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Abstracts

MATTEO SALONIA, *Da Genova alla frontiera cilena. Giovanni Battista Pastene (1507-1580) e la presenza ligure nell'America spagnola*

Genoese capital was a pivotal element for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Habsburg empire-building in the Atlantic. Therefore, historians have usually stressed the role played by Genoese bankers in Spain. However, Genoese captains, merchants and entrepreneurs were also entering the new Castilian kingdoms on the other side of the ocean, being directly involved in the conquest and settlement of virtually all the rapidly expanding American frontiers since as early as the 1520s. This article investigates the role played by Giovanni Battista Pastene, a conquistador born in Genoa whose navigational skills and logistic support became invaluable for Pedro de Valdivia, the explorer and conqueror of Chile – for a long time the poorest and least attractive among the peripheries of Castilian America. My contribution is divided in three parts. First, I contextualize the Ligurian presence in the Spanish empire with a brief discussion of the Italian Wars (between Spain and France) and of the consequences of the 1528 Hispanic-Genoese alliance for the legal status of Ligurian citizens entering Castile and its colonies. Then, I offer an account of the first successful Spanish penetration into Chile, detailing the support offered by Pastene to Governor Valdivia, but also the Genoese's important and adventurous journey to Peru during the civil war of 1544-1548. Finally, I present documents that show how the Pastene family later integrated into the social structures of the new colony. Giovanni Battista and his heirs represent a fascinating case study in the global and transnational history of the Habsburg empire as well as a significant example of the early origins of a 'Genoese Atlantic'.

Keywords:

Spanish Empire

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