹²² Rena had a good reason for this, as some of his Navarrese friends belonged to the rebel faction. His personal network included a wide array of Navarrese tradesmen. Some of them, like the Cruzat family, became key supporters of the new regime, but not all merchants behaved the same. Some, such as Miguel de Añués, followed a more complicated agenda.¹²³ His case is especially interesting because he also acted as a mediator between the royal authorities and his city, Sangüesa, where he occupied a prominent political position.¹²⁴ Añués began collaborating with Rena shortly after the conquest by lending him

money.¹²⁵ This merchant was not just Rena's collaborator; he also played a key role in funding and organizing the rebellions against Castilian rule in 1516 and 1521.¹²⁶ In fact, Añués was close to the leader of the rebel faction: the Marshal of Navarre.¹²⁷ Despite his obvious connection with the rebel leaders, Miguel de Añués was included in the list of royal pardons granted by the emperor. This might seem surprising, but we should not forget that these pardons were based on Rena's advice, and one can assume that he "forgot" the political sins of his associate when drawing up the list of rebels to exclude from the royal pardon.¹²⁸

Being placed on the royal pardon list was a first step, but it was not enough to secure a prominent position in Navarrese society. Far more important was the generosity of a royal agent like Rena. Rena's relationship with Añués seems not to have been affected by the latter's actions during the rebellions. Indeed, Rena helped his friend to maintain his prominent place in Navarre's economy. For example, in the years that followed, Miguel de Añués and his son enjoyed Rena's help when they became ecclesiastical tax collectors in Navarre.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Juan Rena used his influence in the inner circle of the imperial government to obtain a preferential status for Añués's economic activities. For instance, in one of his reports on the defense of Navarre, Rena asked the governors to grant a tax exemption for goods from Valdonsella, a property in Aragon that belonged to the bishopric of Pamplona. This measure was intended to benefit Miguel de Añués, since he was in charge of collecting the ecclesiastical taxes there, and as a result he had a great deal of wheat he needed to transfer from there to Navarre.¹³⁰ Rena also used his contacts within top-tier financiers to promote Añués's business outside the frontier kingdom. Rena connected Añués with the Genoese businessmen who controlled the empire's finances. In fact, as one of them acknowledged, they included Añués in their credit networks between Italy and the Iberian Peninsula following Rena's recommendation.¹³¹ Finally, Rena also mediated between Añués and the Roman Curia's financiers, which was crucial to ensuring the profitability of his activities as a collector of ecclesiastic taxes.¹³² As we can see, Rena not only influenced the inclusion of rebels in post-conquest Navarrese society, but he also actively contributed to their social promotion.

Rena's advocacy for former rebels in post-conquest Navarre encompassed people of different social statuses. He also acted as a mediator between the churchmen belonging to the rebel faction and the royal authorities, ensuring that they received royal favor. Rena even interceded for Doctor Goñi, a prominent churchman and one of the most important members of the rebel faction. Goñi's participation in the rebellion against Castilian rule was pardoned by Charles V after the surrender of Fuenterrabía.¹³³ But as he expressed in a memorandum addressed to the Crown, royal pardon was not enough to secure peace in the kingdom: it was necessary to distribute appointments in all spheres of influence

(administration, justice, the Church, etc.) equally between the *beamonteses* and *agramonteses*.¹³⁴ Goñi was certainly right. The conflict between the two factions was a struggle for local power. Even so, the *agramonteses* struggled to secure appointments when they competed with the *beamonteses* because the latter enjoyed symbolic capital as loyal subjects, while the memory of the former's political sins was still too strong. This was made clear in 1528, when Goñi was elected as one of the most important dignitaries of the Navarrese church. The viceroy blocked the appointment arguing that such a pre-eminent position should be reserved for a member of the *beamonteses* faction.¹³⁵ The *beamonteses* candidate, Juan de Beamonte, the Constable of Navarre's son, did not hesitate to expose his rival's political sins, as Goñi recounted to Rena:

Don Juan de Beamonte, son of the Constable of Navarre, declared to the viceroy, the council, canons and many others, in my presence, that I have been a bad servant (*deservidor*) of His Majesty, and he said it twice. Of course, I replied to him defending my honor.¹³⁶

Goñi's political sins were an obstacle in his ecclesiastical career. However, even if he could not rely on symbolic capital, he had a useful network of contacts to compensate for this disadvantage. Thus, he made a pact with Rena to exchange one of his positions (treasurer of Pamplona's cathedral) for Rena's support for a better position.¹³⁷ In Goñi's eyes, Rena's backing was crucial because he could obtain the emperor's support for his promotion. Rena took this issue seriously and he even used his contacts within the Roman Curia to find key supporters for Goñi.¹³⁸ As we can see, Rena contributed to the appointment of members of the *agramontes* faction. In so doing, he helped them to fully reintegrate into the political life of the kingdom, which was a crucial step in the ongoing peace-building process.¹³⁹ The incorporation of this political faction took decades, since the memory of the difficult years following the conquest were slow to fade. By the exchange of favors like the ones described here Rena was fostering a sort of integration policy from below. Although this was not enough for ending the factional struggle, with this exchange of favors Rena was extending the benefits of empire to the members of the rebel faction, and in so doing he was attacking the problem at its source.

Many different people (from tradesmen to aristocrats, from humble bureaucrats to local oligarchs) asked Rena to secure a better position for them as the political life of the kingdom underwent a profound reconstruction after the conquest. Despite the differences among Rena's clients, they all expected the same from him: to provide them with the reputation and prestige that they needed to secure their new positions. His role involved keeping, transmitting, and creating memories of past services rendered to the Crown or, conversely, forgetting previous political sins. In so doing, Rena was following his own personal agenda. However, at the

same time, he was helping to integrate Navarre into the Spanish Empire from below. He became a key conduit of information between the inner circle of the imperial government and the local community. As we will see, this also allowed him to influence the institutional placement of the kingdom within the empire.

Positioning Navarre in the Financial Landscape of the Spanish Empire

One of the most important issues at stake after the conquest of Navarre was determining its place among the different territories that made up the huge polity of the Spanish Empire. From his prominent position between Navarre and the inner circle of the imperial government, Rena played a key role in influencing the political engagement of Navarre. And he did so at a crucial nexus of the financial structure binding together the possessions of Charles V. In the opening decades of the sixteenth century one of the most interesting political developments in the Spanish Empire was the establishment of durable relationships between the territories that paid for the defense of others and the ones that consumed external resources to fund their military apparatus. By the late 1520s this political system was being shaped, and in fact one of the most important issues in the imperial agenda was to establish the financial links between the different polities that made up the empire. Needless to say, these links had paramount political significance.¹⁴⁰ Rena was involved in inserting Navarre into this imperial political and financial order due to his prominent position in the financial administration of Navarre as well as his position as a conduit of political information between the kingdom and the inner circle of the imperial government.¹⁴¹

From a financial viewpoint, Navarre secured a privileged position in the Spanish Empire. From the beginning, it was seen as a territory that was incapable of paying for its own defense. Rena played a key role in constructing and diffusing Navarre's image as a special political space and in defining the specific administrative practices to guarantee its defense. As the paymaster in charge of administering the resources from Castile, Rena promoted the policy of transferring money from Castile to Navarre. Indeed, he defended the need to invest Castilian resources in Navarre, and to do so by breaking the basic administrative rules if necessary. We can take the letter that he wrote in 1521 to justify this position as an example:

There are two reasons why nobody having a financial position here can do what Your Grace writes me . . . the first one is because, as Your Grace knows, we are on a frontier and things come up at every turn, as Your Grace has seen. And since they have no money they look to borrow it, and when it is impossible to find it, it would be

necessary, in a manner of speaking, to take the churches' crosses and candelabras to meet the needs that arise.¹⁴²

With these words, Rena was constructing the image of Navarre as a frontier space in which it was necessary to invest Castilian resources because it was exposed to a permanent threat and because it was impossible to rely on local resources. The reference to taking the churches' crosses as a last resort was quite evocative in this respect. Maybe he was not the only one pointing to Navarre as a territory in which to invest Castilian resources, but as a paymaster and the right-hand man of the Spanish authorities there, his opinion deserved special attention in the inner circle of the imperial government.

Rena's ability to influence Navarre's transformation into a privileged territory that received financial support grew as he gained in political importance. In fact, Rena's major contribution came in late 1525, when he was appointed as a judge of finances (*oidor de comptos*) in Navarre's Chamber of Accounts (*Cámara de Comptos*).¹⁴³ Shortly after his nomination, Rena drew up a report on this institution. In it, he demanded a special appointment as the president of the chamber, which he needed in order to implement his ambitious program of reforms for Navarre's finances. He also asked for a special commission from the Crown which would allow him to order payments.¹⁴⁴ This petition received a positive response: in February 1526, only two months after his appointment as judge, Rena was authorized to control the spending of Navarrese revenues.¹⁴⁵ Beyond the official sphere, Rena's influence was also apparent on the lower tiers of the Navarrese financial system. Rena was very closely connected to the other judges of finances, which allowed him to combine leadership (giving orders about the correct implementation of financial policy) and friendship (intervening for his friends seeking larger salaries and more status) when operating as the president of the Chamber of Accounts.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the different tax collectors recognized Rena's authority in the fiscal administration and followed his payment orders, which was key to his absolute control over Navarre's revenues.¹⁴⁷ In short, Rena enjoyed a hegemonic position in the management of Navarre's finances.

Rena's appointment as *oidor de comptos* demonstrates the trust that the imperial administration placed in him, but it also reveals more about their true aims. The Crown authorized Rena to make payments in Navarre at the same time as it convened the Navarrese estates. For the first time since the conquest of the kingdom, Navarre's assembly was expected to pay for its own military expenses. Specifically, Navarrese money would be used to pay the two garrisons deployed in Estella and Pamplona.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, it is easy to conclude that Rena's appointment and the new policy of using Navarrese revenues to finance the kingdom's defense were related. In fact, the Crown's order to pay the soldiers with

the local resources was sent directly to Rena.¹⁴⁹ The main problem was that the money raised by the estates was not enough to pay both the soldiers' wages and the Navarrese elites' royal grants and salaries.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, the Navarrese elites tried to take their salaries and grants before the troops were paid. However, when the emperor again ordered that the soldiers receive their pay immediately, they could not put up any resistance.¹⁵¹ This local resistance was entirely predictable, which is probably why the imperial administration decided to give Rena special powers. He was already known as a loyal king's man and he was well disposed to the new financial policy. Indeed, when the Navarrese elites delayed the soldier's pay, Rena exerted considerable pressure on the imperial court to ensure that the troops were paid before matters became desperate.¹⁵²

The payment of garrison wages with Navarrese revenues was part of a more general trend aimed at funding the defense of the frontiers with resources from the respective frontier regions. By way of example, the troops employed in Valencia to suffocate the Morisco rebellion were paid with money from the Valencian tax system.¹⁵³ In addition, in 1528, Charles V asked the Catalan states to pay for the defense of the Pyrenean frontier as well as a galley fleet to protect the coast.¹⁵⁴ In Navarre, as usual, things were much more complex. Despite the initial implementation of a new financial system, the issue remained unresolved and was the subject of difficult negotiations in the years that followed. The payment of the soldiers in 1526 was just the beginning of a complex bargaining process, and in 1528 tensions again flared during another session of the Navarrese estates. Two years after the implementation of the financial policy, the members of this assembly refused to concede the *servicio*, the parliamentary grant of the kingdom's taxes, because they were loath to reduce their own salaries in order to pay for the soldiers.¹⁵⁵ They had very good reasons to do that, since the issue at stake was not the payment of the two garrisons but their control over the revenues of the frontier kingdom.

What was Rena's attitude regarding this thorny issue? When the conflict began, all eyes turned to Rena, which is proof of his importance in this political sphere. The Navarrese administration believed that Rena was the only man capable of solving the Navarrese financial impasse.¹⁵⁶ By the summer of 1526, the regent of the Council of Navarre (the second-highest authority in the kingdom) had asked Rena to return to Pamplona, as his presence was needed to resolve the financial issues being raised in the Navarrese estates.¹⁵⁷ Even though Rena was not in Navarre, the regent believed that Rena was the key to handling the issue successfully. Thus, in January 1527, he wrote to Rena about the latest episodes in the conflict and asked him to inform the key officials at the imperial court about Navarre's financial situation.¹⁵⁸ Shortly after, the regent acknowledged that the in-depth review of Navarre's finances had been delayed because he was awaiting Rena's return. However, Rena was unable to

come back, so instead the regent finished the review himself and promised to follow Rena's orders regarding the payments and to trust him to deal with the issue at the imperial court.¹⁵⁹ When it came to Navarre's finances, Rena served as an important conduit for information between the frontier and the inner circles of the imperial government.

Since Rena enjoyed the trust of both the imperial and local administrations, he was called on to help resolve the conflict over military expenses. In 1528 he was commissioned to evaluate the real capacity of the Navarrese tax system. He collaborated on a report that detailed how the money raised from taxes in Navarre was being spent. It is difficult to determine if Rena wrote the report alone or not, but he was undoubtedly one of the authors: a draft of the document was kept in his personal archive.¹⁶⁰ An in-depth examination of the report shows that the document provided biased information to benefit the aims of the Navarrese nobles. According to the report, Navarre's total revenue was about 6.8 million *maravedies*, but its expenditures were more than 7,335,361 *maravedies* per year; thus, the annual deficit was about 500,000 *maravedies*. Navarre's financial situation was alarming, and consequently it was unreasonable for the imperial court to expect Navarre to pay the additional costs for the garrisons. Nevertheless, if we compare the report with the fiscal data provided by the Chamber of Accounts, we can see that it exaggerated the deficit.¹⁶¹ For instance, some of the expenses included were not paid by the Navarrese treasury. This was the case for the 476,000 *maravedies* assigned to the payment of noble salaries in the *Tierra de Vascos*.¹⁶² Furthermore, the report also included a reference to an estimated decrease in the custom duties on foreign trade. However, the amount actually collected was greater than the estimate noted in the document.¹⁶³ Despite the report's misrepresentation of the situation, the imperial administration was not in a position to judge its accuracy, as it had no direct access to information from the Navarrese tax system.

At first glance, it seems like Rena betrayed the interests of the imperial administration that chose him as their agent by helping the Navarrese to undermine the first serious attempt to make them fund their own defense with their own taxes. Rena's behavior might seem strange, but this was not the first time he was behaving in this way. The year before, he followed the same principle when he took the side of Pamplona's elites when they demanded that the Castilian troops pay for their own lodging in the city.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, this time Rena's decision to back the local interests had more important consequences. The report supported the claim that Navarre was not able to raise enough taxes to pay the garrisons in Pamplona and Estella in the addition to their usual expenses. Consequently, it helped to convince the imperial administration to abandon their plan of funding Navarrese defense with local revenues.¹⁶⁵ We might think that Rena was just helping his local friends but by helping to write the biased report, he was doing more than that. He was taking a clear stance in

favor of maintaining the fiscal status quo established after the conquest of the kingdom, and apparently he was quite effective in doing so.

The financial report was used by the Count of Alcaudete to convince Charles V and the inner circles of the imperial government to abandon the new financial strategy. In one of his letters to the emperor concerning the Navarrese estates and his difficulty in negotiating with them, the viceroy made explicit reference to the document:

Regarding the complaint of the garrisons' pay, they say that if it is paid from the ordinary revenues of this kingdom, the *jueros* (redeemable bonds) and favors cannot be paid, and as the service that they [the members of the Navarrese estates] do cannot give any general or particular benefit to the kingdom's naturals, that they would not do it if it is not sworn and promised to them to pay them their appropriations, and salaries, and gifts from the service that they would do preferring them to all the other things paid in this kingdom except the council. And this is impossible if we pay the garrisons with the kingdom's treasure . . . because more than five hundred thousand *maravedís*, are lacking to pay the ordinary [expenses], so they will not give up on this complaint . . . and because the kingdom knows that this has to be paid they will not give the service if it is not by force, or are misled with oaths and words that would damage more in the future than benefit now.¹⁶⁶

It is obvious that the Count of Alcaudete adopted a favorable position toward the local elites. In fact, in one of the letters that Alcaudete sent to Empress Isabel of Portugal, regent of Spain during Charles V's absence, he admitted his fears about the disaffection that the measure could provoke among the Navarrese nobility.¹⁶⁷ The Count of Alcaudete was not alone in this belief. The other pre-eminent figure in Navarrese politics, Diego de Avellaneda, the president of the Council of Navarre, expressed similar concerns about the issue.¹⁶⁸ As we can see, the memory of the earlier rebellions was still too fresh in the frontier kingdom to ignore the demands of the local elites.

The pressure applied by Rena, the viceroy, and president of the Council of Navarre convinced the emperor and his close collaborators to stop using Navarrese revenues to pay the garrisons. At the following assembly of the Navarrese estates, in 1529, the viceroy gave an inaugural speech in which he made this change in strategy clear:

As for the payment of the garrisons at the fortresses His Majesty says that despite that this expense is the one that most fairly should be paid from the service of this kingdom since it is to keep and protect it, His Majesty will order in the future to pay these garrisons from the budget of the Castilian fortresses.¹⁶⁹

The ghost of this controversial measure continued to haunt the negotiations between the imperial administration and the Navarrese estates in the years that followed. The viceroy's speech at the inaugural ceremony of the Navarrese estates in 1530 referred even more explicitly to the victory of local interests:

All that you would give is for yourselves and for the kingdom's good, and to make you more secure about it, His Majesty has ordered to pay the garrisons of his fortresses from the payment of the permanent infantry in accordance with what he promised you during the last negotiations on the economic service, so that everything from this kingdom will remain in it.¹⁷⁰

The imperial administration's surrender could not have been more evident. The promise to pay the garrisons with Castilian money can be understood as a victory for the local elite. However, it is also the clearest possible sign of Rena's commitment and that of many other political actors to maintain the status quo that was established after the conquest. What is really interesting for us here is that the maintenance of the previous consensus had a real impact on Navarre's position as a privileged kingdom in the financial landscape of the new Spanish Empire. A further examination of the financial documentation from Navarre's Chamber of Accounts shows that, during subsequent decades, the local elites continued to receive most of Navarre's revenues, while the military expenses were paid for with money from Castile.¹⁷¹ Thus Rena contributed to the creation of a symbiotic relationship between Navarre and Castile, a relationship in which the latter paid for the expenses of the former because Navarre was a bulwark that defended Castile.¹⁷² To put it simply, Rena helped to give Navarre one of the most privileged financial arrangements in the new Spanish Empire. Why was he doing that? The answer is simple: because his long experience in Navarre taught him that the best way to defend this frontier kingdom was to respect the consensus that cemented the adhesion of the local elites.

From his previous position as paymaster, Rena assisted in the construction and diffusion of the image of Navarre as a territory that needed external investment in order to fund the frontier's defense. In 1528, when that idea was seriously questioned, he made a step forward and helped to maintain the previous political consensus. Of course, Rena's strategy was far from being original. In fact, he was largely fighting to defend the Navarrese policy of Ferdinand the Catholic, which allowed the local elites their accustomed privileges in exchange for their support, against the new imperial agenda of his grandson, which required local revenues to fund the military frontier. Undoubtedly, the privileged position of the kingdom resulted in the maintenance of the privileged position of its elites. This is crucial, as the success of the incorporation process of the

kingdom relied on their approval. We can conclude that Rena not only helped Navarre to become integrated into the empire by constructing a new social order in the kingdom from below. He also contributed to its integration by taking part in the political and financial arrangements between Castile and the frontier kingdom.

Conclusions

Rena's case is a useful one for studying not only how influential figures like him could be part of the incorporation of political communities into the wider empire but also for analyzing the process of political incorporation from below. Rena influenced the way in which this political community was incorporated into the new Spanish Empire in different ways, especially by participating in the shaping of the kingdom's social fabric after the conquest and helping to grant Navarre a privileged position in the framework of the empire's finances. By taking an active role in the distribution of rewards among the key actors in Navarrese politics he was protecting the interests of the local elite, but he was also ensuring the cohesion of the local community. Rena behaved in a similar manner when he worked to get the members of the rebel faction included in the web of political favors, services, and rewards which determined political life of the kingdom. Hence, with his day-to-day activities he was promoting the incorporation of Navarre from below. This proved to be a crucial factor in bringing this frontier society into the nascent empire.

Rena also influenced the incorporation of Navarre into Charles V's empire by helping to determine the place that this political entity occupied within this vast polity under construction. During the crisis of 1528, Rena helped to create the image of Navarre as a frontier territory whose defense needed to be funded with resources from other territories, especially Castile. Indeed, Rena had been honing this image in the years before the crisis with his arguments about the specific function that the imperial administration should have in frontier areas. Thus, we can conclude that Rena played a decisive role in turning Navarre into a territory that consumed external resources, which was ultimately one of the key threads that bound Navarre to the Spanish Empire. Rena was able to make this contribution due to his experience on the ground. Paradoxically, his influence on Navarrese politics peaked after he left Navarre. Rena spent the following years traveling around Europe and the Mediterranean in the service of Charles V's imperial agenda, but he managed to maintain his personal connection with Navarre, where he returned at the acme of his career as bishop of Pamplona. He contributed to the incorporation of this frontier kingdom into the empire, but at the same time the stay in Navarre helped to make Rena one of the most reliable frontier makers of the empire.

Notes

1. The conquest of Navarre was first recounted at the beginning of the sixteenth century by one of its eyewitnesses. See Correa, *Historia de la Conquista*. The classic works on the conquest are Boissonnade, *Histoire de la reunion*; and Suárez Fernández, *Fernando el Católico y Navarra*. A polemical approach to the conquest can be found in Esarte Muniain, *Navarra, 1512–1530*. For an accurate reconstruction of the events, see Monteano Sorbet, *La guerra de Navarra*. For a recent overview of early modern Navarre, see Floristán Imízcoz, *El reino de Navarra*.
2. Ruiz Ibáñez and Sabatini, “Monarchy as Conquest”; and Ruiz Ibáñez, “Les acteurs de l’hégémonie.” On early modern conquest in general, see Green-grass, “Conquest and Coalescence.”
3. Day, *Conquest*, 112–31.
4. Potter, *Renaissance France at War*, 27–37, 67–151.
5. The authoritative work on the subject is Chavarría Múgica, “Monarquía fronteriza.”
6. Gresset, “Un fidèle de Louis XIV”; and Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, 116–18, 131–42, 234–35 and “The Historical Development of Political Clientelism.” More recently, Dee, *Expansion and Crisis*, 42–48, 71–75, 97–98, 172–78, 181–83.
7. There is a brief monograph on Rena’s role in the conquest of Navarre, but it is only the latest example of the black legend surrounding Rena among Basque nationalists. Esarte Muniain, *Juan Rena, clave*. The book is riddled with errors and thus of little scholarly value, though its multiple anachronisms make it amusing (the comparison of Rena with some current politicians on page 100 is an example).
8. Parker, “The Political World of Charles V.”
9. The conflict between these factions has been analyzed in Ramírez Vaquero, *Solidaridades nobiliarias*. On Navarre’s turbulent politics in Navarre before its conquest, see Adot Lerga, *Juan de Albret y Catalina de Foix*; and Fortún, “Derrumbe de la monarquía.”
10. “Pero la [gente] que era no podía ser mejor.” Letter from Ferdinand the Catholic to Juan de Lanuza. Logroño, December 1512. ADA, Lerín, C. 98, no. 44.
11. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 187-2.
12. Further information on the Castilian army can be found in Ladero Quesada, *Los últimos años de Fernando el Católico*, 185–99. For a firsthand account of the English army and the navy that transported the army, see Santoyo, *De crónicas y tiempos británicos*. On the wider context, see Gunn, *The English People at War*, 5–6.
13. Letter from Charles V to Cardinal Cisneros. Brussels, February 20, 1517. AGS, Estado, Leg. 496, no. 55.
14. AGN, APFR, Caj. 15, nos. 1–16. On the military administration of the time, see Stewart, “The Soldier, the Bureaucrat.”
15. AGN, Tribunales Reales, 26946, fols. 10–12.
16. Letter from Charles V to the Count of Miranda. Vitoria, February 1, 1524. ADA, Montijo, Caj. 50, no. 3, fol. 6.
17. Letter from Charles V to the Count of Miranda. Vitoria, February 7, 1524. ADA, Montijo, Caj. 50, no. 3, fol. 8.
18. Letter from Charles V to the Count of Miranda. Vitoria, February 24, 1524. ADA, Montijo, Caj. 50, no. 3, fol. 9.
19. Letter from Charles V to the Count of Miranda. Burgos, March 30, 1524. ADA, Montijo, Caj. 50, no. 3, fol. 20.

20. "Llave y cerca que defiende así al dicho reino [de Navarra] como a España." AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, nos. 6, 7.
21. Idoate, "Las fortificaciones de Pamplona"; and Echarri Iribarren, *Las murallas y la ciudadela de Pamplona*, 88–105.
22. See Hook, "Fortifications and the end of the Sienese State"; and Pepper and Adams, *Firearms and Fortifications*.
23. On the influence of Venetian military architecture in the Spanish Empire, see Espino López, "La tratadística militar hispana," 76.
24. See, for example, the report sent by Rena in 1515 to the treasurer Francisco de Vargas. AGN, APFR, Caj. 43, no. 1-1.
25. Letter from Francisco de Vargas to Juan Rena. Burgos, July 18, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, nos. 4–14.
26. AGN, APFR, Caj. 43, nos. 1–2 and Cartografía, no. 303.
27. An early example in AGN, APFR, Caj. 23, no. 12-2.
28. Pepper, "Sword and Spade."
29. AGN, APFR, Caj. 42, no. 2.
30. AGN, CO_PS, 1ª S, Leg. 23, no. 48.
31. Letter from the Bishop of Badajoz to Cardinal Cisneros. Brussels, March 8, 1516. Cfr. Fuente, *Cartas de los secretarios*, 2:260.
32. "Su Señoría me preguntó si a Vuestra Merced le ha parecido mal lo que había hecho en pedir licencia para venir a su casa, y yo le dije que a Vuestra Merced le ha parecido tan bien lo que Su Señoría había hecho que querría haber hecho otro tanto, *porque allá no servía a nadie* y que su persona de Vuestra Merced estaba a mucho peligro y que de ello Su Señoría era causa. Que Vuestra Merced suplicaba a su señoría le quisiese sacar de cautivo porque creía que si estuviese en tierra de moros que con dineros se rescataría y que así no pensaba pagar sino con la cabeza." Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan Rena. Chillón, February 19, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, no. 30-1.
33. Letter from Beltrán del Salto to Juan Rena. Talavera de la Reina, November 20, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, no. 4-4.
34. "Según los avisos y nuevas que he escrito a Vuestra Señoría que tengo de Francia y Bearne, razones que por todas maneras este reino se ponga a recaudo, y porque algunas de ellas no se pueden hacer sin la persona de Micer Juan Rena, por la mucha experiencia que tiene de ellas y por su buen seso e industria suplica a Vuestra Señoría le mande dar licencia para que luego se venga que demás que sera servicio de su majestad yo lo recibiré en mucha merced de vuestra señoría." Letter from the Duke of Nájera to Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht. Pamplona, April 8, 1521. AGN, APFR, Caj. 28, nos. 4–7.
35. Obviously, Rena's case was far from unique: similar cases can be found, for instance, in the conquest of Naples. Ladero Quesada, *Ejércitos y armadas*, 433–37.
36. AGN, APFR, Caj. 64, no. 5-1, fols. 8, 12, 31.
37. "Mi oficio aquí no ha sido sino tomar dineros prestados para suplir necesidades." Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de Vargas. September 30, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, no. 24–23.
38. Letter from Pedro de Malpaso to Juan Rena. Valladolid, January 24, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 40, nos. 18–31.
39. Letter from Juan Rena to Cardinal Cisneros. Pamplona, April 20, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, nos. 24–27.
40. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan Rena. Madrid, March 20, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, nos. 30–35.
41. "Micer Johan hizo un gran servicio a Su Majestad en aquellos trances y ello porque por el apresamiento del Mariscal todo el reino fue pacificado." Letter

- from Juan de Vergara to Juan Rena. Madrid, March 20, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, nos. 30–35, fol. 7.
42. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan Rena. Madrid, March 20, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, nos. 30–35, fols. 19–20.
43. AGN, APFR, Caj. 28, no. 6-1. On the Revolt of the Comuneros, see Haliczer, *The Comuneros of Castile*.
44. Letter from Francisco de Vargas to Charles V. Burgos, September 22, 1520. AGS, Estado, Leg. 8, no. 132.
45. Alonso García, *El erario del reino*, 303–25.
46. “El licenciado Vargas está aquí de noche y de día sirviendo a Vuestra Majestad con mucho trabajo y necesidad, y hasta aquí ha trampeado lo que ha podido y ahora como se ha de hacer unas trampas para cumplir otras ya no le queda que trampear, dígolo porque es hombre para mucho y en su facultad no puede ninguno servir mejor que él.” Letter from Constable of Castille to Charles V. Burgos, March 4, 1521. AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 1, no. 5, fol. 576.
47. Letter from Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht to Charles V. Valladolid, August 12 and 23, 1521. AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 2, no. 1, fols. 26, 29–30.
48. We know of the list of contributors thanks to Rena’s personal documents on this issue. See AGN, APFR, Caj. 29, no. 5-2 and Caj. 35, no. 14-4, fols. 7–11.
49. Further information on this critical context in Monteano Sorbet, *De Noáin a Amañur*.
50. The negotiation of this privilege was a crucial issue in the process of incorporating Navarre after the conquest. Chavarría Múgica, “Monarquía fronteriza,” 191–235.
51. These arrangements were frequent, and the local communities used to choose people with obvious political capital. Ladero Quesada, *Hernando de Zafra*, 68–71, 127. And AGS, Consejo y juntas de Hacienda, Leg. 10, nos. 64–89.
52. AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, no. 13, fol. 9. This information comes from the investigation of the legitimacy of these extraordinary expenses carried out by Licenciado Ronquillo of the royal council in 1518.
53. Letter from the Duke of Nájera to Juan Rena. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, nos. 3–16.
54. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Pamplona, May 25, 1524. AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 152.
55. Azcona, “El pago del subsidio,” 36.
56. AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, nos. 1–3.
57. Letter from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Vitoria, February 25, 1522. AGN, APFR, Caj. 87, no. 23-1.
58. On the Navarrese estates after the conquest, see García Bourrellier, Martínez Arce, and Solbes Ferri, *Las cortes de Navarra*, 2:1–119; and Floristán Imízcoz, “Las cortes de Navarra.”
59. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, nos. 1–2.
60. AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, nos. 1–6.
61. AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, no. 137.
62. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Burgos, September 9, 1523. AGN, APFR, Caj. 94, no. 2-1.
63. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Santo Domingo de la Calzada, September 19, 1523. AGN, APFR, Caj. 94, no. 2-2.
64. Letter from Diego de Avellaneda to Juan Rena. Pamplona, August 14, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 19-1.
65. Chavarría Múgica, “Monarquía fronteriza,” 100–89.
66. By “structural holes,” I refer to Ronald Burt’s notion of “empty spaces in social structure.” Burt, *Brokerage and Closure*, 16. These political gaps are

- normal during the processes of conquest and state building. Gribaudo, "La metáfora della rete," 94.
67. Suárez Fernández, *Fernando el Católico y Navarra*, 167–72; and Hernando, "Política y guerra en la frontera."
 68. "Persona que tiene mucho crédito en el dicho reino de Navarra." AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, no. 13, fol. 7.
 69. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*.
 70. Ostoni, *Il tesoro del re*, 67–143. On the importance of royal officials' reputation and their credit, see Fletcher, "Honour, Reputation and Local Officeholding."
 71. Fontaine, *L'économie morale*, 20–23.
 72. Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte*, 65–66; and Braddick, *State Formation*, 82.
 73. Clavero, *Antidora*, 8–10, 66–67.
 74. Moutoukias, "La notion de réseau en histoire sociale," 243.
 75. On the important role of the viceroys in Navarrese politics, see Floristán Imízcoz, "El virreinato de Navarra."
 76. Letter from Francisco Franco to Juan Rena. Málaga, June 18, 1515. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, no. 5-1.
 77. AGN, CO_PS, 1^oS, Leg. 2, Carp. 19. On Pamplona's local government, see Lasasoa Villanúa, *El "regimiento" municipal de Pamplona en el siglo XVI*.
 78. AGN, CO_PS, Caj. 190, no. 10-4; AGN, APFR, Caj. 65, nos. 2–3 and Caj. 64, no. 5-2, fols. 52–53. The reference to Rena's proximity to the viceroy in: Letter from Diego de Montoro to Juan Rena. Madrid, July 21, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 1, no. 22-2.
 79. On the Caparrosos's businesses, see Vázquez de Prada, *Mercaderes Navarros*, 217, 246, 281.
 80. AGN, APFR, Caj. 102, no. 16.
 81. Letter from Juan de Salinas to Juan Rena. Madrid, July 18, 1516. AGN, APFR, Caj. 2, no. 5.
 82. Letter from María Sanz de Caparroso to Alonso de Fonseca y Ulloa. Pamplona, February 27, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 4, no. 13.
 83. On the importance of the concept of service in the political life of the early modern Spanish Empire, see Esteban Estríngana, "El servicio."
 84. Ruiz Ibáñez and Sabatini, "Monarchy as Conquest," 523; and Chavarría Múgica, "Monarquía fronteriza," 63–64 and "Sombras de deslealtad."
 85. Letter from the Count of Miranda to Charles V. Pamplona, August 17, 1522. AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, no. 45.
 86. See, for instance, one of his lists of lenders in AGN, APFR, Caj. 29, no. 5-2.
 87. Vázquez de Prada, *Mercaderes Navarros*, 139–58, 181–207.
 88. For his reports about this matter, see AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, no. 1; and AGN, CO_PS, 2^a S. Annex, Leg. 7, no. 50.
 89. "Suplica que este receptor sea Martín Cruzate que además de ser muy buen servidor de Su Majestades persona hacendada y de crédito que entiendo de menester puede socorrer con lo suyo." AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, nos. 1–4, fol. 3. On Martín Cruzat's businesses, see Vázquez de Prada, *Mercaderes Navarros*, 183–84, 189–91, 195–96.
 90. AGN, Reino, A. Cortes, L. 20, fol. 205.
 91. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Libros de Cédulas, 247, fols. 142, 145, 150, 151–52, 167–68. More references to favors to members of this family in AGN, CO_PS, 1^aS, Leg. 18, nos. 11, 61.
 92. "Con su persona y hacienda." AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 184, no. 18, fol. 3.
 93. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Legs. 132–24. For further information on him, see Vázquez de Prada, *Mercaderes Navarros*, 70, 297.

94. "Yo y mis hijos . . . hemos servido en nombre de Vuestra Majestad a sus visorreyes y capitanes generales y gente de Guerra emprestándoles grandes cantidades de dineros sin ningún interes es i no solo por la gran afección de servir a Vuestra Majestad como de ello Vuestra Majestad podrá ser informado de sus visorreyes y capitanes generales y de Micer Juan Rena." AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 148, no. 199.
95. Letter from Martín de Echaide to Juan Rena. Pamplona, August 10, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 20-1.
96. "Como los más de estos señores son nuevos en este reino no me conocen ni saben mi fidelidad y servicios . . . pues Vuestra Merced sabe si mis servicios merecen esta merced." Letter from Martín de Echaide to Juan Rena. Pamplona, October 15, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, nos. 20-23.
97. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 14.
98. AGN, APFR, Caj. 27, no. 11.
99. Martínez Millán and Ezquerria Revilla, "Integración de las élites sociales"; and Floristán Imízcoz, "Honor estamental y merced real," 146.
100. Letter from Carlos de Artieda to Juan Rena. Pamplona, February 21, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 21.
101. AGN, APFR, Caj. 102, no. 16; and AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 367.
102. Letter from Martín Jiménez to Juan Rena. Puente La Reina, February 25, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 23-1. See also AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, no. 14-4, fol. 11.
103. Letter from Jimeno López to Juan Rena. Puente La Reina, November 18, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 5, no. 9-7.
104. The draft in AGN, APFR, Caj. 5, no. 32.
105. Similar examples on the incorporation of frontier cities can be found in Chittolini, "Milan in the Face of the Italian Wars"; Gantelet, "Entre France et Empire"; and Windler, "¿De la monarquía compuesta a la monarquía absoluta?"
106. AGN, APFR, Caj. 83, no. 5, fol. 1. On the negotiations regarding this city's privilege and the quartering of troops, see Chavarría Múgica, "La capitulación de la 'cabeza del reino'."
107. Letter from Licentiate Jauregui to Juan Rena. Pamplona, February 6, 1521. AGN, Archivos Personales, Rena, Caj. 87, no. 3-1.
108. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de Vargas. May 8, 1521. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, no. 24-12.
109. See the copy in AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, no. 24-18.
110. AGN, APFR, Caj. 28, no. 35-14, fol. 2.
111. AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, nos. 1-7.
112. AGN, APFR, Caj. 28, no. 36-2.
113. "Que esta ciudad está en frontera y a los enemigos tan cercana." "Suplican a Vuestra Majestad que siempre . . . tenga especial cuidado de aquella ciudad y en la defensión de ella pues es cosa que tanto cumple a su real servicio." The draft with Rena's notes, advice, and corrections in AGN, APFR, Caj. 28, no. 36-1.
114. AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, no. 107.
115. "Unos dineros que dicen que la ciudad prestó a Micer Juan Rena para la toma de Maya . . . y para esto la ciudad no tiene razón aunque para ello tengan cédulas de Su Majestad para ser pagados, porque la ciudad de Pamplona nunca dio ni prestó dineros a Micer Juan a cambio ni de otra manera, sino que vecinos particulares de ella amigos suyos se los prestaron sin cambio ni interese que después se les pagaron, y así la ciudad de lo que ella no dio ni prestó a interese ni a cambio ni de otra manera no tiene que pedir ni Su Majestad por que pagar." AGS, Estado, Leg. 353, no. 218.

116. Chavarría Múgica, "Monarquía fronteriza," 106–22. According to the political culture of the day, pardon and forgiveness were two crucial assets for the monarchs since they were guarantors of social cohesion. Cardim, "O poder dos afectos," 278–88. On the use of royal pardon as a political tool, see Soen, "La réitération de pardons collectifs."
117. AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 3, no. 146.
118. Letter from Charles V to the Count of Miranda. Burgos, May 23, 1524. ADA, Montijo, Caj. 50, no. 3, fol. 31.
119. AGN, APFR, Caj. 35, nos. 1–9. The authorities frequently relied on ecclesiastics in peacemaking arrangements. Similarly, factional disputes between aristocratic families often employed high-ranking ecclesiastics to negotiate peace. Kumhera, *The Benefits of Peace*, 163–68.
120. "He holgado de ver la respuesta que el condestable de ese reino dio a Micer Juan Rena sobre lo que toca al Mariscal." Letter from Charles V to the Count of Miranda. Burgos, June 17, 1524. ADA, Montijo, Caj. 50, no. 3, fol. 36.
121. AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 161.
122. Letter from Juan Rena to the Count of Miranda. Maya, August 9, 1522. AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, no. 43. Rena's attitude is connected to the generous policy of the emperor. Interestingly, Charles V was much more clement with the Navarrese rebels than with the Castilian *comuneros*. Floristán Imízcoz, "Renovar lealtades colectivas tras una rebelión."
123. On Miguel de Añues's commercial activity, see Vázquez de Prada, *Mercaderes Navarros*, 139–48.
124. AGN, CO_PS, Caj. 168, no. 80, fol. 13; and AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 128, no. 302, fols. 15–17.
125. AGN, APFR, Caj. 66, no. 2-1. Añues's collaboration in supplying the Castilian army in 1512 was very much appreciated by the Spanish authorities. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Libros de Cédulas, 247, fols. 369–70; AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, Leg. 250; and ACA, Reg. 3584, fols. 29–30, 117–18, 172.
126. Letter from Martín de Javier to Sancho de Yesa and letter from the Abad de la Oliva to Sancho de Yesa. AGN, CO_PS, 2^aS, Anexo, Leg. 1, nos. 34-1, 35-5.
127. Letter from Miguel de Añues to Sancho de Yesa. Sangüesa, April 20, 1518. AGN, APFR, Caj. 103, no. 9-2.
128. The different versions of the pardon in BNE, MS 1757, fol. 5, and AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 3, no. 146. On Rena's advice, see the Letter from Juan Rena to Conde de Miranda. Maya, August 6, 1522. AGS, Estado, Leg. 345, no. 47.
129. Letter from Giovanni Poggio to Juan Rena. Madrid, March 24, 1525. AGN, APFR, Caj. 91, no. 26-2.
130. AGN, APFR, Caj. 43, no. 1.
131. Letter from Nicolao de Grimaldo to Juan Rena. Valladolid, November 5, 1524. AGN, APFR, Caj. 3, no. 33-2.
132. Letter from Giovanni Poggio to Juan Rena. Toledo, May 13, 1525. AGN, APFR, Caj. 91, nos. 26–27.
133. Goñi was also included in the royal pardon. BNE, MS 1757, fol. 5.
134. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Pueblos, Leg. 14, no. 149.
135. Letter from Martín de Ollacarizqueta to Juan Rena. Pamplona, n.d. AGN, APFR, Caj. 92, nos. 31–35.
136. Letter from Doctor Goñi to Juan Rena. Pamplona, April 14, 1528. AGN, APFR, Caj. 92, no. 2-2.

137. Letter from Doctor Goñi to Juan Rena. Pamplona, April 14, 1528. AGN, APFR, Caj. 92, no. 2-1.
138. Letter from Giovanni Poggio to Juan Rena. Toledo, December 29, 1528. AGN, APFR, Caj. 92, nos. 32–36.
139. On early modern peacebuilding, see Neufeld, “From Peacemaking to Peacebuilding.”
140. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 249–303; Rizzo, “Porte, chiavi e bastioni”; and Thompson, “Public Expenditure and Political Unity.”
141. Escribano Páez, “¿De hombre del rey a hombre de la villa?”
142. “Por dos causas nadie que tenga cargo de dineros acá puede hacer lo que Vuestra Merced me escribe . . . la una es que como Vuestra Merced sabe estamos en lugar de frontera y ofrécese cada hora cosas, como Vuestra Merced ha bien visto, y vea que no habiendo dineros siempre los buscan prestados y cuando no los hallasen, por manera de hablar, se habría de tomar las cruces de las iglesias y candelas para cumplir las necesidades que se ofrecen.” Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de Vargas. Pamplona, May 8, 1520. AGN, APFR, Caj. 24, no. 24-12.
143. AGN, CO_PS, 1^a S, Leg. 4, no. 14. The *Cámara de Comptos* was a court that had jurisdiction on financial matters and the fiscal system of the kingdom. Huici Goñi, *La Cámara de Comptos*.
144. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 5-1.
145. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 8.
146. At that time, the judges of the chamber of accounts were Lope Cruzat, Bernal Cruzat, Bernal de Eguía, and Doctor Goñi. AGN, CO_REG, 2^a S, no. 9, fols. 161–62; AGN, APFR, Caj. 2, no. 33 and Caj. 70, no. 5-2; and AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Leg. 202, no. 3, fol. 2.
147. Letter from Rodrigo de Echarri to Juan Rena. Pamplona, January 26, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 5, no. 7-1.
148. AGN, CO_REG, 2^a S, no. 9, fols. 164–65. On the Navarrese tax system and the expenses paid with these resources, see García Zúñiga, “Taxation in the Kingdom of Navarre,” and the data available in García Zúñiga, *Hacienda, población y precios*.
149. AGN, CO_PS, 1^a S, Leg. 23, no. 66.
150. The Navarrese elites received an important share of the resources derived from taxes due to their privileges and offices. Gracia Zúñiga, “Taxation in the Kingdom of Navarre,” 551.
151. AGN, CO_PS, 1^a S, Leg. 23, nos. 57, 58.
152. He probably did this because he was a friend of Miguel de Herrera, the governor of the fortress of Pamplona, who asked for his help in order to pay his soldiers. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 14.
153. Pardo Molero, “El segundo plano del imperio,” 604.
154. Casals, *L'Emperador i els catalans*, 180–95, 210–13.
155. Letter from the Count of Alcaudete to the Royal Council of Castile. Pamplona, June 13, 1528. AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 150. Further information on the conflict in the assembly of 1528 in Escribano Páez, *El coste de la defensa*, 204–16.
156. Letter from Martin de Echaide to Juan Rena. Pamplona, August 10, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, nos. 20–21.
157. Letter from Diego de Avellaneda to Juan Rena. Pamplona, August 14, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 19-1.
158. Letter from Diego de Avellaneda to Juan Rena. Pamplona, January 3, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 19-2.
159. Letter from Diego de Avellaneda to Juan Rena. Pamplona, February 15, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 19-3.

160. Rena's draft of the report in AGN, APFR, Caj. 70, no. 7.
161. The real incomes and expenses for these years are recorded in AGN, CO_REG, 2^a S, no. 9.
162. The *Tierra de Vascos* was the Navarrese territory in the north of the Pyrenees abandoned *de facto* by Charles V in those years: this is the reason why the salaries of the nobility from this region were not paid. Floristán Imízcoz, *El reino de Navarra*, 93–95.
163. The report managed by the royal administration in "Relación del cargo y data de la renta del Reino de Navarra en cada un año así del ordinario como del extraordinario." AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 150.
164. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Pamplona, April 29, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 45, nos. 1–9.
165. On the influence of local interests on political communication between the councils and the local spheres, see Brendecke, "Informing the Council."
166. "En el agravio de la paga de las fortalezas dicen que si se paga de lo ordinario de este reino que no se pueden pagar los juros perpetuos y mercedes de por vida y acostamientos del, y que pues del servicio que ellos hacen no puede redundar ningún provecho general ni particular a los naturales del reino que no le harán si no se les jura y promete de pagarles sus consignaciones y salarios y mercedes del servicio que hicieren prefiriéndoles a todas las otras cosas que en este reino se libran, excepto al consejo. Y como esto es imposible pagándose las fortalezas de la hacienda del reino . . . porque falta para cumplir lo ordinario más de quinientos mil maravedís y que no han de desistir de este agravio . . ., y si el reino sabe que esto se ha de pagar, así no harán el otorgamiento si no es por fuerza y son engañados con juramentos y palabras que para adelante podrían dañar más que ahora aprovechar." Letter from the Count of Alcaudete to Charles V. Pamplona, June 13, 1528. AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 147.
167. Letter from the Count of Alcaudete to Empress Isabel. Pamplona, June 13, 1528. AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 150.
168. Letter from Diego de Avellaneda to the Council of Castile. Pamplona, June 14, 1528. AGS, Estado, Leg. 344, no. 108. On the important role of this institution in Navarrese politics, see Salcedo Izu, *El Consejo Real de Navarra*.
169. "De la paga de la gente de las fortalezas dice Su Majestad que no embarcante que aquel gasto es el que más justamente se debía pagar del servicio de este reino pues es para la conservación y seguridad de él, que Su Majestad mandará de aquí adelante pagar la dicha gente de las fortalezas de Castilla." AGN, Reino, A. Cortes, L. 20, fol. 288.
170. "Lo que dieredéis es para vosotros mismos y para el bien del reino y porque de esto estéis más asegurados Su Majestad ha mandado que se pague la gente de sus fortalezas de la paga de la infantería ordinaria en cumplimiento de lo que en el otorgamiento pasado se os prometió, de manera que todo lo que el reino le sirviere se queda en él." AGN, Reino, Cortes, L. 20, fol. 291.
171. AGN, CO_REG, 2^a S., no. 12, fols. 58–64; no. 14, fols. 44–49; no. 16, fols. 72–83; no. 17, fols. 39–43; no. 19, fols. 39–47; and no. 21, fols. 89–105.
172. On the financial relationship between Navarre and Castile, see Escribano Páez, *El coste de la defensa*, 169–83.

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4 Constructing a Maritime Frontier

Politics and Sea Power in the Mediterranean World During the Age of Charles V

Introduction

In 1525, after having spent more than a decade serving the Crown in Navarre, Juan Rena left the kingdom. An anonymous spy for the French king understood this event to be a warning sign. In one of the spy's reports, he included a significant reference to Rena's departure: "The emperor has given the order to summon a Venetian who lives in Pamplona called Micer Johan Rena. He is the man whom the emperor trusts the most to organize and supply an army by land or by sea."¹ It is legitimate to question the extent to which the emperor considered Rena the most trustworthy person to carry out these tasks, but what is beyond doubt is that Rena enjoyed a well-established reputation as a reliable expert in military logistics. Rena's departure set off alarm bells for the French, but contrary to what the spy predicted, Rena did not go on to take part in the mobilization of an army or a navy. During the following years he participated in a much more ambitious task: the construction of a maritime frontier in the Mediterranean world. Addressing this process from the perspective of Rena's role may seem a bit strange considering the prevailing view of a Mediterranean divide arising from the imperial struggle between the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires. Classic studies on this subject have adopted an approach focused on the problem of how the inner circles of the imperial government projected their authority over geographical distances, on the political peripheries.² As a result, scholarship on Habsburg sea power in the Mediterranean has mostly focused on two aspects: the major battles (mainly but not only Lepanto) and the technicalities of naval warfare. This scholarship has shown that the combination of technical limitations and the inconclusive nature of naval battles meant that imperial hegemony in the Mediterranean could not be imposed by defeating the enemy and destroying its navy. Rather, hegemony was achieved in the day-to-day struggle to counter the enemy's threats to imperial routes and coastal domains.³ Charles V first, and his heirs later, were obliged to wage war against the Ottomans in the Mediterranean Sea—that is, to defend their own possessions rather than to

attempt to destroy the enemy. However, the way in which this war was carried out was the subject of heated debates among the inner circles of the imperial government and the different local elites who participated in the military effort.⁴

This chapter aims to shed new light on the political construction of the maritime frontier surrounding Charles V's dominions in the Mediterranean. Contrary to the ambitious (yet equally conservative) strategy of Philip II in the Mediterranean, most of the efforts during the reign of his father centered on an effective defense of his Italian dominions.⁵ Therefore, this period is characterized by the absence of any major events of naval warfare (the Battle of Preveza being the one exception), while efforts to construct the maritime area as a frontier were ongoing. Rather than focusing on the discussions inside the War Council, I analyze how men like Rena, who served the emperor on the ground, participated in the shaping of a new frontier made up of strongholds, ships, asymmetric power relations, practices, norms, and ideas related to the defense of Charles V's Mediterranean domains from the Ottoman threat. In order to do this, I first reconstruct Rena's career in the naval administration in the framework of Charles V's evolving Mediterranean strategy. After that, I focus on Rena's activity as commissioner of the navy during the campaign of 1532, the first major naval confrontation between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Beyond being a key episode in the formulation of the military strategy adopted by the Habsburg authorities in the Mediterranean, this campaign was the first joint operation of Charles V's government and Andrea Doria's war machinery, and as such it gave rise to a complex system of practices and norms for defending the new frontier. After examining Rena's role in the shaping of the norms and practices governing the collaboration of both parties, I focus on Rena's own ideas on the construction and defense of the new maritime frontier in the context of the evolving Mediterranean geopolitics of the mid-sixteenth century.

Juan Rena's Career on the Mediterranean Frontier

The Mediterranean's changing status as a primary or secondary theater in the imperial politics of the sixteenth century used to be framed within grand strategy narratives centered on the sovereigns' master plans.⁶ Popular as they are, these narratives have been criticized because such a monolithic approach does not reflect the plurality of actors and agendas shaping imperial politics.⁷ It is not my intention here to discuss what constituted a "grand strategy" in sixteenth-century imperial politics, but Rena's career in the Mediterranean offers a good opportunity to assess the extent to which regional politics were not only the result of a cohesive and common objective (defending the empire) but also a consequence of shifting geopolitical circumstances. By taking this approach, we can

better understand the actions of the different figures (Charles V, Andrea Doria, Rena, etc.) as repeated attempts to adapt the empire's defense to their own interests while coping with different challenges as they arose.

Taking this into account, it comes as no surprise that Rena's career in the Mediterranean was anything but simple or predictable. In late 1525, he left Pamplona to join up with the imperial court in Toledo, and from there he accompanied Charles V on his journey to Seville and Granada. The first sign that Rena's path would be a long and winding one can be seen in his mistaken expectations. Rena was convinced that, after years serving the emperor on the frontiers, he was about to be promoted to a position in the imperial court. However, this was not a journey from the frontier to the center of the empire; this was a journey from the frontier in Navarre to another one, in the Mediterranean. Charles V's stay in Granada during the summer of 1526 was suddenly interrupted by the diplomatic storm brewing in Italy after the signing of the League of Cognac.⁸ This new threat to monarchical interests in the Italian Peninsula invited a quick response. Charles decided to send an army to Italy in order to protect his domains and allies. The hero of the previous campaign and the new viceroy of Naples, Charles de Lannoy, was appointed as captain general.⁹ At the same time, the logistical challenge of mobilizing a navy in short order was entrusted to Juan Rena. This was Rena's first appointment in the Mediterranean. Why was he selected for it? Rena was nominated for such an undertaking because of his lengthy experience in military logistics.¹⁰ In the instructions to Charles de Lannoy, Rena's authority in the logistical sphere was justified by his experience.¹¹ The members of the War Council perceived Rena as someone capable of facing huge logistical challenges like quickly organizing a naval convoy. In a way, the appointment of Rena (a key figure in the mountainous frontier region of Navarre) illustrates the shortage of human capital in a geopolitical region that had not yet become crucial to Charles V's imperial strategy. As Pedro de Zuazola, the secretary of the War Council, wrote in one of his letters to Rena, without his "diligence and industry," it would have been impossible to supply the navy in the specified time frame.¹² The duties of this role encompassed the acquisition of all the foodstuffs and other products that the navy would need for its journey, as well as their collection and transport to the points of embarkation and their later redistribution. In short, Rena was responsible for making the navy's journey possible.

Despite all the problems that such a difficult task posed, Juan Rena was able to organize the navy in record time. He had reason to be proud, and, writing to his friend the secretary of the War Council, he boasted: "it has been no little service to organize so many provisions and so well, and to purvey 9,000 men in such a brief time."¹³ Rena's words sought recognition for being able to achieve such results, and the following autumn, this recognition arrived in the most obvious way. The enemy's offensive

in Italy warranted a new response. Once again, the War Council proceeded to raise an army to protect the Italian possessions threatened by the enemy's navy, and once again the task of outfitting the force was entrusted to Rena, who was named purveyor general on November 20, 1527.¹⁴ However, this time his appointment as purveyor general was coupled with a new task: he was obliged to oversee the recruitment and management of the different companies in this army.¹⁵ Later on, Rena was ordered to coordinate the transport of part of these troops to Flanders.¹⁶ Apparently, the emperor and the members of the inner circle of the imperial government had so much faith in Rena's organizational skills that they believed the ships would be ready as soon as Rena arrived at the rendezvous point, as attested to by Secretary Zuazola in one of his letters.¹⁷ In fact, Rena proved to be a remarkably efficient servant for Charles V, who needed to respond quickly to the military challenges threatening his distant possessions.

Clear proof of Rena's success in the different missions entrusted to him by the imperial administration can be seen in his later appointments. During Charles V's stay in Barcelona in 1529, Rena was appointed purveyor of the court.¹⁸ His next assignment involved planning the emperor's journey to Italy in 1529. This journey was a milestone in Charles V's reign. Not only was the monarch traveling to Italy to be crowned emperor by Pope Clement VII, but this journey was also a crucial step in the consolidation of his power over his Italian possessions, since only by going to Italy could Charles V reinforce his imperial authority by establishing the terms of his rule with the local elites and the pope.¹⁹ Empires were built on demonstrations of power like this journey; and the royal servants who made them possible deserved some fame. When the chronicler Francisco López de Gómara referred to the emperor's journey, he mentioned Rena as the purveyor for Charles V's fleet.²⁰ However, this was actually not the case, as the viceroy of Catalonia had already been put in charge of organizing this fleet when Rena tried to obtain the assignment.²¹ Once again, Rena was not able to foresee the emperor's next move. Nevertheless, Rena took part in the logistical and financial arrangements for the navy. Clear evidence of this can be seen in the budgets and other documents that Rena drafted for the official purveyor, the Archbishop of Bari.²² Rena was also appointed as purveyor of the auxiliary fleet to transport the 2,000 soldiers who would escort the emperor.²³ Once again, he was able to organize this convoy in record time: just ten days.²⁴ Rena touted his success at organizing fleets in record time, but his achievements had more to do with the urgency of the missions than with his logistical skills. Clear proof of this was the fact that, while preparing the fleet, he also organized the supply of arms and ammunition to the Spanish garrison deployed on the Peñón of Algiers when it was besieged by Hayreddin Barbarossa. This time, however, Rena's haste was in vain, since the Spanish stronghold was conquered before the arrival of the needed reinforcements.²⁵ In sum,

by 1529 Rena was working on the logistics of the two main prongs of Charles V's Mediterranean policy: staging imperial power and countering the Ottoman advance.

For the next two years, Rena remained in Charles V's imperial court far from the Mediterranean frontier, profiting from the rare calm in this stormy period of geopolitical history. During this period, he served the emperor in administrative matters closely related to imperial finances, such as inquiries into the military administration's debts to Milanese financiers.²⁶ However, this quiet interlude was not to last long. In early 1532, Rena left the emperor's entourage to go to Genoa, where he was given the post of commissioner general of the imperial navy. Just as Rena's 1525 departure from Navarre to present himself at court was understood by the French as sounding an alarm, his departure from Charles V's court in Regensburg seven years later announced new military upheavals. Rena's appointment coincided with the emperor's decision to build a powerful navy able to counter Ottoman sea power in the Mediterranean.²⁷ Despite the Catholic Monarchs' efforts to establish a permanent royal navy, by the early years of their grandson's reign, the navy was in absolute decline.²⁸ Some bitter lessons such as the complete destruction of the Spanish galley squadron by Barbary corsairs in 1528 obliged the emperor to build a new navy.²⁹ This effort was facilitated by an attempt to establish a naval administration. Just before Rena's mission, the War Council drafted the Galleys Ordinance, which established how this force would function and be administered.³⁰ This is the framework in which Rena's activity as commissioner takes on its full meaning, and in which he himself began to grow in importance.

As commissioner of the navy, Rena took part in the early stages of the prolonged naval confrontation between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires.³¹ Once again, Rena was helping to reinforce the imperial authority of Charles V, as the war against the Ottomans and the exhibition of his military power were the two main components of Charles' imperial strategy.³² Interestingly, Rena did his best to dodge this mission. After realizing that his political contacts were useless in helping him avoid being nominated commissioner of the navy, Rena accused his old friend, the War Council's secretary, of "throwing me to the bull's horns" for not appointing him to another position.³³ Nevertheless, and despite his bitter complaints, Rena's participation in the conquest of Koroni earned him widespread fame. The Venetian writer Marino Sanuto noted in his diaries that rumors circulated about Rena's activities in connection to the new naval power of the Spanish Empire. According to Sanuto, Charles V gave the order to prepare an enormous fleet in Genoa to transport about 20,000 soldiers, a mission that the emperor entrusted to "the reverend dominos Joanne Reni [*sic*], who used to have this charge."³⁴ Rena's prominent role in the military machinery of the Spanish Empire attracted Sanuto's attention on many other occasions. For instance, in the spring

of 1532, Sanuto made reference to Rena's trip to Genoa, noting that he was a "Venetian but a servant of the Catholic King for a long time," frequently employed in naval projects.³⁵ Rena's reputation as an expert in Mediterranean naval logistics was reaching its peak. He continued to be given new responsibilities in this field; and, after finishing the campaign against the Ottoman navy in the winter of 1532, Rena was ordered to coordinate the emperor's journey from Genoa to Spain the following year.³⁶

Despite the multiple changes and uncertainties, Rena continued to rise, in conjunction with the success of the emperor's Mediterranean policy. In 1534, with the preparations for the conquest of Tunis as a backdrop, Rena was appointed to direct the construction of a squadron of 20 galleys in Barcelona's royal shipyards.³⁷ Once again, Rena was working to make the empire a reality, as the campaign against Tunis was another key component in Charles V's imperial policy.³⁸ Rena's efforts in directing the shipbuilding process were very well rewarded: shortly afterwards he received one of the most important honors of his career: the bishopric of Alghero in Sardinia.³⁹ After having directed the construction of the galleys in Barcelona, Rena joined the expedition against Tunis. During the campaign, he was included in the inner circle of military councilors who advised Charles V on the campaign.⁴⁰ After Tunis was taken, Rena oversaw the journey of the imperial army back to Italy, where the emperor continued exploiting the political capital earned through his African crusade.⁴¹ Charles V's esteem for Rena at that time was evident. For instance, in a letter that the emperor sent to the viceroy of Naples, he ordered him to treat Rena "as is reasonable to be done with him, because he is such a good servant of ours."⁴² Undoubtedly, serving the emperor on the Mediterranean frontier was far more profitable and rewarding than doing so in the faraway mountains of Navarre.

Rena's career in the Mediterranean was interrupted in 1536 by Charles V's new offensive against Francis I. Even though this new chapter in the long-standing conflict with France diverted the emperor's priorities away from the anti-Ottoman campaigns in the Mediterranean, it gave Rena the opportunity to take on further responsibilities in the military administration. In the spring of 1536, Rena was in charge of the logistics to supply the imperial army in northern Italy.⁴³ After that, he joined the army that invaded Provence, serving as a commissioner general. Once again, he faced the difficult challenge of supplying "such a large army, dispersed over various areas, in a strange kingdom, and through mountains," as his servant Francisco Duarte wrote in his account of the journey.⁴⁴ After years serving on the Mediterranean frontier, Rena was doing exactly the same as he had done in 1524 when the imperial army invaded France by crossing the Pyrenees. However, Rena was not returning to his point of departure. During the emperor's stay in Genoa after the campaign, Rena began his rise in the church hierarchy thanks to his military services.

He received the bishopric of Tuy, in the north of the Iberian Peninsula. The royal chronicler Pedro Girón identified a clear connection between Rena's military services on the maritime frontier and this royal favor: "The bishopric of Tuy was given to Micer Juan Rena, bishop of [Alghero]. He was born in Florence [*sic*], he had the *naturalaleza* (nativeness) of these kingdoms, and he was a wise man in organizing naval forces."⁴⁵ In the spring of 1537, Rena was named purveyor of a new naval force on the northern coast of Castile. This force had initially been designated to transport a new army to help defend Flanders from the French, but when the French king abandoned his offensive in the north, Rena's project was aborted.⁴⁶ In these hectic circumstances, Rena had no time to pay a visit to his nearby diocese.

Rena's reputation as one of the most reliable servants of the monarch on the Mediterranean frontier was evident during the final years of his life, and it granted him new promotions like his appointment as bishop of Pamplona, maybe the most important award he received over the course of his life. When Rena entered Pamplona on September 18, 1538 (where he was "received with demonstrations of great joy"), it was to occupy, finally, one of the most important positions in Navarrese society.⁴⁷ Interestingly, Rena's rise to this prominent position was hastened by his services on the faraway Mediterranean frontier, which also contributed to his remarkable rise in Spanish politics.⁴⁸ During the royal entry of Emperor Charles V into Barcelona during his journey to the 1538 Nice peace negotiations, Juan Rena was among the first ranks together with other prominent servants of the emperor, such as his secretary, Francisco de los Cobos, or his most trusted advisor, Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, in the parade of noblemen escorting the ruler—quite an honor, considering the symbolism around this journey.⁴⁹ Finally, after more than two decades working to transform Charles V's imperial ambitions into a reality, Rena's many services had granted him a place in the first tier of the Crown's servants. Rena's career can be seen as a progressive ascent, but we should not forget that his accumulation of posts and honors was possible because of the emperor's need to deal with the unpredictable and numerous challenges on the empire's frontiers.

To a large extent, Rena's career mirrored the changing nature of Charles V's imperial agenda in the Mediterranean. His astonishing accumulation of posts was the result of the lack of a proper military administration in the Mediterranean before the late 1520s. His first duties there were closely connected to the final stages of the Italian Wars and the fight against the French threat to Charles V's domains in Italy. In contrast, in the early 1530s Rena began to serve the emperor in the effort to counter the Ottoman threat to his Mediterranean domains. There is no doubt that Rena benefited from the growing importance of the Mediterranean frontier in Charles V's geopolitical strategy, since his services to the emperor there allowed him to climb to the upper echelons of the

imperial administration. In sum, Rena's career was greatly influenced by events in the Mediterranean. Let us now assess the extent to which the construction of the new imperial frontier in the Mediterranean was influenced by Rena's activity. In order to do so, it is necessary to focus on his activity in one of the offices he held: commissioner of the navy.

A Joint Operation: The Campaign of 1532

On August 8, 1528, Juan Rena wrote a letter to his friend, the Genoese banker Nicolao Cattaneo, sharing with the financier a vague rumor that had reached Pamplona, where he was staying that same day:

I know of no news to write to Your Graces other than some news that arrived today via Zaragoza, saying that Andrea Doria has come with six galleys to Barcelona, and he says that he has come to serve His Majesty. I cannot confirm this to Your Graces because, as I said, it is a piece of news that just arrived today.⁵⁰

Given the recent events in the Italian Wars, Rena's skepticism was more than justified. It goes without saying that he was in no way able to know that he would be called upon to play a key role in the shaping of the new alliance between Andrea Doria and Charles V. In 1532, Rena was appointed as commissioner of the first naval force jointly organized by the Genoese admiral and the Habsburg imperial administration. As such, he had to fit together two different networks: the bureaucracy he belonged to and the war machine commanded by the most famous military entrepreneur of the sixteenth century, Andrea Doria. Getting the two military organizations to mesh together was crucial to the success of this naval campaign, and by doing this, Rena was also playing a pivotal role in the construction of the new naval frontier protecting Charles V's Mediterranean dominions.

The *condotta* signed by Andrea Doria and Charles V is considered one of the most significant political events during this period of European history. This agreement allowed the latter to repulse the French military threat to his Italian domains, as well as to establish an effective and enduring dominion over the Italian Peninsula. On the other side, by backing the emperor in his struggle against Francis I for European hegemony, Andrea Doria achieved a prominent role for Genoa in the continental political scene and a privileged position for himself as head of the new Genoese republic. The scholarship on this issue has traditionally focused on the *asiento* signed by Doria and Charles V as the foundational text of this allegiance.⁵¹ Of course, this text is of paramount importance; nevertheless, it did not fully stipulate the terms of Doria's military service.⁵² Contrary to the official version, the alliance between the emperor and Doria was not achieved easily or without tension.⁵³ In fact, most

of the terms of their strategic cooperation were defined in response to the strains that emerged when the alliance was implemented; and in this definition, many different actors were involved, one of whom was Juan Rena. He worked hand in hand with Doria and the key members of the imperial administration to organize the first joint forces to engage the Ottomans. It was from this privileged position that he played a major role in shaping the rules of the collaboration between the emperor and the war entrepreneur in the making of the new naval frontier.

In order to fully understand the significance of the campaign of 1532, it is necessary to place it in the context of Charles V's struggle against the threat of the Ottoman fleet.⁵⁴ This naval operation was the first serious attempt to confront Ottoman naval power by combining the resources of Andrea Doria, the most important *asentista*, and the imperial administration.⁵⁵ The naval force was mobilized mainly to prevent an Ottoman attack on the coasts of southern Italy that some *avici* (news) suggested was imminent.⁵⁶ The main goal was to destroy the enemy's navy but its hasty retreat made this impossible, so Doria decided to take the opportunity to conquer Koroni (see Figure 4.1) as well as to destroy Lepanto's fortifications, two key shelters for the Ottoman navy on its route to Italy.⁵⁷ This plan worked quite well with the defensive strategy adopted by the Spanish authorities in the Mediterranean, because naval warfare against the Ottomans was fought on the premise that fleets had to capture the enemy's bases in order to obtain decisive results.⁵⁸ Hence, since both

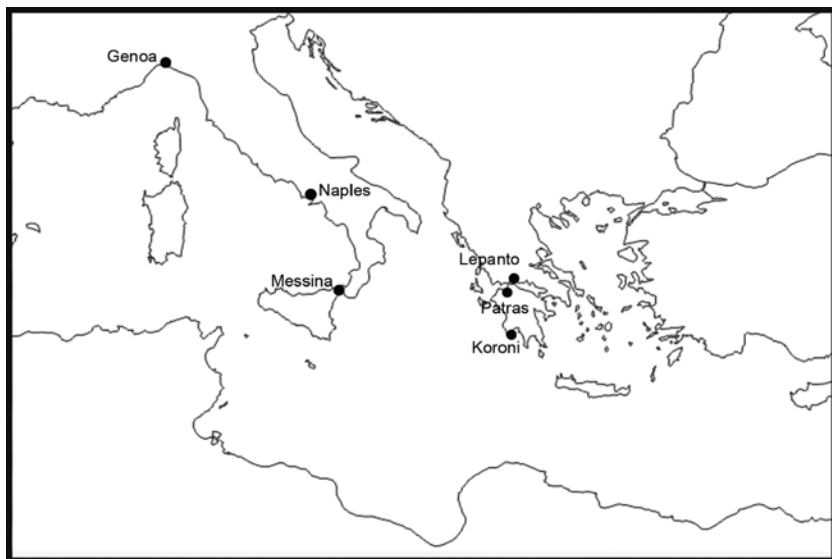


Figure 4.1 Map of the Koroni Campaign (1532)

Source: Map by author.

objectives—seizing Koroni and destroying Lepanto’s fortifications—were accomplished, the campaign was considered a complete success.⁵⁹ One of the most accurate accounts of the campaign was authored by Juan Rena during the siege of Koroni. His letter was copied, translated, and widely circulated throughout Italy, which illustrates the enormous interests the campaign aroused.⁶⁰

The public’s interest in the campaign was closely connected to its political ramifications. Speaking about the conquest of Koroni, the Italian statesman and historian Francesco Guicciardini expressed his hopes about the campaign’s potential for facilitating an attack on Süleyman “in his own land.”⁶¹ He also mentioned that the campaign was much discussed among Italian politicians and intellectuals, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the navy as a political tool. Maybe the Ottoman emperor was not the sole priority of Charles V.⁶² Nevertheless, he was a card that could be played to create the necessary consensus among Charles V’s subjects.⁶³ To a great extent, the latter tried to legitimize his control of a large part of the Italian Peninsula by acting as the defender of Christendom. The emperor was obliged to conduct naval warfare in the Mediterranean as a way to justify and reinforce his prominent position in the European political arena.⁶⁴ By 1532, Charles V and his close advisors were still engaged in the process of forging an image of him as the powerful emperor capable of resisting the Ottoman threat.⁶⁵ In the early modern era, very few things demonstrated the power of a ruler like an exhibition of the military resources at his disposal. Thus, in one of his first letters after arriving in Genoa, Juan Rena shared with Francisco de los Cobos his concerns about the initial delay in the mobilization of the navy. Apparently this delay gave rise to rumors about the imperial navy’s lack of preparation: “and this is not befitting in general the reputation and service of His Majesty.”⁶⁶ In the opinion of Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, Charles V’s ambassador in Genoa, once the navy set sail, this would bolster his reputation among his enemies and also among his allies.⁶⁷ It is worth noting that this coincided with one of the first debates on the status of the Genoese as subjects of Charles V.⁶⁸ Taking this into consideration, it is easy to appreciate this campaign’s importance, not only for the alliance between Doria and Charles V, or in the shaping of tactical plans, but also in the configuration of the new imperial policy in Italy. The political ramifications of the campaign transcended the boundaries of the Italian Peninsula, as the emperor and the inner circle of the imperial government made use of it as a propaganda tool all around Europe. This becomes obvious, for instance, on reading the correspondence between Charles V and some of his allies.⁶⁹ As we can see, already in the early modern Mediterranean, war was a continuation of politics by other means.

Naval frontier defense was a crucial part of the crusading discourse of Charles V. This rhetoric played a major role in the emperor’s war

finances, because fear of the Ottomans allowed him to mobilize more resources for war, as Juan de Vergara (Rena's agent at court) affirmed: "they expect to obtain a lot of money from Spain with this news of the Turk."⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the strategy cut two ways, since crusading discourse obliged the emperor to invest enormous resources in the navy, because only by so doing could he convince other potential allies to follow suit and inspire his subjects' enthusiasm for his militaristic projects.⁷¹ It is important not to forget that this crusading discourse was built on a deep fear of the Turkish threat.⁷² The Christian states were only rarely able to thwart Ottoman sea power, while the Ottoman navy threatened the Italian coasts on a regular basis. Therefore, it is easy to understand the elation that the Genoese felt when the Ottomans retreated and their hopes for Charles V to win further victories over the Turks. These reactions by the Genoese were reported by the Spanish ambassador in his letters discussing the progress of the naval campaign of 1532.⁷³ Once again, nothing helped to cement political consensus around imperial power more than the defense of the frontiers.

The new naval frontier also offered important political benefits to Andrea Doria. The first and most obvious was the chance to acquire prestige as a defender of the faith. It is highly significant that the same messenger who carried to Genoa the royal instructions for mobilizing the navy also transported the Golden Fleece granted by Charles V to Andrea Doria.⁷⁴ This coincidence is full of symbolism, since the Golden Fleece was very closely connected to the aims of the Habsburgs' crusade.⁷⁵ In addition, this was the main demonstration to the local community of Doria's access to the higher ranks of European nobility. Clear proof of the importance of this message is the fact that the Spanish ambassador decided to wait until Doria's return to Genoa (the admiral had departed the city to prepare the navy) in order to grant it to him in the city because "the prince [Andrea Doria] would prefer to receive it here in his homeland than in any other place."⁷⁶ Doria's prestige as protector of the seas transcended Genoa, as can be seen in the fact that in 1532 the poet Ludovico Ariosto celebrated his victories against the Muslim in his epic romance *Orlando Furioso*.⁷⁷ Beyond the symbolic benefits derived from his recent alliance with the emperor, his participation in the campaign provided Doria with the usual material benefits (mainly plunder) from naval warfare. Moreover, as we will see, the campaign allowed Doria to further reinforce his authority as a military leader.⁷⁸ Finally, we shall also consider that this campaign represented a qualitative leap forward, since previous to this, when Doria had fought Barbary corsairs, he had not won any significant victories.⁷⁹ Furthermore, fighting the Ottomans was decidedly more prestigious and honorable than looting Maghrebi ports.⁸⁰ In short, the campaign of 1532 offered Doria the chance to be more than just another *condottiero* and to become a real Poseidon, capable of challenging and defeating the most important maritime threat to Christendom: the Ottoman navy.⁸¹

Beyond all these mutual benefits, the campaign entailed shared challenges. Charles V needed the Genoese galleys led by Andrea Doria to protect his Italian dominions from the Ottoman navy; but equally true is that Andrea Doria needed the military and political support of the authorities of Charles V's empire in order to get the maximum from his war machine. One of Rena's biggest concerns as commissioner of the navy was to make both organizations work together. A brief look through Rena's documents makes clear the mixed nature of the campaign. Andrea Doria only owned 15 of the 39 galleys composing the navy (the rest belonged to the pope, the Knights of Rhodes, the viceroalties of Naples and Sicily, etc.). Of the other ships and galleons, only one belonged to Doria.⁸² More importantly, the navy was manned by crews and soldiers (more than 20,000) from different territories within the Spanish Empire.⁸³ Even more important, due to the navy's limited operational autonomy, Doria depended on the supplies provided in the different territories ruled by Charles V. In theory, Doria should have had no problems in activating the supply networks in those territories because he, as captain general, could send the necessary orders to the viceroys.⁸⁴ However, from the beginning of the campaign, Doria's orders regarding logistics proved insufficient to guarantee adequate food supplies for the fleet. The gathering of foodstuffs was done in Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples, where the fleet had to load them as it passed by en route to the Greek coast. In order to guarantee that the supplies would be ready before the fleet's arrival, Rena proposed sending agents to oversee the logistics operations of each viceroy. Doria rejected this idea, believing that his orders on the matter were being obeyed and that the information that he was receiving from these kingdoms was accurate. Nevertheless, when the fleet arrived in Naples, the supplies were not ready. Thus, departure was delayed at a time when it was imperative to set sail, since the Ottoman navy was only 200 miles from Brindisi. Rena did not hesitate to point out Doria's lack of experience as the main problem behind the delay when he reported to the court: "these dealings require so much sophistication that it requires long experience to understand them."⁸⁵ Doria may have been an accomplished naval commander, but by 1532 Rena had far more experience in handling the particulars of military logistics in the complex political landscape of the empire.

Rena's designation as commissioner of the navy should be understood as an attempt to guarantee the efficient management of the new war machine protecting the Mediterranean frontier. The text in which this appointment is made official specifies his powers and duties and mentions Rena's valuable experience in military logistics.⁸⁶ Rena was required to assist Andrea Doria in mobilizing the navy. He was also in charge of supervising the activities of the other officials of the military administration, who actually were two of his own protégés and men who had his trust: Francisco Duarte and Juan de Vergara. Thus, Rena's involvement

was a way to incorporate not only his know-how but also that of the "Rena school." In the instructions that Rena received before leaving court, the emperor authorized him to intervene in any aspect of the operation to ensure its success, but he was commanded to attend in particular to the accounts and the handling of the money. Rena was also ordered to take charge of supplying the navy (actually he made the initial calculations on this matter for the War Council) in accordance with any change of plans adopted in response to the enemy's movements.⁸⁷ The work was anything but simple. For the first time, Rena had to orchestrate supply activities in Genoa, Milan, Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples. In order to give an idea of the scale of such a challenge, let it suffice to say that Rena estimated that the navy would need 50,000 quintals of biscuit and at least 6,000 boots of wine.⁸⁸ The emperor granted Rena an enormous degree of autonomy and authority; in fact, the second instructions made specific mention of Rena's obligation to take care of the whole logistical operation without consulting the Crown.⁸⁹ Rena would soon take the initiative in organizing the navy, and when he arrived in Genoa he was able to present a memorandum to Andrea Doria with an initial calculation of all the supplies needed and a plan to obtain them in the quickest and cheapest way. The plan convinced Doria to follow Rena's directives with respect to provisioning the navy.⁹⁰ In short, Rena was in charge of navy logistics and administration, two crucial aspects of keeping the naval frontier afloat.

But Rena also had to deal with another challenge: the multiple frictions and tensions between Andrea Doria and the different authorities involved in provisioning the imperial navy. One of Rena's main tasks was to prevent these kinds of problems. As captain general of the navy, Andrea Doria had to be deferred to by all the viceroys in Charles V's dominions. In fact, the document of his appointment made an explicit reference to this, though apparently this was not enough.⁹¹ This had already become clear during the autumn of 1531, when there was an incident between the Genoese admiral and the viceroy of Sicily. Apparently, Doria mobilized his network of contacts on the island to guarantee the provisioning of his galleys during their return voyage from a raid on the Barbary's coast. Following his orders, some merchants prepared the provision of biscuit; however, the viceroy banned them from loading it onto the galleys.⁹² Andrea Doria complained bitterly, because he was hindered from returning quickly to Barbary to follow up on the initial success of the raid. The episode had broad political ramifications, and the Spanish ambassador in Genoa spent two months contriving to satisfy Doria's demands for compensation, as he considered that the Sicilian viceroy had indeed been an obstruction.⁹³ Episodes like this one, which presented a clear threat to the effective functioning of the naval machinery, were frequent.⁹⁴ Tensions between Doria and the viceroy of Sicily flared again when the navy stopped there on its way east in 1532. Apparently, on

this occasion, Doria was angered when the governor of Messina did not salute him in accordance with protocol, a clear affront that, according to Doria, was ordered by the viceroy. Rena was obliged to mediate between both parties, and fortunately he managed to defuse the situation.⁹⁵ This incident makes very clear that he had the negotiation skills needed to make the imperial administration and Doria's military machinery work together. Furthermore, it shows that royal orders were not enough to guarantee the correct functioning of this composite military apparatus. For this very reason, Rena's technical and political savoir faire was absolutely essential.

The campaign of 1532 was the first example of the successful collaboration between the imperial administration and Andrea Doria's network that would dominate the western part of the Mediterranean basin. Charles V needed Doria's collaboration in order to be a true defender of his subjects and the whole of Christendom; in short, Charles V needed Doria in order to be a true and legitimate emperor. Conversely, the Genoese admiral needed the support of the authorities of the Spanish Empire in order to become an effective leader of the most powerful naval machinery in the western Mediterranean. Each party possessed different kinds of resources, but they were not able to achieve their objectives acting alone. Rena played a key role in ensuring that Doria's military operation and the imperial administration worked together effectively; that is, Rena was an important piece of the new naval frontier emerging from the conjunction of these two organizations working together for the first time.

The Making of a Naval Frontier in the Mediterranean

As the conquest of Koroni made clear, Charles V and Andrea Doria were able to do great things together, but it was necessary to establish the terms of their cooperation. The most important of these were established by the signing of the famous *asiento* of 1528. However, the text of this agreement was vague and neglected the practical dimension of the military operations that Doria would be conducting. The *asiento* made no reference to the administration of the resources for paying the soldiers and sailors, the distribution of booty, military patronage, and many other important topics. All the specifics of the strategic alliance were arranged as situations developed during the different campaigns. Some of the problems (like military patronage or the system of accountability) were the usual complications that arise from any alliance in war.⁹⁶ However, the more important issues at stake (the political economy of how booty was allotted or the funding of the navy) were closely related to the particular circumstances of the new war being fought on the Mediterranean frontier. It was precisely because of this that Rena, as the man positioned between the war entrepreneur and the imperial administration, was not only able to influence the definition of the guidelines governing

the collaboration between both parties but also to shape the norms and practices ruling the inner workings of the new naval frontier.

The lack of a clear set of norms and procedures was obvious considering, for instance, that the decision to appoint someone to supervise navy finances during the campaign was improvised on the fly. It seems that Rena foresaw the problems resulting from the lack of clear procedures for managing the navy. Hence, when the fleet was almost ready to depart from the port of Genoa and he was preparing for his return to the imperial court, he wrote to the secretary of the War Council underscoring the need to appoint someone to take care of the money during the campaign: "a trustworthy person should go with this navy, to make an account of everything, and if His Majesty does not order to do this this, . . . everything will disappear like the salt in the water."⁹⁷ The court's response was not what he expected, and when he got notice of the royal order commanding him to join the navy to perform this task, Rena bitterly complained that he would rather have occupied any other post in the service of the emperor.⁹⁸ Undoubtedly, this would not have been desirable work for Rena, but the reason he was able to play a major role in the definition of the rules of the game was that, once again, he was the person to safeguard the emperor's interests on the ground—or, in this case, on the deck.

Despite the improvised nature of the nomination, or perhaps because of it, Rena enjoyed broad latitude in the actions he took in his new mission. Before learning that he would be obliged to take charge of managing resources during the campaign, Rena sent a memorandum to the War Council trying to solve some problems regarding the powers and functions of the royal official in charge of controlling the navy's resources.⁹⁹ When he received the order to take over this task, he asked for a response to his memorandum since he needed specific instructions to carry out this new responsibility; however, he received no answer.¹⁰⁰ Rena insisted and wrote to the emperor's secretary Francisco de los Cobos, asking him for directives.¹⁰¹ The royal secretary replied to him in vague terms, commanding him to do whatever was most opportune in all possible regards for His Majesty's service and the care of his resources, saying that the rush to deal with the planning of the land campaign in Austria prevented the War Council from discussing Rena's petition.¹⁰² When the response to Rena's demands finally arrived, it was too late. The memorandum was sent back to Genoa, along with answers to his questions, more than a month and a half later, when Rena was already at sea with the navy, and in any case, it was just a vague expansion of the commission that he had received during the mobilization of the navy.¹⁰³ This lack of a job description may seem like it would have been a problem, but it allowed Rena to intervene in different aspects of the navy's inner workings. It seems that Rena was perfectly aware of the fact that he was participating in the shaping of the naval administration. Clear proof of this was his desire to implement innovations. For instance, during one of his quarrels with some of the

military men recruited by Doria, Rena stressed the innovative nature of the new naval enterprise when he said: "this is not a war like any of the others, so it should not warrant the generosities given in other previous wars."¹⁰⁴ According to Rena, new challenges like the naval defense of the Mediterranean frontier demanded new ways of managing war, but as he would soon realize, he was not the only or even the loudest voice with something to say about how the war would be conducted.

The preceding anecdote not only illustrates Rena's concerns about how to correctly manage the money; it was also one of the first episodes in his struggle with Doria and the members of his military war machinery. The relationship between Rena and Doria was not always a fractious one. They were able to collaborate in many different respects. For instance, when the navy arrived at Messina, Doria and Rena agreed on the way to proceed with reviewing and paying the troops and the ships' crews. Furthermore, Doria and Rena coordinated their efforts to negotiate with the viceroy on the troops' embarkation and other issues such as borrowing artillery or acquiring gunpowder.¹⁰⁵ In fact, when news of the enemy navy's retreat arrived in Sicily, Rena reported the general disappointment in response to the news but also expressed his complete confidence in Doria's capacity to lead the navy to a sound victory.¹⁰⁶ The problems between the two began shortly after the navy arrived at Messina. The root of these problems was basically that Doria, as head of his own military network, and Rena, as a representative of the imperial administration, were trying to define the conditions of how war would be waged and managed under the dictates of two different agendas.

Despite the apparently cordial relationship between Rena and Doria, Rena began to openly criticize Doria's rapacity, and this criticism became more frequent with the passing of time. The main point of debate between the two men was the management of the navy's economic resources. During the first stages of the campaign, Rena was able to maintain a certain degree of authority in this sphere; nevertheless, as he acknowledged in one of the letters he sent to the secretary of the War Council, he failed in controlling the resources obtained through plunder:

From Genoa I wrote to Your Grace that these people do not like to see order in the treasury, and as I was always alert about it, there had been no way to access it. Now that there has been the possibility of entering into other people's properties, . . . things have got a bit broken.¹⁰⁷

The management of resources coming from *corso* activity and booty was not a marginal issue in the construction of the naval frontier in the Mediterranean. In fact, it became one of the key issues in the day-to-day interactions between Rena and Doria in their activities defining the terms of the new naval frontier. The chance to engage in plunder was a crucial

factor in making naval warfare profitable for Doria. In fact, plunder had always played a major role in attracting private entrepreneurs to the business of war.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, Rena considered booty as an important source of income for the coffers of the military administration. It is true that the total amount of the booty was not great. The only approximate data we have relates to the ransoming (for four thousand ducats) of the captive Jews in Patras, a fortress in the Gulf of Lepanto.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, booty had a strategic value from Rena's perspective. In one of his letters to Charles V before the Lepanto offensive, Rena wrote:

Since there is no money to pay the soldiers, I would like to try to conquer Lepanto, because the booty would be good, since the wealthiest persons of all the region are refuged there with their belongings. And with this the soldiers will remain content and with their mouths sweetened, and this sweet taste would be advantageous in the future if we have to make war in these parts.¹¹⁰

With these words, Rena expressed the strategic value of booty in the funding of frontier warfare against the Ottoman Empire: it could be used as an incentive for the always poorly paid soldiers.¹¹¹ Rena also demonstrated the value that booty had in the funding of the naval frontier when he tried to regulate its distribution, to avoid the unrestrained plundering of the conquered enclaves.¹¹² Later, he also took measures to ensure an equal distribution of the loot among the troops.¹¹³ Nevertheless, booty also played a central role in Andrea Doria's plans to fund his military enterprise. In fact, Doria's unequal distribution of the booty (he favored the crews of his galleys) ended up giving rise to bitter complaints among the infantry.¹¹⁴ Rena and Doria were drawn into a clash over this issue as soon as the navy started to realize profits. Analyzing their confrontations helps us to understand Rena's and Doria's involvement in establishing the norms that governed the cooperation between the imperial administration and Doria's military apparatus in the context of maritime frontier making.

The main cause of the conflict over the distribution of booty was that both parties needed and competed for the same strategic resources. Doria's rapacity was especially evident when it came to some particularly valuable goods, such as artillery and wheat. It is not necessary to stress the importance that artillery had for war entrepreneurs.¹¹⁵ Andrea Doria needed to provide the ships with guns, one of the most expensive investments that a private contractor had to make. At a time when Doria was starting an ambitious shipbuilding project, a shortage of artillery posed a serious problem. Unfortunately, the imperial administration also faced grave difficulties in this respect. Actually, the artillery shortage was one of the biggest problems for the emperor's navy during the campaign of 1532, which was quite evident even before the navy's departure. When

Rena took a count of the total number of pieces embarked, he laconically wrote at the end of the list: "this is little and poor artillery for such a navy."¹¹⁶ Faced with this lack of artillery, the monarchical authorities only replied by adopting Rena's suggestion to ask the authorities in Lucca and Leghorn to lend some guns.¹¹⁷ This decision made even more obvious the inability of the imperial administration to meet its needs in the short term. While the Habsburg monarchy was not able to produce enough artillery, the Ottoman Empire's ability to supply its fortresses amply in this regard was becoming notorious.¹¹⁸ When the imperial navy conquered Ottoman strongholds on the Greek coast, Doria and Rena obtained a huge amount of weaponry. In fact, this booty became legendary in the history of Mediterranean warfare. Thus, when the chronicler Francisco López de Gómara recorded the conquest of the fortress protecting the Gulf of Lepanto, he made reference to the enormous amount of artillery acquired, with a value of up to 60,000 ducats.¹¹⁹ The problem was determining who deserved to possess the seized artillery. This was a matter of discussion between Rena and Andrea Doria, and, as usual, the commissioner reported the issue to his connections among Charles V's entourage. According to Rena's account, the amount of artillery seized was not as great as Gómara would later write, but it was substantial. An inventory that Rena attempted to make, but that was hindered by Doria, counted 81 artillery pieces, each one weighing 80 quintals, and the total price of the artillery seized in the different Ottoman strongholds was upwards of 20,000 ducats.¹²⁰

However, as Rena knew, the contest over the artillery was not a simple matter of money. The strategic value of these seized goods frequently led to conflicts between the monarchical authorities and the army's leaders. Rena was aware of this because of his previous experiences in the war against the French, when the dividing up of the artillery among the nobles composing the imperial army was bitterly contested.¹²¹ However, the fair distribution of the artillery was even more important in the context of the new Mediterranean frontier. The importance of these strategic goods is clear from the multiple references to seized artillery in the chronicles about Mediterranean frontier warfare.¹²² Furthermore, the royal chronicler López de Gómara echoed the public debate over the artillery's distribution and Andrea Doria's rights to it.¹²³ Considering the importance of the issue, it is easy to understand why Rena reacted strongly to Doria's determination to take all the seized artillery. Rena explained to Doria that, according to Castilian custom, the captain general only had the right to choose a piece of artillery, whereas in Italy, the captain general had no rights over the seized artillery. Doria reacted to Rena's arguments as only someone aware of his strong position can do: by ignoring them. Furthermore, the admiral prevented Rena and his servant Francisco Duarte from taking an inventory of the artillery seized and ordered his men to load it onto his ships.¹²⁴

The artillery was not the only booty fueling the clash between Juan Rena and Andrea Doria, for the latter made use of the imperial navy to conduct corsair activities that would allow him to reinforce his political authority. After signing the *asiento* of 1528, Andrea Doria rose to political prominence as the father and protector of the Genoese republic.¹²⁵ As such, he protected Genoese economic interests beyond Genoa.¹²⁶ In addition, he made use of the military machinery under his command to buy popular support and thus extend his political influence in Genoa. It was during the campaign of 1532 that Doria took some of his first steps in this direction. He used his absolute command over the navy of the Spanish Empire to capture Ottoman vessels transporting wheat collected in payment of Ottoman taxes.¹²⁷ Seizing wheat cargos was a common and profitable source of income for military men and corsairs, and it is difficult to overemphasize the strategic value of this commodity on the Mediterranean frontier.¹²⁸ The Genoese admiral allocated part of this wheat to the supply of the navy, but he sent most of it to Genoa, an important gesture towards the inhabitants of *La Superba*, especially taking into consideration the political dimension of the city's problem with the supply of this strategic commodity.¹²⁹ At first glance, this action might seem an innocent act of generosity; but, as Rena reported, it had cost the imperial administration. In fact, it was a clear transgression of the rules. Doria prevented Rena from taking a count of the quantity of wheat seized, and as a consequence, prevented him from collecting the *quinto real*, the 20% of the booty belonging to the Crown. Rena was able to calculate the approximate sum belonging to the Crown and offered to communicate it if the members of the inner circle of the imperial government eventually decided to ask for it.¹³⁰ In the end, nothing came of it; but this episode demonstrated Doria's determination to use his authority over the imperial navy to reinforce his own political position at home, breaking the rules if necessary. At the same time, it showed Rena's determination to protect the interests of the imperial administration regarding one of the most strategic commodities in the economy of the new maritime frontier.

Rena and Andrea Doria did not only contest the seized goods acquired from booty. Another sore point in the relationship between the two was the management of the navy's resources. Military leaders in the early modern period were obliged to win the approval and obeisance of their subordinates by seeing to their needs and granting them favors, and Andrea Doria was no exception. Due to the innovative nature of this enterprise, he was even more obliged to act as a reliable military patron. By 1532, Doria was an expert in the difficult task of leading his own galley squadron, but during this campaign, he commanded a navy composed of lots of units for the first time, and he needed to win the approval of the units under his command.¹³¹ He tried to do this in the same way that many other military commanders of that time did, by granting side payments to the middle-rank officers; but Rena complained that some of

these practices constituted a clear transgression of the rules of the military administration. Tensions between Doria and Rena first arose over the distribution of supplies. Before Rena's arrival in Messina, a great amount of biscuit had been distributed among the crews of the pope's galleys (led by Antonio Doria, the Genoese admiral's cousin) and many other people who did not receive salaries from the emperor. When Rena got word of this obvious breach of the administrative rules, he tried to recover payment for these supplies, but Doria intervened, claiming that the captain of the pope's galleys had no money to pay for the supplies received. Rena tried to obtain a royal order asking for payment for the biscuit, because he was aware that, if they did not resolve the issue immediately, collecting the money later would be impossible.¹³² Doria's generosity towards his cousin Antonio Doria and his men continued. Thus, when the campaign ended, in order to feed the crews under his command during the winter of 1533, the admiral gave his cousin 400 quintals of biscuit. Rena tried, in vain, to obtain payment for Doria's gift, and when he complained about it to the admiral, he was told that it was not necessary to be so punctilious about such things, "especially with a person who had served so well during this campaign."¹³³

Due to the complexity of the issue, Rena appealed to the emperor, which allows us to learn Charles V's position on this matter. Rena obtained a clear response: the monarch considered Doria's present to be an appropriate reward for the captain's services.¹³⁴ Charles V thus was acknowledging Doria's right to exercise a certain military patronage by these means. Rena accepted the Crown's command without reservation, because the royal order freed him from having to justify the expenditure of these supplies.¹³⁵ His readiness to accept this transgression shows that Rena only wanted to be able to justify his activities for the purpose of subsequent reviews. He was not averse to Doria's gift per se; and actually, these practices were widespread and accepted (even by the members of the administration) in early modern militaries.¹³⁶ In fact, they were crucial to maintaining the solidarity and the patronage ties that high-ranking officers needed to ensure the obeisance of their subordinates. Rena was much more interested in getting clear instruction and in protecting his reputation in case of any retrospective analysis than in hindering these practices.

Interestingly, Rena and Doria did not always disagree on the fraudulent use of the navy's economic resources. For instance, after the conquest of Koroni, Rena tried to review the nine companies deployed there to defend the city, but the captains avoided the inspection of the troops because they did not agree with the payment procedure. Rena wanted to pay the soldiers directly, but the captains hoped to receive and redistribute the soldiers' wages. The difference between the two methods was that the first one would provide accurate information on the number of soldiers, while the second one would allow the captains to misrepresent

the number of soldiers and thus to receive extra money that could later be redistributed among their soldiers as favors.¹³⁷ Rena was able to detect the ruse (apparently the captains included some sailors from the navy in the inspection), because the number of soldiers worked out to be exactly the same as it had been when they had embarked, which was impossible given the high number of casualties and deserters. Nevertheless, Rena was obliged to accept this way of paying the troops because the captains convinced Doria to accede to their demands. Doria ordered Rena to proceed accordingly, arguing that “for such a minor thing, and because of other considerations, I do not want the people to be discontented.”¹³⁸ Rena accepted Doria’s orders and proceeded with the troops’ payment, and only offered to review the troops again after the navy’s departure. Once again, it seems that Rena only aimed to show his zeal for his duties as commissioner. But what is interesting here is that the admiral’s words and Rena’s resigned acceptance show that both understood the necessity of giving the soldiers and middle-ranking officers some additional gratifications in exchange for their past and future efforts. Interestingly, Rena was familiar with this fraud because it had been common in the different campaigns in which he had previously participated, such as the conquest of Oran.¹³⁹ Furthermore, by that time, similar practices were also customary in the Ottoman navy.¹⁴⁰ By acquiescing to this fraud, Rena was not only accepting what already was a widespread practice in the Mediterranean frontier, he was doing what he had done in Navarre; in other words, he understood that the exceptionality of frontier warfare called for unusual financial arrangements. The rank and file serving in the navy and the frontier strongholds had to live under harsh conditions, and that was the reason why even so strict an official as Rena knew they needed to be indulged.

Despite his criticisms, Rena agreed with Doria on the necessity of dealing with the navy’s resources in a pragmatic way. Why did he complain about Doria’s approach? Obviously, he was doing this to display his own vigilance. However, that was not the only reason. He was also taking a position in the definition of the norms governing the collaboration between the imperial administration and the Genoese admiral in the construction of the new naval frontier. Moreover, he was calling on Charles V to take a position in this process. In order to illustrate this, we can cite his criticism of Doria’s appropriation of the seized artillery. When Rena informed the emperor about Doria’s ploy to take all the artillery, he wrote:

I write this to Your Majesty so that you may be forewarned about what Prince Andrea Doria is considering, and know what this artillery is, and how much it may be worth, so that, considering both the present and the future, Your Majesty might do what you think best suits your service.¹⁴¹

The reference to the future shows that Rena was not acting only as a commissioner of the navy. He was aware of being involved in the shaping of the norms and practices that would govern the inner workings of the new naval frontier from that point onwards. Precisely because of this, he was right in trying to draw the attention of the imperial government to this matter. However, despite the importance of these issues, the discussion was tabled after the campaign ended, and Rena's complaints were not heeded by the other members of the emperor's entourage.¹⁴² Despite the fact that his formal complaint was not followed up on, it shows that Rena was perfectly aware of the importance of this issue. Moreover, he was able to foresee the possible long-term effects of any decision; this is why he asked the emperor to take "the present and the future" into consideration. It seems that Rena expected the emperor to be tempted to accede to Doria's agenda; and this was why, according to Rena, Charles V should be aware of the effects that decision would have in the future. What was at stake was not only the distribution of the seized artillery pieces; the debate was about establishing the basis for future re-partitions. Put simply, allowing the Genoese admiral to get all the cannons implied an acceptance that, in the future, all the artillery seized from the enemy on the frontier would belong to him. This not only suggested that the Crown was relinquishing a means of obtaining this strategic materiel; it also implied an acceptance of conceding to Doria a way for him to increase his own naval power. Loaning artillery was one of the strategic services that Doria offered to Charles V, so accepting Doria's claims over the seized guns meant a direct increase of the emperor's dependence on his services.¹⁴³ Rena aimed to fight Doria on this issue and, especially, to prevent a dangerous precedent from being set. This was crucial because, as Rena knew, the norms and practices ruling the political economy of booty distribution were being shaped at this juncture, and booty would be one of the main sources of income sustaining the war machine on this maritime frontier.

The need to establish a clear set of norms was also connected to another thorny issue: the distribution of the income derived from booty as supplementary payments to the military men defending the frontier. Initially, Rena did not disagree with Doria about using these resources to pay the soldiers and captains. When Doria wrote with instructions for Rena to follow during his absence, one of the main points concerned this redistribution of booty. As per Doria's command, Rena was to proceed with the sale of all the goods and to set aside 10% for Doria, a right that he claimed as captain general. After this, Rena was to discount the *quinto real*—the 20% owed to the crown—and distribute the rest in the following manner: half to the infantry captains, officers, and soldiers (the money was to be distributed among the troops according to the number of soldiers in each company, and the different ranks of the soldiers and officers; later, Doria also ordered the gunners who managed the

artillery during the sieges to be paid); and half among the galleys' captains and other officers of the navy.¹⁴⁴ Rena accepted Doria's command, and actually, during the following months, Doria wrote several times to Rena with orders regarding specific payments to different captains and companies, which the latter followed without protest. However, problems arose some time later.¹⁴⁵ Apparently, Doria, in an attempt to benefit the galleys' captains in the distribution of the booty, ordered Rena not to discount the *quinto real* from the half allotted to them. Obviously, this measure would negatively affect royal revenues.¹⁴⁶ The issue was important for Rena for three reasons. First, since the admiral did not want deduct the *quinto real* from his own share, Rena thought he should use his own revenues, if he wanted to reward his associates. Second, because of the great expense of the campaign, any quantity of money would be helpful in meeting these expenses. And last but not least, as Rena asserted, it was of paramount importance not to make this concession because it could set a dangerous precedent.¹⁴⁷ Once again, what really mattered was to prevent little transgressions like this from becoming norms or accepted practices that would affect the viability of the naval system guarding the Mediterranean frontier.

What stance did Charles V's advisors take toward the definition of norms governing its collaboration with Doria? Rena's arguments appear to have been logical, but, unsurprisingly, in this disagreement as in many others, Charles V and his close collaborators took a position supporting Doria.¹⁴⁸ Once again, the emperor recognized the need to compromise with Doria in order to guarantee the correct functioning of the military machinery under his command and, with it, the defense of the maritime frontier. Perhaps the clearest proof of this policy of indulging Doria was the attitude of Charles V and his entourage regarding the review of Doria's accounts after the campaign. This was another aspect of the relationship between Doria and Charles V that was left undefined in the text of the *asiento* and had to be extemporized. The campaign was funded with resources from the Castilian treasury, and so it was necessary to present to the Castilian Chamber of Accounts the official records showing how the money had been spent.¹⁴⁹ In fact, according to the royal order sent to Doria announcing Rena's nomination as commissioner, the need to present the accounts "according to the style of our kingdoms of Castile" was one of the reasons why the Crown had appointed Rena.¹⁵⁰

Once again, Rena was at a crucial juncture that would define the norms governing the administration of the new naval frontier. As captain general, Doria enjoyed wide latitude in his management of the king's resources.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, he and Rena were obliged to present their accounts of expenses for the campaign. As usual, the complications that arose during the campaign made it difficult to follow the procedures stipulated by Castilian accounting protocol. For instance, Rena and Doria had problems drawing up and preserving all the *recaudos* (documents

needed to justify any expense in the accounts). Thus, when the admiral sent Rena his instructions to oversee the navy during his absence, he promised to give him “*recaudos* of everything, because it was impossible to do so until now, due to the haste that we have had with other matters.”¹⁵² The Genoese admiral also recognized that he had distributed a large amount of supplies without following the administrative procedures—that is, without writing the necessary orders and *recaudos*—but he offered Rena the accounts of his servant, Francesco Ferrari, to calculate them, and he promised to pay for these supplies.¹⁵³ The main problem arose when Rena and Francisco Duarte began to review the accounts that Doria presented, because some of the data included in the financial records did not meet Rena’s approval. Rena wrote to the emperor asking for specific instructions on how to proceed with the review of Doria’s accounts.¹⁵⁴ As expected, Charles V decided not to take unnecessary risks and resolved the issue by accepting Doria’s private records as a valid form of documentation to justify the expenditure of the navy’s economic resources during the campaign.¹⁵⁵ As usual, Rena accepted the order without protest, because this royal order in fact freed him from having to review the records of the campaign.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, it seems that Doria capitalized on the emperor’s decision: the accounts of his next missions to come to the aid of Koroni’s garrison were presented in the same way—that is, with Doria’s private calculations as the only documentation needed to justify the expenses.¹⁵⁷ Rena was right about at least one thing, the bureaucratic leniency granted to Doria evolved into a norm.

After analyzing Rena’s activity during the campaign of 1532, we can conclude that his capacity to influence the shaping of the naval frontier was quite restricted. It goes without saying that Rena was a dwarf between two political giants like Andrea Doria and Charles V. Moreover, Rena’s position as defender of the interests of the Crown vis-à-vis Doria’s ambitions was anything but easy. Andrea Doria was a key figure in the defense of the Mediterranean frontier. He was the only one who could provide both a galley squadron and the necessary collaboration of the other key ally in this major challenge: the Genoese authorities.¹⁵⁸ In other words, Doria was not just a mere *condottiere* or a war entrepreneur but an important political actor; and, of course, this reinforced his position relative to the imperial administration.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the important role played by Doria in Charles V’s Mediterranean policy gave rise to a set of specific administrative practices to grant Doria preferential treatment. At a time when delays in the payment of any military expense were the rule, Doria would always receive the money to fund his galleys on time.¹⁶⁰ In fact, if any obstacles arose that threatened nonpayment of the terms of the *asiento*, the Crown’s agents acted swiftly to avert the problem.¹⁶¹ However, Rena influenced the way in which the men of the inner circle of the imperial government dealt with Doria, which was crucial,

considering that the naval organization of the Spanish Empire was still in the making.¹⁶²

Rena was also aware of the complex logic governing the cooperation of Charles V and Doria in the defense of the Mediterranean frontier. He recognized and reported to the Crown how aware Doria was that the emperor's need to secure the new naval frontier strengthened his own position, writing: "because he thinks that he is needed, he is considering getting everything or the biggest part."¹⁶³ Furthermore, Rena conveyed how Doria's clients aimed to profit from the Crown's deficiencies at a critical juncture when he said: "since they know the time, they want to take profit from it."¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Rena was circumspect in regards to Doria's political clout. Clear proof of this can be seen in the different ways in which Rena would express his concerns about Doria, depending on his interlocutors. Rena only criticized Doria openly in his letters to his friend Pedro de Zuazola, the secretary of the War Council, and Francisco de los Cobos, the royal secretary, and not in the letters sent to the emperor. In fact, he admitted the difference between how he expressed himself with the two audiences when he said: "I do not write this as clearly to His Majesty, because I do not know if he would appreciate it."¹⁶⁵ Rena's words (and calculated silence) show that he was aware of the importance of not interfering in the service relationship between Andrea Doria and the emperor. Precisely because of this, he took the precaution of stressing that, despite his questions of Doria, the Genoese admiral never "showed any discontent." He clearly wanted to make it known that he was capable of fulfilling his mission without provoking Doria's displeasure.¹⁶⁶ In accordance with the political culture of the day, a false step by Rena could affect the alliance between Doria and Charles V. In fact, according to Doria's biographer, one of the main reasons why the Genoese admiral put an end to his relationship with Francis I was his poor relationships with some French royal officials.¹⁶⁷ Rena's cautious behavior was more than justified. Any blunder might provoke Doria's rage and that would have serious consequences for the stability for the naval frontier.

In his position serving the emperor on the naval frontier, Rena influenced the way in which Charles V dealt with Andrea Doria. For instance, when Rena was reviewing Doria's accounts, he wrote to the emperor suggesting he accept Doria's private records to validate the navy's expenses: "because the Prince is not acquainted with the way that accounts are reviewed in Castile, and being so friendly with him myself, I am sure that if any data from those accounts were to be rejected, he would be annoyed."¹⁶⁸ Rena's words show that he was aware of Doria's difficult temperament and how to manage him by making allowances for that. Moreover, by alleging Doria's ignorance of Castilian administrative procedures and his vulnerability, Rena was also contributing to the preferential treatment that Doria enjoyed in the administrative structure of the

Spanish Empire. Clear proof of this was the response that Rena received from the emperor shortly after:

Regarding the accounts of the expenses of the Koroni navy that you say the Prince's servants and agents drew up, have great temperance, showing the Prince how much I trust him, with regard to not only the important things, but also the treasury, for I believe that he will take care of our funds as well as his own; and in the end, take his accounts only with the Prince's signatures and certifications, in case there are no other *recaudos* that comply with the style of the chamber of accounts; because out of respect towards the Prince, it is necessary to be tolerant, and dispense with the rest.¹⁶⁹

Charles V's positive response to Rena's suggestion is even more interesting considering that one of the key aspects explaining the success of the alliance between the emperor and the Genoese admiral was the complete trust that the former showed the latter.¹⁷⁰ By underscoring the necessity of handling Doria carefully, Rena contributed to giving a practical dimension to this trust, something that reinforced the alliance between both political actors and stabilized the new naval frontier in the Mediterranean.

Perhaps Rena did not agree with the preferential treatment granted to Doria, but he was clearly aware of a painful truth: in the shaping of the norms and practices of the administration of the naval frontier, the emperor would rather satisfy Doria than comply the official procedures. With his vigilant attitude, his multiple complaints, and his various reports, Juan Rena was trying to establish a fair set of administrative norms for the new naval frontier and the collaboration between the Genoese admiral and the imperial administration. Nevertheless, it was a vain effort, because Doria was able to offer strategic services that the emperor needed too much. What all these examples show is that Charles V and the inner circle of the imperial government prioritized the necessity of facing the military challenges over any awareness of the dangerous precedents that they were establishing by accepting Doria's demands. The campaign of 1532 may have been a success from a political and military point of view, but it made crystal clear the extent to which Doria was able to dictate the norms on how the naval frontier would work in the future.

The Impossible Frontier

Despite the fact that his warnings about Doria's greediness came to naught and the failure of many of his attempts to establish the norms for how the new military machine operated, Rena did not desist in his attempts to participate in the construction of the new Mediterranean frontier. In fact, he went even further to try to have a voice in the empire's Mediterranean strategy. In fact, he understood this as one of his main duties as one of

the emperor's servants. Rena never wrote a memorandum on the defense of the Mediterranean like the ones he wrote about Navarre. However, his letters during the more than ten years he spent serving Charles V on the maritime frontier are full of advice, suggestions, and ideas about how to protect his empire from the Ottoman threat from beyond the seas. By looking at them, we can infer some of his personal views on how to proceed to construct the imperial frontier in the Mediterranean.

As an experienced servant of Charles V on the Mediterranean frontier, Rena had his own ideas about the emperor's Mediterranean agenda, but some of his plans were overly optimistic. For instance, just after the surrender of Koroni, Rena wrote an enthusiastic letter to Charles V celebrating this victory. His fevered report is understandable given that this was the first significant victory over the Ottomans in the eastern Mediterranean in decades. And as a Venetian, Rena had an additional reason to be happy, since Koroni had been taken from the Venetians more than 30 years before. In fact, Rena was euphoric: during the siege of Lepanto, he wrote Cobos suggesting that a naval base be built there facing the enemy's land.¹⁷¹ However, in light of later developments, it is easy to see that he went too far in his assessment of the impact of these offensives. According to Rena, the capture of Koroni would strike fear in the hearts of Muslims living in neighboring areas and inspire Christians in the Peloponnese to rise up against Ottoman rule. He went even further and promised to compose and send a memorandum with an accurate description of Koroni and the reasons to keep this stronghold.¹⁷² Rena was not alone in his extreme optimism over the impact of the victory at Koroni. In fact, during the initial stage of the campaign, Andrea Doria suggested to Charles V that he should deploy an army big enough to incite an uprising of the Christian populations in Greece.¹⁷³ Rena worked hard to make the most of the conquest of Koroni, and it seems that during his brief stay there he spent time discussing the future of the city with army officers like the gunner Luis de Pizaño.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Rena took special care to take an inventory of all the artillery and other weapons available in the city before leaving.¹⁷⁵ During the following weeks Rena prepared a report on the city, and he even made a drawing of Koroni with a detailed description of the city defenses (see Figure 4.2). Unfortunately, his multiple obligations as commissioner of the navy seems to have prevented him from writing the promised memorandum on the reasons to hold Koroni.

During the months that followed, Rena tried to influence the ongoing debates about what to do with Koroni. This was the first stronghold taken from the Ottomans in decades, so there was no clear idea on how to proceed. Again, the decision on this specific issue could influence the future strategy for the maritime frontier with the Ottoman empire, so it was important for Rena to have a voice in the discussions. The debate was taking place in the inner circles of the imperial government, far from the southern coasts of the Italian Peninsula where he was serving the emperor,

The debate revived the next summer, when the Ottoman navy besieged Koroni. Rena sent a letter to Charles V's secretary with a detailed plan to come to the aid of the imperial garrison, taking the opportunity to recall his previous services planning the defense and supplying of Koroni. According to Rena, it was due to his diligence supplying the fortress that the garrison had been able to hold out as long as it had. Even more important, he claimed that the main reason for the present difficulty was that his plan to defend the frontier stronghold was ignored.¹⁸⁴ He said the same in his letter to the secretary of the War Council, but emboldened by his old friendship, he went further and mentioned that the previous winter he proceeded to supply Koroni without waiting for an order from Charles V or Andrea Doria. Even more interesting, he asserted that abandoning Koroni would have negative consequences. Leaving aside the religious dimension, abandoning the first stronghold captured from the Ottomans would be a dishonor and damage the reputation of Charles V the world over, especially in the Ottoman Empire, where the emperor's power was not well known.¹⁸⁵ Interestingly, Andrea Doria put forward similar reasons in his letters to Charles V, after delivering reinforcement and supplies by sea to the besieged fortress. However, the response of the War Council suggests that by the end of 1533 the emperor and the inner circle of the imperial government were more concerned with how to leave Koroni than how to sustain it.¹⁸⁶ In fact, shortly thereafter, the emperor ordered the frontier stronghold to be abandoned. Clear proof that Rena was right in his estimation that leaving Koroni would harm Charles V's international reputation can be found in the fact that the official chroniclers tried to justify this decision blaming the pope, the French, the Venetians, and the Knights of Rhodes for not assisting the emperor in holding the only Christian garrison conquered from the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸⁷

It is difficult to understand why Rena advocated so forcefully for holding this garrison in Ottoman lands. After all, his personal experience in Oran should have made him aware of how difficult it was to maintain a bridgehead in enemy territory. But maybe his previous experience was the reason for his optimism. By suggesting holding Koroni, Rena was only trying to export the model of frontier defense from the western Mediterranean to the new front. From his point of view, sustaining Koroni from Sicily and Naples was not that different than sustaining Oran from Málaga. However, Charles V and his closest advisers considered that attempting to defend a frontier stronghold surrounded by Ottoman territory was too risky. In deciding to abandon Koroni, they were anticipating the defensive strategy for confronting the Ottoman threat that was later adopted in the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁸ By contrast, by advocating the holding of Koroni in order to push forward the frontier, Rena was just trying to keep alive the aggressive strategy pursued during the opening decade of the sixteenth century. As we will see later, this was not the only time

he attempted to make use of old approaches and solutions to solve new problems in the defense of the frontier.

With the next great campaign in the Mediterranean, the conquest of Tunis, Rena had further opportunities to influence the shaping of the new frontier. This time, Rena's main objective was not to advocate for the maintaining of a frontier stronghold like Koroni, but to rethink how to keep pushing the frontier forward, and for that the navy was key. Technological constraints reduced the scope for strategic innovation in sixteenth-century naval warfare in the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁹ By contrast, the main issue at stake in the discussion of the Habsburg military advisors was how to build and coordinate the fleets defending the empire.¹⁹⁰ Some of them preferred to rely on the collaboration of private war contractors, while others advocated for the construction of a royal navy. Most of the scholarship on the Habsburg military administration has tended to focus on the discussions taking place within the War Council. Not surprisingly, the lack of a systematic corpus of sources on the debates within this institution during the reign of Charles V has obliged historians working on shipbuilding to focus on later periods.¹⁹¹ However, we can try to reconstruct those debates by reading the correspondence of men like Rena who took part in them while building and coordinating the imperial fleets.

After experiencing firsthand Doria's overwhelmingly powerful position as owner of the galleys defending the Mediterranean frontier, Rena devised a strategy to curtail the imperial administration's dependence on him. During the Koroni campaign, Rena alerted the imperial secretaries of the dangers arising from Doria's powerful influence over Charles V's Mediterranean policy. It seems that the numerous reports sent by Rena to the imperial government were not futile after all. They served to make one thing clear: the effects of the absolute dependency of the Crown on the military operation led by Andrea Doria. The latter's success made it unnecessary for the emperor to implement any changes to his Mediterranean strategy. Moreover, in the months following the Koroni campaign, efforts were focused on planning Charles V's journey to Spain. It was during the preparations for the conquest of Tunis that a decision was made to reduce the complete dependence on Doria's services. The emperor and his councilors decided to resume construction of galleys in the dockyards of Barcelona; and once again, Rena played a leading role in these plans since he was put in charge of the shipbuilding activity.¹⁹²

The ambitious shipbuilding program was part of a bigger plan: the conquest of Tunis. In 1534, Hayreddin Barbarossa, recently appointed admiral of the Ottoman navy, completed a successful raid around the Italian coast and went on to conquer Tunis.¹⁹³ Charles V and his advisors decided to confront Barbarossa by attacking his recent acquisition in order to prevent him from consolidating his gains. Thus, the campaign's objectives were twofold: first, it sought to capture from the enemy an important naval base from which it could attack any point in the western

Mediterranean; second, it reinforced Charles V's image as protector of his Italian domains from the Ottoman threat, as Tunis was so close to the Italian Peninsula. The emperor hastened to respond forcefully to Barbarossa's challenge and to exhibit his power, thereby communicating his willingness to organize a navy capable of destroying the Ottomans'. Thus, in a letter to Lope de Soria, one of the most important diplomatic agents in his service in the Italian Peninsula, the emperor referred to Barbarossa's raid and said:

In order to remedy it . . . , I ordered all our galleys to assemble to resist and avoid the damage that [Barbarossa] could inflict on Christendom; I sent an order to construct as many galleys as possible to the Prince Andrea Doria, to the viceroys of Naples and Sicily, and here I ordered the rapid construction and arming of up to 20 galleys or as many as possible in Barcelona and Tortosa, and likewise to assemble galleons and big ships and all the supplies and things needed to prepare a formidable navy for next spring, to resist enemy's navy and to destroy it, and expel it from the seas of Christendom; and for our part we will do everything necessary to this effect.¹⁹⁴

In clear contrast to what had happened during the Koroni campaign in 1532, this time the emperor decided not to rely exclusively on Doria's services and tried to create his own naval resources, ordering the construction of royal galleys.¹⁹⁵ The War Council suggested that they be built in Barcelona under the direction of Juan Rena, and shortly afterwards, Charles V wrote to the local authorities announcing the arrival of Rena to oversee the project.¹⁹⁶ Undoubtedly, it is significant that the man in charge of this ambitious shipbuilding program was the same one who knew better than anyone else the effects of Andrea Doria's excessive influence as the only owner of a galley squadron able to oppose Ottoman naval power.

Juan Rena actively embraced the project and quickly went to work.¹⁹⁷ The first thing he did was to devise a plan to coordinate the different people taking part in this complex task. He drew upon a wide supply network to obtain all the materials needed to construct the galleys. This network extended from Naples to Flanders through Sicily, Sardinia, Genoa, Valencia, Málaga, and Biscay. The imperial administration started to work according to Rena's plan, sending orders to the authorities of the different territories to secure the needed supplies for Barcelona's dockyards.¹⁹⁸ The network mobilized by Rena was much bigger and more effective than the one deployed by his predecessor, Bartolomé Ferrer, and was but one indication of the radical changes in the Barcelona shipyards in comparison to the inactivity of the previous period.¹⁹⁹ Gil Pérez de Bierlas, Rena's secretary, was so busy writing to the court and to many other places that he had no time to write to his own family or, even

worse, to flirt with women, as he bitterly complained of in a letter to a friend.²⁰⁰ Rena's system of providing incentives to efficient workers bore fruit, and only a few months after his arrival in Barcelona he was able to announce that five galleys were ready to put to sea, while work on the rest was progressing rapidly.²⁰¹ The first ships built by Rena were used by Charles V to reinforce the galley squadron under the command of Álvaro de Bazán.²⁰² This squadron was less important than Andrea Doria's, but it was made up mainly of galleys belonging to the Crown. The fact that Charles V decided to reinforce this squadron illustrates his commitment to relying on his own military rather than that of his Genoese ally.

Unsurprisingly, Rena's shipbuilding project soon met with Doria's opposition; and in fact, to some extent it was Rena himself who provoked Doria. As we have seen, Rena knew perfectly well the Genoese admiral's difficult temperament, but having chafed for so long under his command, Rena could not resist the temptation to flaunt his new authority and write to Doria, requesting his collaboration on the shipbuilding project. Thus, when Rena wrote to Doria and to the Spanish ambassador in Genoa, asking them to send raw materials and workers from Liguria to Barcelona, Doria reacted by writing to Charles V and expressed his displeasure in the following terms:

A letter has arrived addressed to me from the Bishop of Alghero Micer Joan Reina . . . in which he tells me about the orders that he has been given for the expedited construction of galleys in Barcelona; and, among other things, he has sent to the ambassador here a list of prices and different provisions that he hopes to acquire here to this effect . . . if I were young enough, for I am old, I would not be able to control myself.²⁰³

Doria's violent reaction is easy to understand, as the aggressive construction of the galleys directed by Rena implied a serious threat to his own interests. For one thing, both Rena's and Doria's supply networks were competing for the same limited resources needed to build and maintain galleys.²⁰⁴ Doria's response contrasts with that of the Spanish ambassador in Genoa, who also wrote to Charles V complaining about the issue, but in a more polite way.²⁰⁵ Both Doria and Figueroa also argued in their letters that the construction of galleys was a demanding task that could delay the departure of the navy—a dangerous prospect, since the objective was to attack Tunis before Barbarossa could prepare its defenses. Competition for raw materials and skilled workers was an important factor in explaining Doria's opposition to the shipbuilding project. However, even more important was the fact that, in the business of war, Doria had always been a powerful broker for Genoa's merchant elite and had constructed an enormous clientele system there.²⁰⁶ After the rumors about Charles V's ambitious naval project reached Genoa, Doria

was approached by several people asking for his intercession with the Spanish authorities, in the hopes of becoming contractors, which would have threatened Doria's role as broker. As he wrote in one of his letters to the emperor:

Having notice about the preparations of Your Majesty for the navy, some citizens and other persons of this city [Genoa] have come to find me, offering to build and arm galleys if Your Majesty would pay them salary for two years . . . it seemed to me I should advise Your Majesty that I believe that these deals could be convenient because of the speed of the enterprise, which is what matters the most.²⁰⁷

Thus, the Barcelona shipbuilding project threatened Doria's interests not only because it was consuming the same materials that he needed, but also because it limited his role as a broker in the local sphere, redistributing the economic and symbolic capital derived from the activity of serving the emperor in the defense of the Mediterranean frontier.²⁰⁸ In short, the project led by Rena threatened the pillars of Doria's political influence.

Eventually, the emperor and his military advisors decided to follow Doria's advice and reduced the number of galleys to be constructed in Barcelona in order to concentrate efforts on accelerating the mobilization of the navy. Apparently, everybody agreed on the necessity of attacking Barbarossa as soon as possible, and even if the galleys were finished on time, it would take months to train the crews.²⁰⁹ Even Rena knew that time was of the essence; still, he continued working to make as much progress on the construction of the galleys as possible.²¹⁰ Doria was able to defend his strong position in the Mediterranean policy of the Spanish Empire because producing new equipment to defend the frontier required a lot of time. Nevertheless, the decision by the royal administration to attempt an ambitious program of shipbuilding shows that the same men who had been forced to accept Doria's prerogative were trying to counterbalance his influence. In order to do that, they had to create an alternative to the extreme dependency on Doria's war machinery. Of course, this was not a zero-sum game. The imperial administration's main objective was not to get rid of Doria's services. The motive behind Rena's activity as a galley constructor was to make Doria's services cheaper.²¹¹ However, creating a new galley squadron was impossible in the framework of an imperial agenda motivated by short-term objectives. After the conquest of Tunis, Rena was given a new post: commissioner of the imperial army that invaded Provence in 1536. This derailed any plans to resume the shipbuilding project, as the imperial administration turned its attention from the defense of the Mediterranean frontier to Charles V's dynastic enemy par excellence: Francis I. As it turned out, in advocating for a frontier defense strategy using a powerful imperial navy, Rena was once again championing a lost cause.

Unfortunately, this was not the only one. While supervising the construction of the galleys in Barcelona, Rena decided to prepare himself to serve the emperor as a military advisor in his new Maghrebi crusade. As a bishop, Rena was considered an advisor to the emperor, but in addition, he had long experience serving the Crown in the Maghreb. Even more important, he was one of the few servants of Charles V who had participated in the Maghrebi campaigns of his grandfather, Ferdinand the Catholic. He was also regularly consulted by the members of the War Council, like his old friend the secretary Pedro de Zuazola. So Rena had well-founded reasons to believe that he would be called on to participate in the strategy meetings for the Tunisian campaign. When the navy arrived at the Tunisian coast, Rena was included among the inner circle of military advisors to Charles V.²¹² Although multiple sources refer to this field War Council, they do not include detailed accounts of its meetings and discussions.²¹³ As a consequence, the only way for us to analyze Rena's plans for the Tunisian campaign are the few materials he collected while in Barcelona. The first one is a detailed map of the city and fortress of Tunis (see Figure 4.3).

The accuracy in the representation of the city walls, its fortification, the shipyards, and the coastal defenses might lead us to think that Rena was collecting the information needed to prepare a siege. However, unlike



Figure 4.3 Map of the City of Tunis Kept in Rena's Archive (1534)

Source: AGN, FIG_CARTOGRAFIA,N.142.

contemporary European depictions of North African cities, this map was not designed for military purposes.²¹⁴ A close examination of the drawing shows that it contains a clear view of the composite nature of the city, with the Christian neighborhood on the right side next to the castle, the names of the local notables in charge of guarding the city's gates, and their respective areas of influence (see Figure 4.4 detail). The drawing is not a simple physical representation of Tunis—it is above all a political map of the city.

The same can be said about the other drawing kept in Rena's personal archive. It represents a chaotic array of tents and castles with the city of Tunis at the center. For years, this map has been thought to be a representation of Charles V's imperial camp during the siege of Tunis in 1535. However, each set of tents is labeled with the name of a tribal notable, like "Nasser ben Sola" or the most important ones, "Al Duedi" and "Sheikh Ismael" (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). Far from being a representation of the siege of Tunis, the drawing is an accurate political map of the kingdom of Tunis in the early 1530s.

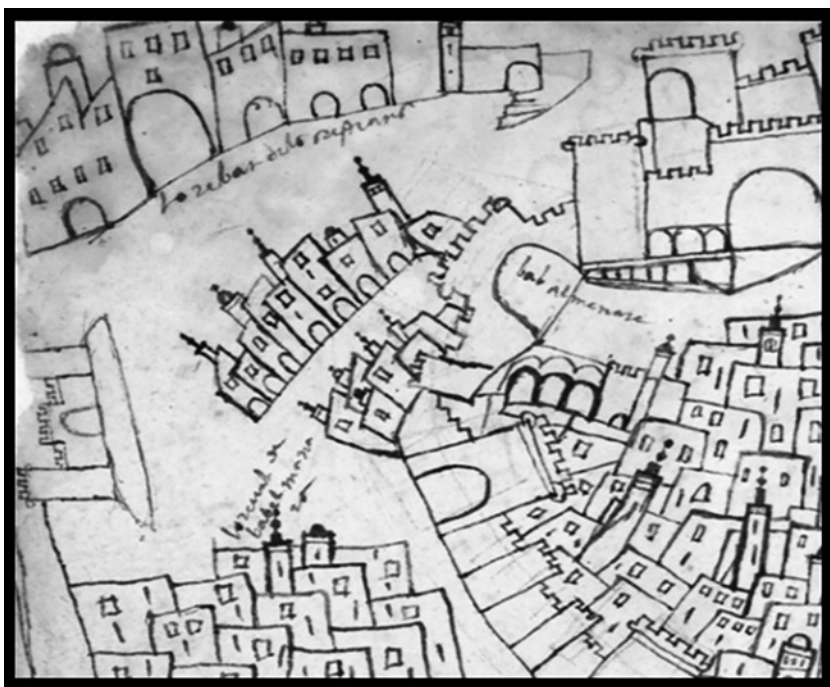


Figure 4.4 Detail of Map of the City of Tunis Kept in Rena's Archive (1534)

Source: AGN, FIG_CARTOGRAFIA,N.142.

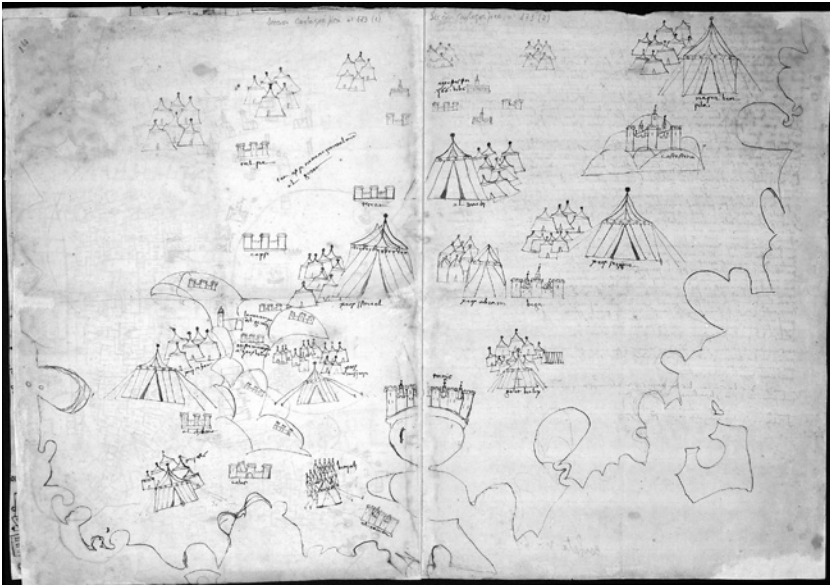


Figure 4.5 Map of the Kingdom of Tunis Kept in Rena's Archive (1534)
 Source: AGN, FIG_CARTOGRAFIA,N.142.

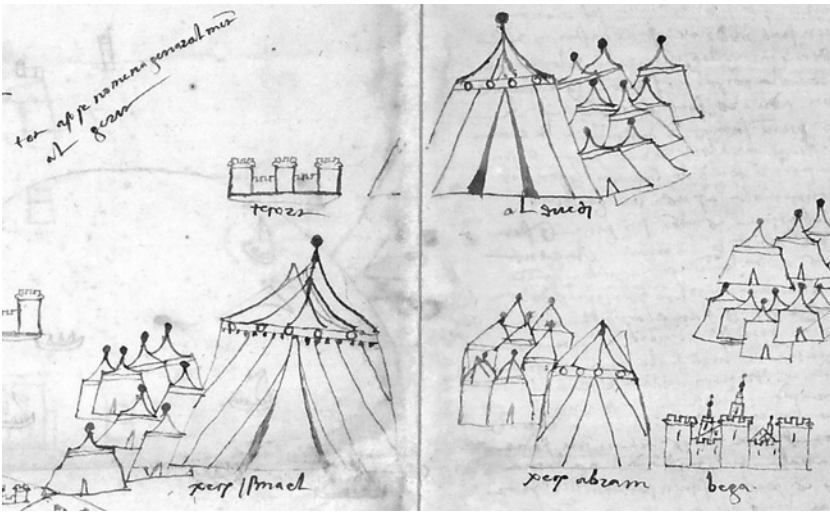


Figure 4.6 Detail of Map of the Kingdom of Tunis Kept in Rena's Archive (1534)
 Source: AGN, FIG_CARTOGRAFIA,N.142.

Together with these maps, there is a document written in Catalan with an accurate account of Tunis's political landscape at the time.²¹⁵ The document is intended to complement the two drawings and contains several references to them. More important for us, this document offers a first-hand account of the different leaders and factions in the Tunisian court, the main royal officials, the key religious leaders of the city, and the tribal chiefs in the surrounding areas. A close reading of the document suggests that Rena was not looking for an accurate representation of the physical city of Tunis; he was collecting information about the human landscape of the Maghrebi kingdom. The information seems a bit outdated since there is no reference to Barbarossa, the city's new ruler, or the exile of the king.²¹⁶ Even more interesting, the references to political factions, marabouts, qadis, and royal officials like the *mizwar* recall the negotiations Rena was engaged in during the conquest of Oran. Rena was not collecting information about Barbarossa or his forces because he was approaching the conquest of Tunis in a particular way. He believed that learning about local politics in general, and the local notables in particular, was a crucial part of the strategy, because he thought that they could play a key role in the conquest of the city. The report on Tunis's human landscape refers to the troops that the different sheikhs had under their command, but the big picture that emerges from a reading of the document is that of a divided society. And that is precisely what Rena was looking for, since he was approaching the conquest of Tunis not only as a simple military offensive but also as a complex process of negotiation with the different local potentates. Barbarossa had seized Tunis by taking advantage of the factional struggle against the Hafsi king, Mawlāy al Ḥasan, so it was feasible that the Spanish would be able to do the same and rely on the supporters of the dethroned ruler.²¹⁷ Rena's expectation that internecine conflict would work to the advantage of Spanish interests in the Maghreb can be better understood if we recall that two years earlier he firmly believed that the dethroned sheikh of Algiers could have plotted to kill Barbarossa.²¹⁸ He was wrong, since the rumors about Barbarossa's death proved to be false, but by approaching the conquest of Tunis by assessing the motivations of the different stakeholders Rena was acting as someone with a grounded knowledge of Maghrebi politics. He knew that division was the byword of local politics and he anticipated that not all the political actors would back Barbarossa's attempt to resist Charles V's attack, so he wanted to know the potential local supporters of the imperial army. In sum, he was hatching a plan to conquer Tunis in the same way that the Maghrebi cities were taken more than 20 years before: by taking advantage of the divisions within the local society.

Maybe Rena had good reasons to approach the campaign in this particular way, but he was wrong in thinking that the city would be taken with the support of local notables. The dethroned monarch, Mawlāy al Ḥasan, did join the imperial army but only with a few followers. According

to the account of an eyewitness, the local king had only 200 men when he arrived at the imperial camp outside Tunis.²¹⁹ The emperor's secretary, Antoine Perrenin, gave the same number in his official account of the campaign but added a passing mention of the false rumors about a caravan of 800 camels transporting supplies to the camp and about 16,000 horsemen in the nearby mountains ready to assist in the final assault on the city, just to clarify that neither the supplies nor the troops materialized. Interestingly, this author underscores the fact that Charles V hosted the dethroned king out of piety and clemency and not because he needed any help.²²⁰ The testimony of Antoine Perrenin illustrates Rena's error when approaching the conquest of Tunis in the same way that he had approached the conquest of Oran. Contrary to what happened during the opening years of the century, this was not a campaign aimed solely at securing a coastal stronghold. The attack on Tunis was a military operation carefully designed to showcase the imperial power of Charles V before a European audience. Relying on local supporters would only have been understood as a sign of weakness, and that is why Perrenin clarified that the emperor hosted Mawlāy al Ḥasan out of charity and not because he needed his help.²²¹ It should be noted that Rena was not alone in exploring the potential benefits of internal division. In September 1534, Charles V had sent an envoy to Tunis to explore the possibility of instigating a factional uprising against Barbarossa, but special care was taken to keep any contact secret.²²²

Rena, who was able to appreciate the propagandistic dimension of the conquest of Koroni, did not anticipate that his plans for conquering Tunis by gaining the support of the different local leaders did not dovetail with the official planning of the campaign. This does not mean that Rena was wrong, since even the emperor himself tried to play the card of fomenting internal division against Barbarossa. However, once the military and propaganda machine was set in motion, there was no room for arrangements like the ones Rena was considering. We can appreciate the difference between the strategies used in the campaign of Tunis on the one hand, and the precarious expeditions that conquered Melilla, Oran, and Béjaïa decades before on the other, if we look at the volume of resources mobilized in each case. The wealth derived from the conquest of Perú allowed Charles to assemble an armed force to oppose the Ottoman forces under Barbarossa.²²³ According to a modern estimate of the size of this force based on different sources, it included 75 galleys and almost 30,000 soldiers and cost 1,076,652 ducats.²²⁴ The navy that conquered Mers el-Kébir 30 years before cost only 7,000 ducats.²²⁵ These numbers make clear the huge difference in magnitude between the African campaigns of Ferdinand the Catholic and those of his grandson Charles V. Undoubtedly, the enormous difference in terms of resources says a lot about the profound changes taking place on the Mediterranean frontier.

Overall, it can be said that Rena's strategy for the construction of the new Mediterranean frontier was influenced by his previous experience in the area more than 20 years before. His ideas about how to maintain Koroni and how to conquer Tunis by negotiating the support of local notables were a direct translation of his previous experience in the conquest and defense of the Maghrebi strongholds. His convictions about the need to construct a powerful imperial navy was a direct response to his bitter experience working hand in hand with Andrea Doria during the naval campaign of 1532, but it is also true that Rena was merely proposing a return to the arrangements of the 1520s, when the imperial administration owned its own galley squadrons. However, Rena's past experiences were not a good guide when strategizing the new maritime frontier. Greece was not the same as the Maghreb. The Ottoman sultan was able to respond quickly to the seizure of Koroni. By the spring of 1533, the janissaries were already besieging Koroni, and the imperial garrison resisted only because these troops were later redeployed to the sultan's offensive against Shi'ite Persia. Early the following year, a new Ottoman force besieged the stronghold and the imperial garrison surrendered shortly after.²²⁶ Funding the construction of a powerful imperial navy was not only impossible but also inconsistent with Charles V's grand strategy for two reasons. First, the place of the Mediterranean theater in the emperor's agenda was in constant flux; and second, the main pillar of the emperor's Mediterranean policy was to entrust maritime defense to his Genoese allies led by Andrea Doria.²²⁷

Finally, conquering a city with the collaboration of its Muslim notables was out of question at a time when the conflict with the Ottoman Empire had become a recurring theme in Charles V's propaganda. By proposing a Mediterranean frontier comprised of fortified enclaves in Ottoman territory, a navy under the direct control of the imperial administration, and collaboration with Muslim notables, Juan Rena was wagering on practices and means more suited to the past than to the present, when the defense of the Mediterranean frontier had become a major part of Charles V's imperial agenda. By the 1530s it was impossible to sustain a frontier stronghold in a territory under direct control of the Ottoman sultan, it was impossible to construct a imperial navy without Genoese collaboration, and it was impossible to acquire more cities in the Maghreb through the support of the local notables. In sum, Rena's ideas about how to build an effective imperial frontier in the Mediterranean did not amount to a feasible policy but were, rather, a blueprint for constructing an impossible frontier.

Conclusion

Rena's career mirrored the changing nature of Mediterranean geopolitics in general, and Charles V's agenda regarding the *Mare Nostrum* in

particular. During the 1520s, and in line with the long-standing conflict with Francis I, Charles V's naval policy was mainly focused on guaranteeing reliable communications between the Iberian and Italian peninsulas. However, the end of the Italian Wars coincided with the escalation of the imperial conflict between Charles V and Süleyman. From the early 1530s onwards, the war between the two emperors was almost constant. It was precisely the permanent threat posed by the Ottoman navy that called for a completely different strategy. The protection offered by Charles V was what sustained his dominion over the Italian territories. The political significance of the protection Charles V offered to his Italian subjects, together with the specificities of naval warfare in the Mediterranean, were what shaped the Mediterranean frontier between Charles V's and Süleyman's empires. Together with many other figures, Juan Rena played a key role in the construction of this maritime frontier.

Rena also developed his own ideas about how the Mediterranean should look and the best means to defend it. It is true that he proposed strategies and means better suited for the Maghrebi frontier of the early decades of the century, rather than for the imperial frontier built in the framework of Charles V's struggle against Süleyman. However, his failure to propose useful solutions tells us a lot about the nature of the Mediterranean frontier as a political construction. The changing strategy of Charles V in the Mediterranean influenced which practices and means were useful and which were not. In sum, Rena failed not only because the local context in which he was serving in the 1530s was different from the one in which he had served 20 years earlier but also because the international politics were completely different.

However, Rena's failure as a tactician should not lead us to neglect his role as technician. After all, Rena was not the political architect in charge of creating a blueprint for the frontier but just one of the many masons in charge of building it. It is because of this that Rena played a key role in the shaping of the new military administration sustaining the naval frontier. His activity as commissioner of the navy opens a window on the inner workings of the naval machinery defending the Mediterranean dominions of Charles V precisely when this war machine was in the making. As the nexus between the imperial administration, on the one hand, and Andrea Doria and his Genoese galley squadron, on the other, Rena had to balance their interests and to combine their respective assets in the most advantageous way to ensure the defense of the frontier. The result of Rena's activity as commissioner of the navy was a complex set of norms and practices that rendered the joint effort of protecting the Mediterranean frontier beneficial to both parties. Furthermore, Rena also helped to shape an administrative procedure tailored to adapt the political alliance of two giants like Charles V and Andrea Doria to the practicalities of naval warfare on the Mediterranean frontier. Rena was unable to curb Doria's authoritarian style of conducting naval campaigns, but Rena's

bitter complaints about it tell us a lot about the asymmetrical power relations between the multiple actors involved in the defense of the frontier. Rena's activities also allow us to witness the multiple interests at stake in the making of the new maritime frontier. The picture emerging from the analysis of Rena's activities in the Mediterranean is that of a maritime frontier shaped by a wide array of actors, ranging from the two world emperors in conflict with each other, to their subjects, passing through a long list of military men like Andrea Doria and imperial officials like Juan Rena. In sum, this was a maritime frontier constructed by a wide array of actors both, from inside the inner circles of the imperial government but also from the ports, ships, and strongholds which composed this frontier.

Notes

1. "El emperador ha enviado a mandar a un veneciano que está en Pamplona que se dice Micer Johan Rena que es hombre de quien mas cuenta se hace y se da fe para dar orden al avituallamiento de una armada de mar o de tierra." Paris, BNF, Manuscrits, Clairambault 314, fol. 309.
2. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde méditerranéen*. For an opposed viewpoint, see Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*.
3. The historical significance of Lepanto was a matter of debate in the 1970s. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto"; and Parker and Thompson, "The Battle of Lepanto." A detailed reconstruction of the campaign can be found in Capponi, *Victory of the West*; Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys*, 221–52; and Williams, *Empire and Holy War in the Mediterranean*.
4. Pacini, *Desde Rosas a Gaeta*; and Pardo Molero, *La defensa del imperio*. A case similar to the one analyzed here can be found in Mourieux, *The Channel*, 109–49.
5. Parker, *Imprudent King*, 136–39, 203–5.
6. Espinosa, "The Grand Strategy of Charles V," 239–83; Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*; and Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen*, vol. 2. On Charles V's "grand strategy" (and his need to improvise), see Parker, *Emperor*, 96–97, 191–94, 270–74, 289, 517–19.
7. Hernando Sánchez, "Non sufficit orbis?" 31–37.
8. Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, 155–60; and Vincent, "Carlos V en Granada."
9. Halkin and Dansaert, *Charles de Lannoy*, 112–13.
10. AGS, Contaduría del Suelo, Leg. 104, s.f.; and AGN, APFR, Caj. 44, no. 1, fol. 3.
11. AGN, CO_PS, 1^a S. Leg. 168, no. 15, fol. 17.
12. Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Malaga, July 28, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 38, no. 10, fols. 6–7.
13. "No ha sido poco servicio en tan breve tiempo haber hecho tanta provisión y buena y proveer 9.000 hombres." Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Cartagena, October 6, 1526. AGN, APFR, Caj. 38, no. 10, fol. 117.
14. AGS, Estado, Leg. 269, no. 48.
15. AGN, APFR, Caj. 72, no. 2-1, fol. 6.
16. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Burgos, January 27, 1528. AGN, APFR, Caj. 71, no. 2–10. On this military route, see Fagel, "El camino español por mar."

17. "Porque ya la tienen por hecha con la llegada de Vuestra Merced." Letter from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Burgos, December 29, 1527. AGN, APFR, Caj. 71, no. 3-5, fol. 1.
18. AGN, APFR, Caj. 73, no. 5-2.
19. D'Amico, *Charles Quint maître*, 30-31, 247; Dandele, *The Renaissance of Empire*, 92-98; and Rivero Rodríguez, "La coronación imperial de Bolonia," 150.
20. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 125.
21. Letter from Francisco Duarte to Juan Rena. Toledo, February 14, 1529. AGN, APFR, Caj. 6, no. 7-1.
22. AGN, APFR, Caj. 73, no. 5-1.
23. AGN, APFR, Caj. 73, no. 1.
24. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan de Alarcón. Barcelona, July 3, 1529. AGN, APFR, Caj. 6, no. 2.
25. Letter from Juan Rena to the War Council. May 23, 1529. AGS, Estado, Leg. 461, no. 22.
26. AGN, APFR, Caj. 95, no. 1.
27. On the Ottoman navy, see Hess, "The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire"; Imber, "The Navy of Süleyman"; and Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, 89-121, "Foreign Policy, Naval Strategy," and "The Ottomans as a World Power."
28. A general survey in Fernández Duro, *Armada española*, 1:123-37, 1:142-55.
29. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 111, 113-15.
30. AGS, Contaduría del Sueldo, Leg. 160, s.f.
31. A brief but useful survey of the naval war between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans in Williams, "War and Peace."
32. D'Amico, *Charles Quint maître*, 14, 256.
33. "A mi me echa a los cuernos del toro." Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Genoa, July 23, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 3-4, fol. 2.
34. "Il reverendo domino Joanne Reni (*sic*), solito aver tal carico." Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 56:16. Other references to Rena in 56:23, 29, 57, 582, 929. "[P]er il che soa Maestà manda a Zenoa al Doria domino Zuan Regina ditto el Venetiano, homo pratico di cose da mar." Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 56:86.
35. "Et per questo efecto expedí di Ratisbona messer Erasmo Doria et messer Gioan Rena nostro citadino venetiano ma gran tempo servitor dil re católico e molto adoperato etiam per quello, et li mandò a Genoa con tal ordine." Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 56:354.
36. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Bolonia, December 24, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-11.
37. AGS, Estado, Leg. 439, s.f.
38. On this campaign, see Duchhardt, "Das Tunis unternehmen Karls V" and "Tunis-Algier-Jerusalem?" The conquest of Tunis was treated preferentially in Charles V's imperial propaganda. Deswarte-Rosa, "L'Expédition de Tunis"; and D'Amico, *Charles Quint maître*, 252-53.
39. Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, 3:104.
40. AGS, Estado, Leg. 462, nos. 41, 43, 44, 46-50.
41. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Trapani, August 27, 1535. AGS, Estado, Leg. 462, no. 81; and Poumarède, "Le voyage de Tunis et d'Italie de Charles Quint."
42. "Que es razón que se le haga por ser tan buen servidor nuestro." Letter from Charles V to the Viceroy of Naples. Trapani, August 27, 1535. AGS, Estado, Leg. 462, no. 81. I am grateful to Gennaro Varriale for sharing this reference with me.

43. "Memoria de lo que se mandó comprar en Nápoles para la provisión de la felicísima armada de Su Majestad para este año de 1536." AGS, Estado, Leg. 441, s.f.
44. "En reino extraño, y por montañas, y con tan gran ejército y repartido por diversas partes." "Relación que Francisco Duarte me envió en primero de octubre de 36 años de las cosas de la entrada que Su Majestad hizo en Francia el año de 36." BRAH, Salazar y Castro, N-43, fols. 206–13.
45. "El obispado de Tuy se dió a Micer Juan Reina, Obispo de [Alghero], Era natural de Florencia [*sic*]; tenía la naturaleza de estos reinos, era hombre sabio en dar orden en hacer armadas." Girón, *Crónica del Emperador*, 84.
46. Girón, *Crónica del Emperador*, 96.
47. Sandoval, *Catálogo de los obispos*, fol. 127. I am grateful to Cloe Caverro de Carondelet for sharing this reference with me.
48. Girón, *Crónica del Emperador*, 147.
49. Girón, *Crónica del Emperador*, 259.
50. "Otras nuevas no se escribir a Vuestras Mercedes salvo que hoy vinieron nuevas por vía de Zaragoza que Andrea Doria es venido con seis galeras a Barcelona e diz que viene a Su Majestad para servirle. No lo confirmo a Vuestras Mercedes porque como tengo dicho es nueva que hoy ha venido." Letter from Juan Rena to Nicola Cattaneo and Company. Pamplona, August 8, 1528. AGN, APFR, Caj. 72, no. 1–11, fol. 8.
51. Oreste, "Genova e Andrea Doria," 62–63; Pacini, *La Genova di Andrea Doria*, 40, 49–50, 55–57, 63; Sirago, "I Doria, signori del mare"; Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, 20–22; and Parrott, *The Business of War*, 80–87. A different approach is adopted by Dauverd, who addresses the relationship between the Genoese and the Spanish by focusing on their common interests. Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition*.
52. The text is quite vague on this matter and has explicit stipulations only on some practical matters such as the payment for the galley and the supply of wheat. A copy of the text belonging to the imperial administration is kept in AGS, Estado, Leg. 1362, no. 4.
53. Even though this continues to be the prevailing perspective. Airaldi, *Andrea Doria*, 159.
54. Further information on this campaign can be found in Laiglesia, *Un establecimiento español en Morea*; and Moral, *El virrey don Pedro de Toledo*, 99–108. A recent reconstruction of the campaign in Varriale, "Nápoles y el azar de Corón." See also Varriale, *Arrivano li turchi*, 35–42. The English reader can consult Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 141–44.
55. This episode earned only a passing mention in reference works about the effects of maritime warfare on the development of early modern states. Glete, *Warfare at Sea*, 100. However, as Pacini has shown, this expedition played a major role in shaping the Spanish Empire's strategy in the Mediterranean. Pacini, *Desde Rosas a Gaeta*, 178–95.
56. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 120. On the Ottoman threat to Charles V's southern domains, see Aubin, "Une frontière face au péril ottoman." The image of the Ottoman as the enemy par excellence in early modern Italy has been analyzed in Ricci, "Il nemico ufficiale."
57. As Doria's friend and associate Adam Centurione explained, from the very beginning one of Doria's aims was to destroy the Ottoman navy's havens along its route to Italy. Letter from Adam Centurione to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, August 20, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1565, no. 81.
58. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys*, 57; and Thompson, "Las galeras en la política militar española."

59. The outcome was reported to the Spanish court as a complete success. Letter from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to the Empress Isabella. Genoa, November 18, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1565, no. 69. The Ottoman sources, on the contrary, portray the campaign as a simple raid to loot the Greek coasts. Çelebi, *The Gift*, 82.
60. The draft of Rena's description of the facts in AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 5-1, fols. 1-3. The news about the circulation of this document was recorded in a letter from Adam Centurione to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, November 3, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 289. The Italian translation of Rena's account in AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, nos. 290-91. I have already discussed the spread of this news elsewhere. Escribano Páez, "Escribir y mandar nuevas de Turcos," 105-6.
61. "Pure si se potesi fermare un nidio in quelle bande sarebbe cosa di grande importanza et da desirare de Christiani a non perderé l'occasione di travagliarlo in casa sua." Letter from Francesco Guicciardini to Bartolomeo Lanfredini. Bologna, October 15, 1532. Cfr. Ricci, *Carteggi di Francesco Guicciardini*, 15:221.
62. Rodríguez Salgado, "¿Carolus Africanus?"
63. On religious warfare as a mechanism of "soft power," see Tracy, "The Background War."
64. Williams, *Empire and Holy War*, 258, 265, 267-70. For a more general study on the close connection between protection claims and imperial power in the early modern period, see Benton and Clulow, "Introduction."
65. On the importance of the symbolic rivalry between Charles V and Süleyman, see Necipoglu, "Süleyman the Magnificent"; and Woodhead, "Perspectives on Süleyman."
66. "Y esto no conviene en general a la reputación y servicio de Su Majestad." Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, May 9, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 297.
67. Letter from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V. Genoa, June 3, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 41.
68. Schnettger, *Principe Sovrano oder Civitas Imperialis?* 67.
69. See, for instance, the letters sent to his ambassador in Portugal. Letters from Charles V to Lope Hurtado de Mendoza. Regensburg, July 11, 1532. BZ, Altamira, Leg. 133, no. 63. See also nos. 66, 68.
70. "De España piensan sacar gran dinero con esta nueva del turco." Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan Rena. Regensburg, June 19, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 4-1. This argument was also employed to extract resources from the Kingdom of Naples. Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI*, 386-96. See also Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 131-37. Fear of the Ottoman sea power was a tool to legitimize his policy regarding the mobilization of resources for war. For instance, when the Catalan authorities complained to Charles V about the management of the military resources, his reply to them made reference to the navy organized in 1532 to defend his strategy. Letter from Charles V to the Deputies of the Generalitat of Catalonia. Mantua, April 4, 1533. ACA, Generalitat, V. 240, no. 114.
71. This is expressed in a letter from the Spanish ambassador in Genoa to the emperor. Letter from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V. Genoa, May 9, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 36.
72. On the fear of the Ottoman threat, see Delumeau, *La peur en Occident*, 262-72.
73. Letter from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V. Genoa, October 6, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 10.

74. Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Genoa, July 23, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 3-4, fol. 2. On the political use of the Order of the Golden Fleece by Charles V, see Ceballos-Escalera y Gila, *La Insigne Orden del Toisón de Oro*, 118-29.
75. Postigo Castellanos, "Capturaré una piel de oro."
76. "Que le parecía que el príncipe sería más contento de recibirlo aquí en su tierra que en otra parte ninguna." Letter from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V. Genoa, July 23, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 136.
77. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, canto XV.
78. I will come back to both issues later.
79. Doria's previous naval actions during these years have been described in Anatra, "Andrea Doria."
80. "Memorial para la Magestad en orden a la conquista de Jerusalén." BNE, MS 19699/60.
81. On Andrea Doria's use of his public image as defender of the sea against the Turks, see Stagno, "Triumphing Over the Enemy."
82. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 13-3. On the role of galleys in the Mediterranean imperial navies, see Bunes Ibarra, "La defensa de la cristiandad."
83. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 13-1.
84. ADP, Scaffale 79, Busta 58, no. 1.
85. Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Naples, August 7, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 4-1, fol. 2.
86. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-1.
87. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-2, fols. 1-2.
88. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-2, fols. 1-2.
89. "Pues Su Majestad en todo y por todo se descuida con su señoría." AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-2, fols. 3-4.
90. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 44; and Letters from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, May 7 and 9, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 297.
91. ADP, Scaffale 79, Busta 58, no. 1.
92. Letter from Andrea Doria to Charles V. Genoa, October 5, 1531. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1363, no. 167.
93. Letters from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V. October 1 and November 22, 1531. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1363, nos. 58, 77.
94. Pacini, *Desde Rosas a Gaeta*, 296-304.
95. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Messina, August 26, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 4-4, fol. 33.
96. Parrott, *The Business of War*, 196-259; and Esteban Estríngana, *Guerra y finanzas*, 146-50.
97. "Digo que conviene que con esta armada vaya una persona de recaudo para que tenga razón de todo, y si esto Su Majestad no manda proveer no ha de hacer cuenta de cuanto se cargase en las naos que todo se ha de consumir como la sal en el agua." Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Genoa, June 23, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 2-3, fol. 2.
98. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, July 3, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 3-1, fol. 1.
99. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, July 3, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 281.
100. The draft of a report in AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 3-2, fol. 2.
101. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, July 3, 1532.
102. Letter from Francisco de los Cobos to Juan Rena. Regensburg, July 16, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, nos. 2-4 and AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 280.
103. Letter from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Regensburg, August 11, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 3-2, fol. 1 and AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 138.

104. "Esta no era guerra de la calidad de las otras, así no había de haber en ella las larguezas que ha habido en las otras guerras pasadas." Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Naples, August 7, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 4-1, fol. 1.
105. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 17-1, fol. 4.
106. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Messina, August 23, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 4-4, fols. 1-2.
107. "Desde Génova escribí a Vuestra Merced como no le agradaba a esta gente de ver la orden que se tiene en lo de la hacienda, y como siempre ha andado hombre alerta no ha habido lugar de entrar en ella. Ahora que ha habido disposición de entrar en lo ajeno . . . han ido y andan las cosas algo rotas." Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fol. 12.
108. Redlich, *De Praeda Militari*; see also Parrott, *The Business of War*, 82, 44.
109. AGS, Estado, Leg. 439, no. 72.
110. "Yo quisiera, pues no hay dineros para pagar la gente de guerra, que se tentara de tomar a Lepanto, que el saco fuera bueno, porque creo se han recogido los bienes y personas principales de toda la comarca, y con esto quedará la gente contenta y con la boca dulce, y esta golosina aprovecharía también para adelante si en estas partes se hubiese de guerrear." Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Gulf of Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fol. 1-5.
111. On the reasons for the soldiers' eagerness to engage in plunder, see Sherer, *Warriors for a Living*, 144-74.
112. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 15-1.
113. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 17-1, fol. 3.
114. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 140.
115. Redlich, *De Praeda Militari*, 9-13.
116. "Esta es poca y pobre artillería para tal armada." AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 3-1, fol. 2-3.
117. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 71.
118. The Ottomans were producing monster wrought-iron pieces, but also bronze artillery, that is, highly esteemed pieces from a European perspective. Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 64-65. On siege artillery in Ottoman fortresses, see Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 40-43.
119. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 141. The enormous size of Ottoman artillery pieces is by now a cliché. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 61.
120. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Gulf of Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fol. 1-5. The inventory in no. 15-3.
121. Similar problems regarding this matter arose during the Revolt of the Comuneros. Letters from Adrian of Utrecht to Charles V. Logroño, June 8 and August 8, 1521. AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 2, no. 1, fols. 197, 199.
122. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 92, 102, 141, 169, 199, 220, 246-47; and Çelebi, *The Gift*, 90, 110, 114, 125.
123. Interestingly, the chronicler López de Gómara decided to take part in the debate by opining that Doria deserved the prize. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 141.
124. Rena was able to obtain sufficient information to write a tentative report of the artillery seized and to inform the Crown about the issue. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Gulf of Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fols. 2-3.
125. Pacini, *La Genova di Andrea Doria*, 25, 49-51, 77; and Grendi, "Andrea Doria," 103.
126. Zünckel, "Diplomatische Geschäftsleute," 40-41.

127. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Gulf of Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fol. 1-5.
128. The chronicles on the Mediterranean frontier are peppered with references to the seizure of ships transporting wheat. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 65, 89, 97, 103, 105, 150, 203, 205, 237, 247, 251; and Çelebi, *The Gift*, 97, 117, 199.
129. On the importance of the wheat supply in Genoese politics, see Grendi, "Genova alla Metá del cinquecento"; and Pacini, *La Genova di Andrea Doria*, 57-61.
130. "Relación de una carta de Micer Juan Rena a Su Majestad de 30 de octubre." AGS, Estado, Leg. 439, no. 72.
131. A similar case can be found in Esteban Estríngana, *Guerra y finanzas*, 146-50.
132. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Messina, August 26, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 4-4, fol. 3. On the pope's galleys, see Filioli Uranio, *La squadra navale pontificia*.
133. "Especialmente con una persona que había servido tan bien en esta jornada." Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, February 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 10-2, fols. 1-4.
134. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Bologna, February 20, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-14.
135. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, February 25, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 10-3, fol. 1-2.
136. Stewart, "The Soldier, the Bureaucrat."
137. Esteban Estríngana, *Guerra y finanzas*, 154-63, 246-50. On the importance of captains' interests in the development of military campaigns, see Esteban Estríngana, "Cabos de guerra."
138. "Por poca cosa y por otros respetos no quería que quedase la gente descontenta." Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Sapienzia, October 6, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-2, fols. 1-2.
139. Letter from Jerónimo de Illán to Juan de Cazalla. Alcalá de Henares, June 12, 1509. Gayangos and Fuente, *Cartas del Cardenal Fray Francisco de Cisneros*, 51.
140. Imber, "The Costs of Naval Warfare," 216.
141. "Escribo esto a Vuestra Majestad para que esté prevenido de lo en que el Príncipe Andrea Doria está puesto, y sepa lo que es la dicha artillería y lo que pueda valer para que, considerado así lo del presente como lo de por venir, Vuestra Majestad haga en ello lo que más viera que a su servicio convenga." Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Gulf of Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fols. 2-3.
142. Letter from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Bolonia, December 23, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, nos. 3-4.
143. AGS, Patronato Real, Leg. 17, no. 25.
144. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 11-1.
145. Letters from Andrea Doria to Juan Rena. Gallipoli, December 6 and 8, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, nos. 11-3, 11-4.
146. A similar problem was posed by Álvaro de Bazán, captain general of the Spanish galleys, who refused to pay the royal fifth from the booty. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Libros de Cédulas, Lib. 76, fols. 135r, 135v.
147. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, March 6, 1533. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1366, no. 241.
148. Letter from Charles V to Andrea Doria. Milan, March 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-16, fol. 3.

149. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to find the accounting records for this campaign in the Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas section of the Archivo General de Simancas, where it should be kept like the rest of the documentation produced by the military administration from this period. Furthermore, the Doria Pamphilj Archive does not hold Andrea Doria's private records from this period.
150. "Conforme al estilo de nuestros reinos de Castilla, dónde se ha de dar la cuenta." AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-3.
151. ADP, Scaffale 79, Busta 58, no. 1.
152. "Y se darán recaudos de todo porque hasta ahora no se ha podido hacer por razón de la prisa que se ha tenido en otras cosas." AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 11-1.
153. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 11-1.
154. "Por no estar el Príncipe informado de la manera que se toman las cuentas en Castilla como por ser tan amigo de sí mismo, yo soy cierto que en recusándole cualquier partida de las dichas cuentas se desabrirá." Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, March 8, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 11-3, fols. 1-2.
155. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Milan, March 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1-16, fols. 1-2.
156. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, March 19, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 11-5, fols. 1-2.
157. Letter from Andrea Doria to Francisco de los Cobos. Genoa, January 31, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1367, no. 7.
158. On Doria's role as guarantor of the political allegiance between Emperor Charles V and the Genoese ruling elite, see Pacini, *La Genova di Andrea Doria*, 25. On the strategic and geopolitical importance of Genoa in Habsburg policy, see Pacini, *Desde Rosas a Gaeta*, 70-91.
159. Both older and recent historiography concur on this point. See Petit, *André Doria*; and Parrot, *The Business of War*, 80-83.
160. AGS, Estado, Leg. 268, no. 55. Charles V urged the empress to pay Doria punctually and to give preference to this over other demands on the imperial coffers. Letter from Charles V to the Empress Isabel. Innsbruck, May 7, 1531. The following year, the archbishop of Toledo, president of the Council of Castile, received similar instructions. Letter from Charles V to Juan Pardo de Tavera. Brussels, March 9, 1531. AGS, Estado, Leg. 496, nos. 98, 152-54. This contrasts with the delay in the payment of funds for the other galley squadrons. Letter from Francisco de los Cobos to Juan Vézquez de Molina. Barcelona, December 4, 1531. AGS, Estado, Leg. 268, no. 44.
161. As happened in Barcelona in the summer of 1531, when the members of the Generalitat tried to evade this payment. Letter from Fadrique de Portugal to Charles V. Barcelona, July 21, 1531. AGS, Estado, Leg. 268, no. 54.
162. Mira Ceballos, *Las armadas imperiales*, 173-74.
163. "Porque le parece que de él hay necesidad, él piensa de quedarse con todo o con la mayor parte." Mira Ceballos, *Las armadas imperiales*, 173-74.
164. "Que como conocen el tiempo se quieren aprovechar de él." Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fol. 12.
165. "No escribo esto tan claro en la carta de Su Majestad por que no se si lo tendrá por bien." Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fols. 10-11.
166. "En su habla y en su semblante no mostró descontentamiento." Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Lepanto, October 30, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-5, fols. 10-11.

167. Capelloni, *Vita del Prencipe Andrea Doria*, 36–37. See also Petit, *André Doria*, 69–73; and Gravière, *Doria et Barberousse*, 158–59.
168. “Por no estar el Príncipe informado de la manera que se toman las cuentas en Castilla, como por ser tan amigo de si mismo, yo soy cierto que en recusándole cualquier partida de las dichas cuentas se desabiará.” Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, March 8, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 11-3, fols. 1–2.
169. “En lo de las cuentas de los gastos de la armada de Corón que decís que hicieron los criados y hacedores del dicho Príncipe, tened toda la templanza, dando a entender al dicho Príncipe la mucha confianza que de él tengo, no solamente en las cosas mayores, más en las de hacienda. Por lo cual tengo creído que mirará por la nuestra tanto como por la suya propia. Y al fin pasad por las dichas cuentas por solas firmas y certificaciones del dicho Príncipe, caso que según estilo de contaduría de cuentas no haya los otros recaudos que al caso convengan. Porque por el respeto del dicho Príncipe se ha de tolerar y dispensar lo demás.” Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Milan, March 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, nos. 1–16, fols. 1–2.
170. According to Grendi, Charles V never showed any doubt about Doria’s actions. Grendi, “Andrea Doria,” 108.
171. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Patras, October 11, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 6-3.
172. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Koroni, September 25, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 5-1, fols. 1–3.
173. Letter from Andrea Doria to Charles V. Genoa, June 3, 1532. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1365, no. 189.
174. Letter from Luis de Pizaño to Juan Rena. Koroni, October 9, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 8-1.
175. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 14-3.
176. Letter from Charles V to Juan Rena. Bolonia, January 18, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 1–13.
177. Letter from the Archbishop of Bari to Juan Rena. Bolonia, January 17, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 24-1.
178. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Mesina, January 11, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 9-1, fol. 4.
179. Letter from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Bolonia, January 12, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 3–6.
180. Letters from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Bolonia February 20, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 3–7.
181. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Genoa, February 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 10-2, fols. 1–4.
182. Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Genoa, February 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 10-2, fols. 6–7.
183. Letter from Pedro de Zuazola to Juan Rena. Parma, March 4, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 74, no. 3–8.
184. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Barcelona, June 12, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 12-1, fols. 1–3.
185. Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Barcelona, June 13, 1533. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 12-1, fol. 4.
186. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1366, no. 38. To the best of my knowledge, the debates on the abandonement of frontier strongholds during Charles V’s reign is yet to be done. For a compilation of materials for similar debates in the Portuguese empire, see Cruz, “As contovérsias.”
187. Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 146–48; and Girón, *Crónica del Emperador*, 35.

188. Alonso Acero, "Defensa del Mediterráneo."
189. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys*.
190. Thompson, "Las galeras en la política militar española" and "Navies and State Formation."
191. Goodman, *Spanish Naval Power*; Philips, *Six Galleons*; and Glete, *Navies and Nations and War and the State*.
192. Unfortunately, Rena's personal archive contains very little information about his activities directing the shipbuilding process in Barcelona, in comparison with the wonderful personal sources that Venetian shipbuilders produced and kept. Hocker and McManamon, "Mediaeval Shipbuilding."
193. López de Gómara, *Guerras de Mar*, 154–59.
194. "Para remedio dello . . . proveemos que se junten todas nuestras galeras para hacer la resistencia y escusar los daños que en la cristiandad podría hacer con lo que más pareciere necesario, al Príncipe Andrea Doria enviamos a mandar al visorrey de Nápoles y Sicilia para que en aquellos reinos se hagan todas las más galeras que ser pueda. Y en estos proveemos que se hagan y armen con diligencia hasta 20 en Barcelona y en Tortosa se da orden como se hagan todas las que más ser pudiere y así mismo galeones y navíos gruesos; se aderecen las provisiones y otras cosas necesarias para que a la primavera se pueda hacer una armada gruesa para resistir a la de los enemigos y ofenderla y echarla de los mares de la Cristiandad. Y no faltaremos por nuestra parte a hacer todo lo que para este efecto convinieren." Letter from Charles V to Lope de Soria. Palencia, September 4, 1534. BRAH, Colección Lope de Soria, 9/1952, no. 74. On the activity of this diplomatic agent, see Pizarro Llorente, "Un embajador de Carlos V en Italia."
195. There had been previously some failed projects to construct galleys in Barcelona, but only with the aim of organizing a small defensive navy. For that reason, I believe that this was a new project, conceived for the new campaign, and not just a part of the previous one. On the construction of galleys in Barcelona, see Casals, *L'Emperador i els Catalans*, 210–13, 305–7. Unlike the medieval period, we know very little about shipbuilding in Barcelona's dockyards during the first half of the sixteenth century. Riera i Melis, "Les Drassanes Reials de Barcelona" and "La construcció naval a Catalunya"; and Estrada-Rius, *La Drassana Reial de Barcelona*.
196. AGS, Estado, Leg. 439, s.f.; Letter from Charles V to the Deputies of the Generalitat. Palencia, September 28, 1534. ACA, Generalidad, V. 240, no. 131; and Girón, *Cronica del Emperador*, 48.
197. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Morillo, October 15, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 65, no. 183.
198. AGS, Estado, Leg. 269, no. 123–125. On the logistical and administrative difficulties involved in shipbuilding, see Rose, *Medieval Naval Warfare*, 6–23.
199. ACA, Real Patrimonio, Maestre Racional, Volúmenes. Serie General, A-520, fols. 27–39. Bartolomé Ferrer was the treasurer of Catalonia, a post that had belonged to him and his family for decades. Molas Ribalta, "Las redes de poder," 2:401.
200. Letters from Gil Pérez de Bierlas to Juan de Alarcón. Barcelona, November 12 and December 10, 1534. AGN, APFR, Caj. 10, nos. 14-1, 14-3.
201. Letter from Juan Rena to Charles V. Barcelona, January 28, 1535. AGS, Estado, Leg. 270, no. 101.
202. Letter from Charles V to Álvaro de Bazán. December 3, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 28, no. 105.
203. "Mi é sopravvenuto una letera del Vescovo di L'Algher micer Joan Reina di III et VIII del presente per la quale mi avisa delli ordine che ha datti per la

- expedición de las galeras que son en Barcelona, et fra le altre cose ha inviato qua al'imbasciatore una lista de precii et de diverse provisione che ricerca da queste bande per tal effetto . . . Se io mi fossi ritrovato cossi giovane, c'oe sonno vecchio, non mi sarei potuto contener." Andrea Doria to Charles V. Genoa, November 14, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1367, no. 164.
204. This was especially true in regard of the skilled shipbuilders from Genoa. Gatti, "Catene d'oro per il maestro Ambrogio."
205. Letter from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Charles V. Genoa, November 11, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1367, no. 20.
206. Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, 21, 45.
207. "Sentendossi li apparati di Vostra Maestà circa l'armata sono venuti a ritrovarmi alcuni cittadini et alter persone di questa città offerendosi di far fabricare et armare galere contetandossi Vostra Maestà far li dare soldo per dui anni . . . mi e parso farne noticia a Vostra Maestà con quello che creudere fussero aproposito simili partiti per la celerita de la impresa che sopra tutto importa." Letter from Andrea Doria to Charles V. Genoa, November 2, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 439, no. 115.
208. It is worth noting that the shipbuilding industry in Genoa was at a very low ebb during this period. Gatti, *L'Arsenale e le Galee*, 30–32.
209. AGS, Estado, Leg. 439, s.f.
210. Letter from Juan Rena to Francisco de los Cobos. Barcelona, November 25, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 269, no. 121.
211. In fact, the members of the inner circle of the imperial government tried to do that, by creating a new galley squadron but also seeking the collaboration of other private individuals who would sign new *asientos* to construct and arm more galleys in different territories of the empire. The Crown petitioned the viceroy of Catalonia unsuccessfully. Letter from the Archbishop of Zaragoza to Charles V, n.d. AGS, Estado, Leg. 269, no. 108. In Andalusia it was the other great *asentista* who was approached on the matter. Letter from Álvaro de Bazán to Charles V. Vélez, December 7, 1534. AGS, Estado, Leg. 28, no. 120. There is an anonymous plan to build 32 galleys in the different territories of the monarchy in AGS, Estado, Leg. 440, s.f.
212. AGS, Estado, Leg. 462, no. 41, 43, 44, 46–50.
213. On this personal war council traveling with the emperor during his journeys and military campaigns, see Fernández Conti, "El gobierno de los asuntos de la Guerra," 47, 82. This council's activity during the Tunisian campaign is recorded in BNE, MS 19441, fols. 63, 70–72, 83–86, 101, 111, 117, 119.
214. Manfré, "Picturing North African Cities."
215. AGN, Cartografía, no. 173v.
216. On the tormented politics of Tunis before the campaign, see Boubaker, "L'empereur Charles Quint."
217. Bunes Ibarra and Sola, *La vida y historia de Hayradin*, 117–21.
218. Letter from Juan Rena to Pedro de Zuazola. Genoa, July 3, 1532. AGN, APFR, Caj. 75, no. 3-1, fol. 6.
219. González Cuerva and Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535*, 123.
220. González Cuerva and Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535*, 80–81.
221. González Cuerva and Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535*, 9–11.
222. The envoy, Luis de Presende, was sent to Tunis in secret and without any credentials. However, he was eventually discovered and executed by Barbarossa. Despite the secrecy surrounding his mission, the instructions he received from the emperor were published in one of the histories of Charles V. Sandoval, *Historia de la Vida y Hechos del Emperador Carlos V*, 2nd Part, Lib. XXI. Other sources refer to Presende as an ambassador to the dethroned king of Tunis. BNE, MS 19441, fols. 28–30.

223. Ramos Gómez, "El primer gran secuestro de metales"; and García Baquero, "Agobios carolinos y tesoros americanos."
224. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 154–55.
225. Ladero Quesada, "La toma de Mazalquivir," 191.
226. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 143–44.
227. Pacini, *Desde Rosas a Gaeta*, 57–91.

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Conclusion

Juan Rena died on January 18, 1539, while he was at the imperial court in Toledo. After having spent most of his life serving the Crown on the realm's frontiers, he ended his days in the heart of the empire. Paradoxically, after many failed attempts to secure a place at court, Rena left instructions in his will for his body to be transported back to the frontier, to Navarre, where he still had his household despite years of absence.¹ At the end of the sixteenth century, one of the collaborators of the royal chronicler Esteban de Garibay visited Pamplona's cathedral, taking note of the inscriptions on its walls. Among the many epitaphs that he transcribed is one that is of special interest to us. Inscribed on a tomb behind the choir, the epitaph reads:

Joannes Reyna Illustris Venetus Caroli viro Imperator a cosim huius
Ecclesie antistes, pauperum [r]efugium exiquo permit lapide. Obiit
Toleti, anno Domini 1538. 18 Januarii.²

Since the original epitaph has disappeared, along with Rena's grave, this brief note (which is full of errors) in one of Esteban de Garibay's notebooks is the only available source about his tomb. The note about the inscription was accompanied by a brief reference to Rena's coat of arms, which included an eagle, the emblem of the empire; a rampant lion to symbolize bravery, valor, and strength; and some waves in acknowledgement of Rena's association with the sea. This austere epitaph and the coat of arms reflected Rena's life in the service of the Spanish Empire, but even though they are interesting to us, they made little impression on the royal chronicler. Unsurprisingly, he made no reference to Rena in any of his works. This "Joannes Reyna" may have been "a man of Emperor Charles V," but he was not included in the histories written by the chronicler because his role was irrelevant in a historic narrative where providence was the driving force behind events and the monarchs were its agents.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, Rena's life in the service of the Spanish Crown tells us a lot about the construction of the empire and its frontiers.

Interestingly, even after his death, he continued to illustrate how this empire functioned. As I have mentioned, Rena died in Toledo at the beginning of 1539. The news of his death traveled fast and, in a matter of days, it reached the frontiers where Rena had worked. Francisco Duarte, one of his most successful protégés, organized a commemorative mass for Rena's soul in the church of Santa Maria la Nuova in Naples, the most important city on the Mediterranean frontier, where he was working.³ Only three days after Rena's death, the Marquis of Cañete (the viceroy of Navarre) wrote to Juan de Alarcón, Rena's successor as the military paymaster of Navarre, to convey his condolences on the death of his mentor. At the end of his letter he wrote: "God willing, he lingers in memory."⁴ These words expressed his sincere conviction about Rena's exemplary life as a servant of the king. Nevertheless, Rena's image as a reliable king's man soon began to be contested. When Juan de Alarcón was appointed as paymaster of Navarre, he was asked to present Rena's accounts. After reviewing Rena's documentation, he suggested that Rena owed a large amount of money to the Crown.⁵ Juan de Vergara (Rena's favorite protégé) defended his mentor's reputation against Alarcón's accusations.⁶ Alarcón remained firm in his allegation and wrote a memorandum showing that between 1527 and 1528 Rena received more than 10,400,000 *maravedies*, but he only spent about 9,000,000.⁷ The bureaucrats at Castile's office of expenditures tried to shed light on the matter by reviewing Rena's ledgers, receipts, payment orders, and other financial documents that were kept at this office, but the findings of their investigation only confused matters further, as they did not concur with either Vergara's version or with Alarcón's previous inquest.⁸ The controversy over Rena's administrative activity moved to the courts, where Alarcón and Vergara continued to litigate the matter. Nevertheless, the technical difficulties involved in reviewing Rena's accounts meant that the trial went on for years and never came to a clear conclusion.⁹

Outside the courts, the controversy over Rena's legacy took a different path. Following Alarcón's accusations, royal orders were sent to Navarre to seize Rena's goods to pay his debt to the Crown.¹⁰ It is difficult to ascertain why Alarcón decided to question Rena's management of the emperor's resources, but it probably had something to do with his difficulties in justifying his own activity as paymaster.¹¹ It is much easier to imagine why the authorities decided to accept his version about Rena's debt. For the Marquis of Cañete (who considered Rena to be a trustworthy servant) as well as for the members of the central military administration, accepting Alarcón's version instead of Vergara's was a way to obtain additional funds for the fortification of Pamplona. A year after Rena's death, the viceroy of Navarre urged Rena's goods to be used to fund the fortification of the frontier city.¹² Unsurprisingly, the inner circle of the imperial administration (ever in need of resources to fund military projects) agreed. During the summer of 1539, even before the courts had

handed down a verdict on Rena's debt, the War Council sent orders to the trustees' of Rena's estate to sell his goods and to hand over the proceeds for the fortification of Pamplona.¹³ During the following months, the Marquis of Cañete and Juan de Alarcón used Rena's estate to fund the work on the city walls.¹⁴ The next summer, when the emperor considered imposing the same measure again, Francisco de los Cobos replied that the money from Rena's debt had already been spent on the fortification of the city.¹⁵ It seems that this fact ended up helping to preserve Rena's memory because a part of Pamplona's defenses were in fact named "Juan Rena's tower."¹⁶ Thus Rena made a final, involuntary contribution to the construction of the frontier after his death.

Somehow, the construction of Rena's posthumous image mirrored his role building frontiers. He had a voice in the making of this image, but not the most important one. In his will, he ordered a funerary chapel to be built for him in the Pamplona cathedral.¹⁷ However, the chapel was never built because Rena's estate was seized. He also wrote a sort of autobiography, mentioned in the inventory of effects that he brought to court in 1525, which he called "my chronicle."¹⁸ Unfortunately this text seems to have been lost. It may have been one of the writings that Rena had with him when he died, which were confiscated by the agents of the papal nuncio. However, it more likely disappeared in 1529 when Rena's Genoa-bound ship was beset by a storm and most of the ship's contents were swept out to sea.¹⁹ In the absence of these other sources, it is paradoxically the inquiry regarding Rena's administration of the Crown's resources that has preserved his memory up to the present day. We historians are able to study Rena mainly because of his wonderful archive, and the archive was only created as a result of the inquiry into Rena's activities. After his death, one of his protégés suggested that Rena's archive be kept as a way to discover the truth about his alleged debts. Only three weeks later, Charles V agreed and ordered Rena's documentation to be kept in the archive of the Navarrese Chamber of Accounts in Pamplona.²⁰ From the archive's contents and organization, it is clear that Rena did not intend it as a way to chronicle his life serving the emperor. Instead, he created the archive only as means to justify his professional activity. This is why he accumulated the thousands and thousands of documents that allow us to analyze his activity as frontier builder in such detail. He constructed his archive on a day-to-day basis, and through his daily activities Rena helped to construct the empire's frontiers.

Both in the construction of his legacy and in the shaping of the imperial frontiers, Rena was just one actor in a collective process. However, his activity helps us to appreciate the role that someone like him could have in the construction of the imperial frontiers. Of course, Rena did not write a single line of Charles V's imperial strategy (a task reserved for his close advisors), but he played a key role in bringing this project to life. Focusing on Rena's activity as a frontier builder highlights the

need to move beyond the study of the architects of this empire and to include the anonymous masons who constructed it *in situ*, making the imperial project designed by Charles V's advisors a reality. Contrary to what Esteban de Garibay and many others have thought, looking at the empire from Rena's perspective is one of the best ways to understand its construction. The creation and the shaping of the empire involved the efforts of thousands of actors. By looking at the empire as a collective endeavor through Rena's eyes, we can go beyond the established perspectives of the Spanish Empire (and early modern empires in general), based on a center-periphery approach. Moreover, by examining Rena's activity we can assess the impact that these less important men had in the shaping and molding of the empire.

The multiple challenges Rena faced show that conquering new territories was far less complex than maintaining and defending them at a time of fierce dynastic and imperial rivalry. In fact, the very first lesson we can take away from Rena's tireless activity is that the expansion of imperial control over territories was just part of the empire-building process. Establishing effective rule over liminal spaces was an intricate task. However, far more complex was creating a political culture specifically tailored not only to ensure the empire's defense but also to protect the interests of the numerous figures working to defend it. Hence, as we have seen, places like Oran, Navarre, or the Mediterranean Sea were vibrant political spaces. How they came to be—both their own particular features and their common characteristics—is something that we can learn by looking at figures like Rena.

Juan Rena's participation in the shaping of the imperial frontiers began even before his formal engagement with the Spanish Empire. During the opening years of the sixteenth century, while he was still a private merchant trading between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb, he participated in the informal cross-cultural diplomacy that facilitated Spanish expansion into this region. Along with the other members of his trading network, he participated in the negotiations around the surrender of different Muslim cities. These negotiations proved less effective than expected in producing surrender, but they were the foundation for the peculiar nature of Oran's cross-cultural social makeup and the later success in establishing diplomatic connections between this imperial bulwark and its Muslim neighbors. After the conquest of Oran, Rena entered the service of the Alcaide de los Donceles, the nobleman in charge of the military defense of the coastal strongholds in the Maghreb. Rena worked hand in hand with the Alcaide in sustaining this new frontier, but also in constructing a new political space around it. As a servant of the Alcaide, Rena was the face that his lord's military authority presented to local leaders. Even more interesting, he gave form to the commercial activity that made it possible to sustain the military defense of Oran. His experience working for the Alcaide in the defense

of the realm's southern frontier would be crucial for the next stage of his career: Navarre. In relocating to the northern frontier, Rena was part of a wider transfer of the experience and know-how needed to construct imperial frontiers.

In Navarre, Rena joined the royal administration and was put in charge of managing the financing of the military frontier. Soon he became a key piece of the new military apparatus. Far more important, the fear of the French together with the divisions within the local society and the imperial administration's limited presence in Navarre gave Rena a prominent role in the incorporation of this polity from below. From his privileged position bridging the political divide between the frontier kingdom and the core of the imperial administration he served as liaison for an interesting exchange of political favors. In so doing, he contributed to the shaping of this frontier society, first by distributing rewards to a wide array of collaborators who helped him to sustain the military defense of the kingdom, and second by favoring members of the former rebel faction and allowing them to profit from the opportunities that the new empire opened up. In addition to this, Rena participated in the complex process of fitting this frontier kingdom into the web of the empire's finances. In sum, Rena became a key figure in the incorporation of Navarre into the Spanish Empire.

After having worked in Navarre for years, Rena went back to the Mediterranean. There he was able to apply his experience constructing military frontiers to a new challenge: the shaping of the naval frontier between the Ottoman Empire and Charles V's Italian domains. Rena's participation in the first naval operations jointly organized by the imperial administration and Andrea Doria's military machine secured for him a prominent role in the definition of some of the norms and practices for defending the new Mediterranean frontier. Furthermore, through his almost continuous struggle with Doria, Rena helped to give shape to the practical terms of the alliance between Charles V and the famous Genoese admiral. Unsurprisingly, Rena never had the upper hand in his disagreements with Doria, but his vigilant attitude proved crucial for the definition of some key rules in the management of naval warfare in the years to come, which contrasts starkly with his obvious failure to make his voice heard in the negotiations that established a new imperial strategy for the Mediterranean.

The analysis of Rena's activities presents a vivid image of the imperial frontiers as vibrant political spaces where a wide array of figures interacted to shape norms, practices, and agreements that transformed the political landscape of these liminal spaces. While serving the Crown in different tasks, Rena cooperated, negotiated, and tangled with merchants, noblemen, military officers, and local leaders. All these different actors combined diverse sources of power in their attempts to adapt the defensive needs of the empire to their own interests. Through their

interactions, they all gave shape to practices and norms that influenced the connection of these frontier spaces with neighboring territories (within and beyond the empire), the shaping of the social fabric, the definition of new jurisdictions, and the mobilization of resources for war. In a nutshell, they helped to construct the frontier political space. In so doing, they influenced the defense of the empire and also the lives of the people living on the imperial frontier.

The picture that emerges from the study of Rena's career is of an empire that was being constructed simultaneously at its center and along its borders. Hence, the liminal spaces do not appear to have been passive peripheries but rather a crucial part of the empire-building process. As we have seen, these frontier spaces were closely connected to the empire's core. The attention they received from the inner circles of the imperial government due to their strategic value allowed for a fluid back-and-forth between both political spaces. However, the frontier was not shaped only by the binary relationship between the local society and the imperial center. In other words, close ties to the center were not the only factor. Links to the territories beyond the empire also influenced the shape of the local politics of these frontier spaces. Even more interesting, the different frontier spaces were closely connected to each other through the ongoing circulation of figures like Rena and his associates, who accumulated and then transferred experience about how best to defend the empire. In short, Rena's career provides valuable insight into the interconnected history of the imperial frontiers.

Rena's activities allow us to reconsider the tailoring of things like administrative procedures, political agreements, and jurisdictions to the defensive needs of the empire, not as a form of "exceptionalism" but as common practices in frontier political culture. The need to guarantee the realm's defense against external threats can be considered the basic principle of this culture. However, figures like Rena adapted that principle to the political, jurisdictional, and social circumstances of each frontier. Together with a wide range of people with whom Rena interacted, he helped to shape norms, practices, and power relationships which transformed the political environment of the liminal spaces of the empire. It goes without saying that Rena and the people with whom he interacted were not the sole actors on the stage. Furthermore, their agency depended on factors such as the different imperial agendas, the balance of power at the international level, and the power struggles within the empire—all factors that were beyond their control. It is because of this that Rena's career was not an uninterrupted series of successes. At times Rena managed to attain his objectives, at others he failed, but more frequently than not he just adapted his agenda to adverse circumstances. The agency of someone like Rena did not consist of his capacity to impose his own will, but rather his capacity to navigate power asymmetries, divergent interests, and complex social and jurisdictional landscapes.

The case of Rena tells us a lot about the complex power relations on the frontier. First of all, it allows us to rethink received ideas about the frontier as a peripheral place in terms of the exercise of power by the inner circle of the imperial government. Men like Rena embodied the close connection between the imperial court and the last outpost on the furthest frontier, and precisely because of that they are a vantage point from which to observe how imperial power was exercised over far-flung areas. At times Rena acted as a reliable servant implementing orders coming from the highest levels of the imperial administration. At others, he became one of the main obstacles to the implementation of a given measure. From his distant position, he also did his best to try to influence the decision-making process inside the imperial government. Most often, however, he strove to adapt the policies dictated by the emperor and his close advisors to the complex reality of the frontier. A close examination of Rena's activities during the years he spent working in Navarre offers us examples of how he implemented, contested, or adapted royal orders and mandates, which he continued doing throughout his whole career. True, Rena's ploy to undermine the new plan to fund the military frontier with Navarrese resources can be considered as a clear example of how local societies were able to use royal officials to defend their interests against the central administration. However, this example is also clear proof of how limited traditional explanations focused on the dialectics between the Crown and the local society are. In order to make sense of the emperor's attempt to reform the financial system we must consider not only the empire's entire financial network but also what was happening in other frontier areas of the empire. Furthermore, Rena may have been defending the economic interests of the Navarrese elites, but above all he was acting according to what he considered the only way to sustain the new military frontier: with the resources of Castile. Hence, to a large extent, he was just defending the symbiotic relationship between Navarre and Castile established during the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic.

This connects with Rena's prominent role in establishing the ground rules for how things were done on the frontier. Rena's experience in Navarre led him to oppose what he considered a clear threat to Ferdinand the Catholic's political strategy in this frontier kingdom. In so doing, Rena shows how some of the successful ideas and principles developed during Ferdinand's reign remained alive on the frontiers despite the profound changes that took place during the early years of Charles's reign. Hence, by looking at figures like Rena we can assess the extent to which Charles V's empire relied on political tools designed and tested during his grandfather's reign. But Rena not only acted as a repository for the political ideas of the previous king. One of his main contributions to the construction of the imperial frontiers was his amassing of practical know-how about how to maintain these frontiers. The interesting blending of military service and cross-cultural trade that the Alcaide de los Donceles and

Rena began in Oran after its conquest was crucial not only to maintaining this frontier stronghold but was later adopted by others who participated in the Spanish expansion into the Maghreb. Even more interesting, Rena's appointment and later success as a paymaster in Navarre cannot be understood without his previous experience working in military logistics in Oran. While working under the Alcaide de los Donceles in the defense of the southern frontier, Rena learned how to exchange political favors for the collaboration he needed to sustain the military machinery defending the frontier. Examples like this illustrate how the practical know-how needed to defend the imperial frontiers developed out of the circulation of people who served the crown on different frontiers.

If Rena's previous experience in the Maghrebi frontier was useful in his later activity in Navarre, that was not the case for his final position as military advisor to Charles V in the Mediterranean. Interestingly, the Navarrese and Maghrebi frontiers of the opening decades of the sixteenth century were more similar to each other (politically speaking) than the latter was to the Mediterranean frontier of the 1530s. At times Rena failed to grasp the changes affecting the frontiers where he was working. Perhaps the most evident example of this were his ideas about conquering Tunis in the same way Oran had been conquered more than 20 years before. His earlier experience in the Maghreb also explains his commitment to defending Koroni after its conquest, as if holding a city on the border with the Ottoman Empire was the same thing as sustaining a stronghold on the coasts of the weak and fragmented kingdom of Tlemcen. Rena's failure to adapt his ideas to the changing nature of the Mediterranean frontier shows the limitations of relying on the experiences and know-how of the men who circulated along the empire's frontiers. It might seem to make sense to assume that the members of the inner circle of the imperial government were unfamiliar with the situation on the ground. However, by rejecting the idea of keeping Koroni, they proved to be far more aware of current power dynamics in the Mediterranean than were people like Rena with more than 30 years of experience on the ground. Having said this, we should also recall that the members of the core institutions of the imperial government relied heavily on figures like Rena. Maybe Rena was not well equipped to ascertain which was the best strategy to follow in the Mediterranean, but contrary to what he thought, this was not what was expected of him. His main task was not to chart the empire's grand strategy; it was to mesh the different policies with the reality of each frontier.

Rena's major contribution to the empire-building process analyzed here was to create and implement ways of ensuring an effective defense of the frontiers. The ways in which he pursued that goal had a deep impact on the shaping of the different frontiers where he worked. As I stated before, Rena was not acting alone and, in fact, one of the additional advantages of looking at him is that we can perceive the changing

power relations among the different people who participated in the shaping of the frontier. Rena spent a great deal of his life working in the shadow of powerful figures like the Alcaide de los Donceles and Andrea Doria. In both cases, Rena's efforts were aimed not only at serving the Crown but also at making the defense of the imperial frontiers a viable and even profitable activity for them. In both cases, combining military service and economic enterprise implied sidestepping the rules of the imperial bureaucracy. However, while Rena had no qualms about becoming the Alcaide's right-hand man and promoting his commercial interests through the smuggling of luxury goods into the Maghreb, he tirelessly denounced Doria's abuses. Why? Because while Rena was profiting from his participation in the Alcaide's businesses, Doria's rapacity was a clear threat to the interests of the imperial administration, which could have negative consequences for him. As we can see, even when working in the shadow of powerful figures, Rena was able to defend his own interests. Something similar happened with regards to the interests of all the people who agreed to collaborate with Rena in the construction of the imperial frontiers. Rena, as a royal official, may have had authority over them, but he knew he was obliged to do his best to accommodate the construction of the imperial frontiers to their needs and aims. The dispute over the booty from the Ottoman strongholds and its distribution among the soldiers is a clear example of this, as are the multiple political favors he bestowed upon his collaborators in Navarre. Rena's continuous efforts to manage the private interests of different individuals illustrates the agency that lower-ranking officials like him were able to wield in the construction of the empire's frontiers.

Clear proof of the complex power relationships on the frontiers is Rena's changing place within the dynamics shaping them. For instance, while acting in the Maghreb as a mere merchant, he helped to shape Oran's exceptional social landscape after its conquest. Later on, Rena played a major role in the incorporation of Navarre into the Spanish empire even if he was just a low-ranking bureaucrat. On the contrary, 20 years later, after having reached the upper echelons of the imperial administration, Rena played a modest, secondary role in shaping Charles V's strategy in the Mediterranean. As we can see, Rena's agency did not depend on the office he held. Even more interesting, he had far more influence in those places which attracted no particular attention from the inner circle of the imperial government. This was the case for the Maghreb during the opening years of the sixteenth century or Navarre in the 1520s, two fronts that were hardly a priority either for Ferdinand the Catholic or Charles V. On the contrary, Rena was forced to adopt a more discrete, secondary role in places like the Mediterranean frontier that were central to the emperor's strategy.

After his death, most of Rena's contributions to the shaping of the imperial frontiers lasted no longer than his excellent reputation as a

royal servant. The progressive integration of Navarre into the Spanish Empire meant that the exceptional services of a mediator like Rena were no longer needed. Fernandez de Córdoba's authoritarian rule over Oran changed the local politics, leaving Rena's associates out in the cold. During the years that followed, Charles V's military advisors in charge of naval warfare in the Mediterranean forgot about Rena and his lessons. Needless to say, the frontiers were not at all an exception. Shortly after Rena's death, during the transition from Charles V's reign to Philip II's, the entire polity experienced profound changes. Unsurprisingly, the very malleability of the frontier politics that had granted Rena a voice in its shaping erased most of his contributions. The empire continued changing and new challenges emerged. Nevertheless, no matter how profound these changes were, it was figures like Rena who made the polity function, and would always have a paramount place in shaping and re-shaping it.

Interestingly, Rena's protégés—his personal servants who inherited his different posts—continued working for years on the same frontiers. They learned how to act as royal officials while serving Rena and they held the very same offices he had held, but they adopted completely different strategies. The low profile adopted by Juan de Alarcón, new paymaster in Navarre, starkly contrasted with Rena's salient role in the military and political life of the kingdom. Alarcón used his position only to enrich himself. Unfortunately, he was ruined, and his wife and her brother (the husband of Rena's daughter) plotted to kill him.²¹ Juan de Vergara inherited Rena's post as judge of finances (*oidor de comptos*) in Navarre, but contrary to what Rena did for years, he used his position to denounce the greed of the Navarrese elites whom Rena had helped to protect.²² Francisco Duarte was appointed purveyor of the navy in the Mediterranean, a position he obtained thanks to Rena's support and which later made it possible for a long line of his descendants to serve the Crown in administrative positions.²³ Like his former colleagues, Duarte broke with Rena's style. Rather than denouncing the abuses of the private military contractors he dealt with, he became Andrea Doria's firm ally.²⁴ Undoubtedly, a great deal of personal choice was involved in the paths that the three followed. However, to a large extent, the three different strategies mirrored the profound changes taking place on the different frontiers where they served the emperor. Juan de Alarcón had no real chance of leveraging his post as paymaster the way Rena had done, since there was no serious threat to the Pyrenees frontier in the middle of the sixteenth century. Similarly, Juan de Vergara could denounce the abuses of the Navarrese elite because of the relative calm on this imperial frontier, but his power was also limited by the strong position the Navarrese elites had secured thanks to their successful incorporation of the kingdom into the Spanish empire. Finally, on the Mediterranean frontier, Francisco Duarte had no choice but to get as close as possible to Andrea Doria, whose authority

at that time was uncontested. The different strategies adopted by Rena's protégées show how much the frontiers had changed.

The changing nature of the frontiers where Rena spent his life serving the Spanish monarchy shows that Rena himself was also largely the result of a particular historical moment, the initial stages of the empire-building process. While it is difficult to imagine that there were other figures with similar trajectories during Philip II's reign, since Rena left such a profound mark on the imperial administration, it is also hard to think of Rena as an exception. True, his career benefited from the ambitious imperial agendas of Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V, but his success was due, above all, to the fertile ground for action that he found on the frontiers. As the empire continued expanding and changing, its frontiers kept moving. New threats required new ways of protecting the empire, and these new frontiers required the tireless activity of myriad frontier builders. By seeking out and studying these figures, we can learn much about the political body they were helping to construct, even on its remote frontiers, far from the palace gates.

Notes

1. AGN, Tribunales Reales, 065185/16014763, s.f.
2. BRAH, 9/329, fol. 182.
3. Letter from Antonio Orejón to Juan de Alarcón. Naples, February 28, 1539. AGN, APFR, Caj. 78, no. 9-2.
4. Letter from the Marquis of Cañete to Juan de Alarcón. Cuenca, January 21, 1539. AGN, APFR, Caj. 50, no. 2-1.
5. Letter from the Council of Navarre to Charles V. Pamplona, February 2, 1539. AGS, Estado, Leg. 348, no. 53.
6. AGS, Leg. 349, no. 17; and Letter from Juan de Vergara to Juan de Alarcón. Toledo, April 24, 1539. AGN, APFR, Caj. 78, no. 12-2.
7. AGS, Estado, Leg. 348, no. 174.
8. AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, Leg. 1429.
9. AGN, Tribunales Reales, 065185/16014763, fols. 61, 86.
10. AGS, Estado, Leg. 348, nos. 167-69.
11. Letter from Pedro del Peso to Empress Isabel. Pamplona, July 6, 1538. AGS, Estado, Leg. 348, no. 122; and Letter from Luis de Velasco to Francisco de Ledesma. Pamplona, September 23, 1547. AGS, Estado, Leg. 353, no. 184.
12. Letter from the Marquis of Cañete to Charles V. Pamplona, August 5, 1539. AGS, Estado, Leg. 348, no. 27.
13. AGS, GyM, Leg. 16, nos. 6-9 and Leg. 1324, no. 54.
14. AGN, APFR, Caj. 50, no. 2-5.
15. Letter from Francisco de los Cobos to Charles V. Madrid, June 26, 1540. AGS, Estado, Leg. 64, no. 188.
16. AGS, GyM, Leg. 25, no. 76.
17. AGN, Tribunales Reales, 065185/16014763, s.f.
18. AGN, APFR, Caj. 105, no. 14-1.
19. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Francisco de los Cobos. Pamplona, June 6, 1540. AGS, Estado, Leg. 349, no. 20; and Letter from Juan Rena to Juan de Alarcón. Genoa, August 30, 1529. AGN, APFR, Caj. 6, nos. 1-16.

20. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Francisco de los Cobos. Pamplona, June 6, 1540. AGS, Estado, Leg. 349, no. 20; and AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Libros de Cédulas, Lib. 251, fols. 80–81.
21. AGS, Estado, Leg. 354, no. 95.
22. Letter from Juan de Vergara to Francisco de los Cobos. Pamplona, May 13, 1540. AGS, Estado, Leg. 349, no. 14; Letter from Juan de Vergara to Francisco de Ledesma. Pamplona, September 15, 1548; and Letter from Juan de Vergara to Vázquez de Molina. Sesma, October 28, 1549. AGS, Estado, Leg. 353, nos. 198, 219.
23. Francisco Duarte's grandson wrote a wonderful genealogy including an account of the administrative services of his family from the time when Rena brought his grandfather into the imperial administration. Letter from Francisco Duarte to Mateo Vázquez. Lisbon, January 19, 1583. BL, Additional, MS 28344, fol. 2.
24. Letter from Francisco Duarte to Charles V. Genoa, July 3, 1541. AGS, Estado, Leg. 1374, no. 15.

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