

**The *patrons* of the Kingdom.
Shipowners, shipmasters, foreign merchants
and the control of Sicily's fiscal system
at the beginning of the Trastámara age (1414-22)**

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**Fiscalità e circolazione di capitali
nel tardo medioevo**

a cura di Davide Morra e Tommaso Vidal

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The *patrons* of the Kingdom. Shipowners, shipmasters, foreign merchants and the control of Sicily's fiscal system at the beginning of the Trastámara age (1414-22)

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Nel 1420, Alfonso V d'Aragona (1416-58), detto il Magnanimo, stipulava un contratto con un gruppo di *patrons*, ovvero, di armatori e capitani di navi iberici, allo scopo di ottenere i vascelli per la sua flotta regia e il sostegno militare del quale necessitava per completare la conquista della Sardegna e avviare l'invasione della Corsica, che era in mano genovese. In virtù di tale accordo, il sovrano cedeva temporaneamente a questi *patrons* il controllo sulle risorse fiscali più importanti del regno di Sicilia, quelle cioè generate dall'esportazione del grano e di altre vettovaglie dai porti dell'isola, mediante la vendita di licenze per l'esportazione (*tratte*). L'intesa si concretizzò pure in un'ampia cessione di quote di autorità pubblica, tanto che i *patrons* furono investiti dell'amministrazione diretta dei porti e del loro personale, nonché del controllo sui castelli nelle località in cui si trovavano le strutture portuali che gli erano state assegnate. Dopo avere analizzato l'opera di ricostruzione del real patrimonio siciliano in seguito all'avvento della dinastia di Trastámara sul trono della Corona d'Aragona nel 1412, il saggio discute il ruolo della Sicilia per il finanziamento delle imprese militari di Alfonso il Magnanimo, per spostare poi l'attenzione sull'accordo stipulato tra quest'ultimo e il consorzio di armatori e capitani di navi al suo servizio, esaminando non solo i contenuti dell'accordo e la distribuzione delle risorse fiscali tra i *patrons*, ma anche le loro origini sociali. Infine, il saggio si chiude con un'analisi del ruolo strategico che il regno di Sicilia, grazie alle sue ricche risorse fiscali, ebbe per il proseguimento delle campagne militari della Corona a Napoli e nel Mezzogiorno italiano.

In 1420, Alfonso V of Aragon (1416-58), known as the Magnanimous, signed a legal contract with a group of *patrons* (i.e., shipowners and shipmasters) to secure ships for the royal fleet and military support to complete the conquest of Sardinia and launch an offensive against Corsica, then under Genoese rule. According to this agreement, the sovereign temporarily granted these

Abbreviazioni

ASPa = Archivio di Stato di Palermo

PR = Protonotaro del regno

ACA = Archivo de la Corona de Aragón

RC = Real cancellería

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patrons control over the kingdom's most significant fiscal resources, namely, the revenues generated from grain and foodstuff exports through the sale of export licenses (*tratte*). The agreement also resulted in the transfer of extensive public authority from the Crown to the *patrons*, who gained direct administrative control over the ports, their personnel, and the castles located in the same port towns. After examining the reconstruction of the royal patrimony following Alfonso's ascension to the Crown of Aragon in 1412, this essay explores Sicily's role in financing the political and military agenda of Alfonso the Magnanimous, focusing on the agreement between the monarch and the consortium of shipowners and shipmasters. In this regard, it provides a detailed analysis of the contract's contents, the distribution of fiscal resources among the *patrons*, and their social origins. Finally, the essay discusses Sicily's increasing strategic and financial significance in supporting the Crown of Aragon's subsequent campaigns in Naples and the Italian *Mezzogiorno*.

Medioevo, secolo XV, Corona d'Aragona, campagne militari, risorse fiscali, flotta regia, armatori e capitani di navi, Sicilia, finanziamento della guerra.

Middle Ages, 15th century, Crown of Aragon, military campaigns, fiscal resources, royal fleet, shipowners and shipmasters, Sicily, war-funding.

1. Introduction: Sicily and the Crown of Aragon's wars

Iberian historiography has traditionally neglected the role of Sicily in supporting – both politically and financially – the expansion of the fifteenth-century Crown of Aragon. It has often been suggested that the conquests were primarily funded by the incomes collected in Catalonia and Valencia, particularly through excise duties on commerce, as well as by funds (*donatius* and *subvencions*) granted by the parliamentary assemblies to their monarchs.¹ This interpretation, however, largely stems from a lack of detailed inquiries into the Sicilian financial and fiscal system, as well as the various methods used by the Kings of Aragon to raise funds on the island to support their political and military agenda in the late-medieval Mediterranean.² There are a few exceptions to this historiographical tendency, with essays focused on specific case studies and timeframes. For instance, Carmelo Trasselli argued that Alfonso V of Aragon (1416–58), known as the Magnanimous, exploited Sicilian finances to support his Italian wars from the 1430s to the 1450s. In particular, Trasselli examined the extraordinary loan through which the king financed his sea and land campaign to conquer Naples in 1435 – a campaign

¹ Winfried Küchler, *Les finances de la corona d'Aragó*, provided a comprehensive and detailed overview of the various means through which the Crown financed its campaigns, prompting subsequent Iberian scholars further investigating the fiscal tools of both direct and indirect taxation. For a recent account on taxation in the Crown of Aragon, see Lafuente Gómez and Reixach Sala, "Crown of Aragon," and bibliography therein mentioned.

² For an overview on taxation in Sicily, see Di Martino, "Il sistema tributario," and, more recently, Morelli and Silvestri, "Kingdoms of Sicily," while Marrone, "Sovvenzioni," focuses on the thirteenth and fourteenth century direct money collections. Useful information on the kings of Sicily's fiscal strategies can be found in Bresc, *Un monde*, vol. 2, chapter XIV, and Epstein, *An Island for itself*, chapter 7, who analysed taxation in connection to the island's economic framework. With a specific focus on urban taxation in Sicily, see Dentici Buccellato, *Fisco e società*, and, with a deeper attention to the fiscal mechanisms, Titone, *Governments*, chapter 4.

that culminated in the disaster of Ponza and Alfonso's imprisonment. To fund this effort, the king farmed out future revenues and customs duties (*gabbe*) – administered locally by a network of royal magistracies (*secretie* and *vicesecretie*) – in exchange for immediate cash to meet his relentless financial needs, thereby draining the island's wealth and resources.³ By adopting the stereotype of the foreign ruler who plunders the economic assets of his distant subjects – a view that, according to Stephan R. Epstein, historiography has never challenged – Trasselli implies that the monarch devastated Sicily's economy.⁴

On the other hand, by examining and updating the data collected by Winfried Küchler in his still-influential monograph on the Crown of Aragon finances,⁵ Epstein argued that the financial transfers from Sicily to the Crown of Aragon's central treasury – though relatively small in comparison to the Catalan-Aragonese union's total fiscal revenue – were the largest among all the territories under the rule of the Kings of Aragon. However, this apparent agreement in perspective between Trasselli and Epstein is misleading. According to the latter, Sicily's overrepresentation in the Crown's fiscal contributions stemmed from the absence of recorded transfers from regions where the king resided – since monarchs never resided in Sicily for extended periods during the fifteenth century – as well as from the exceptional volume of Sicilian financial resources generated by its vast and wealthy royal demesne. Far from being depleted, the island's royal demesne continued to generate a fiscal surplus that was crucial in meeting the Crown's economic demands.⁶

This means that if it is true that Alfonso the Magnanimous led an extensive exploitation of the Sicilian royal demesne to fund the conquest of Naples and the Mezzogiorno, it is also true that the impact of this exploitation – which likely was even more severe than Trasselli argued – affected Sicilian economy less than previously suggested.⁷ Sicily's late-medieval royal demesne remained largely intact over time and was therefore far more extensive and prosperous compared to the demesnes controlled by the Kings of Aragon in other territories of the Crown – such as Catalonia, where much of the land and rights had been alienated or sold.⁸ In effect, existing records and accounts from the period clearly reveal that the Crown relied on Sicily's resources not only to increase its revenues and to pay for royal expenses, but also to com-

³ Trasselli, "Sul debito pubblico in Sicilia."

⁴ Epstein, *An Island for itself*, 383. In his monograph, Epstein argued that the island's economy in the later Middle Ages was dynamic, driven by domestic specialization and active trade within the Western Mediterranean, thus challenging Henri Bresc's interpretation of Sicily an economy solely reliant on grain exports in exchange for foreign goods in his book *Un monde méditerranéen*.

⁵ Küchler, *Les finances de la corona d'Aragó*.

⁶ Epstein, *An island for itself*, 387–90.

⁷ On the role of Sicilian finances for the conquest of Naples, see Bresc, *Un monde méditerranéen*, 854–9, as well as Silvestri, *L'amministrazione*, chapters 8 and 9.

⁸ Sabaté Curull, "Discurs i estratègies."

pensate for funds withheld by the Iberian parliaments, which were often subject to prolonged negotiations, delays, and unforeseen complications.⁹

Consequently, in Sicily monarchs had little need to raise revenues through direct taxation, which in the island generated modest income and remained irregular for a long time, also generating conflicts with local political society.¹⁰ It was only in 1446 – though recent research suggests as early as 1439¹¹ – that Alfonso the Magnanimous introduced the *pactisme* (pactism) model to the island.¹² This system was based on negotiations between the Crown and the local ruling elite during parliamentary sessions, where an economic concession (*donativum*) was granted to the monarch in exchange for a series of demands.¹³ Despite the rise in direct tax revenues, they made up only 30% of the treasury's income until the mid-sixteenth century,¹⁴ leaving the Sicilian royal demesne as a key financial resource in the fifteenth century.¹⁵

As examined by Henri Bresc, this was achieved through the network of *secretie*, via indirect taxation on commerce and farming out of customs duties (*gabelle*), as well as by selling export duties (*tratte*) on grains and other products, and by alienating royal lands, rights, and other resources to private individuals.¹⁶ These included foreign entrepreneurs and merchants, members of the Sicilian aristocracy and political elite, and – on a smaller scale – prominent individuals of urban communities and other private persons, all seeking social and economic advancement.¹⁷ During the reign of Alfonso the Magnanimous, this strategy, as Epstein observed, did not result in the permanent depletion of the royal demesne, as “each wave of alienations (in 1420-25, 1430-34 and 1440-46) was preceded and followed by orders to recover the royal patrimony”.¹⁸ This policy enabled the Crown not only to preserve the functionality of a crucial funding system but also to attract substantial capital from foreign investors while retaining a powerful bargaining tool for negotiations with the local political elite, thereby securing their consensus.¹⁹ These dynamics, essential for funding warfare, were not unique to Sicily in the late 1430s – i.e. when the campaign for the conquest of Naples resumed – but had impacted the island since the establishment of Trastámara rule, to such an

⁹ Küchler, *Les finances*, ch. III.

¹⁰ Morelli and Silvestri, “Kingdoms of Sicily,” 167-170. See, for instance, the extraordinary money collection the Crown organized in Sicily in 1441-2 in Silvestri, “*Pagari certa quantitati*.”

¹¹ Titone, “Alcune osservazioni.”

¹² Bresc, *Un monde méditerranéen*, 860. On *pactisme*, see Sobreques Callicó, ed. *El pactismo* and Ferrer i Mallol et al., eds. *Negociar*; as well as the recent anthology Furió and García Marsilla, eds. *Pactisme*.

¹³ Pasciuta. “Dal contratto al dono.”

¹⁴ Giuffrida, *La finanza pubblica*, 60.

¹⁵ Epstein, *An island*, 375-97.

¹⁶ On these aspects, see Bresc, *Un monde méditerranéen*, 850-9.

¹⁷ On social advancement, see the essays included in Carocci and Lazzarini, eds. *Social Mobility in Medieval Italy*.

¹⁸ Epstein, *An island for itself*, 381.

¹⁹ In this regard, see Corrao, “Celebrazione dinastica,” and bibliography therein mentioned.

extent that they even call into question the monarch's sovereignty over the financial and fiscal structures of the realm during the early years of Alfonso V's reign.

Thanks to the reconstruction of the Sicilian royal patrimony initiated under Ferdinand I of Aragon (1412-6), since 1420 his son Alfonso had been able to exploit Sicilian resources to fund his war across the Western Mediterranean. In so doing, as I will discuss in this essay, the monarch effectively alienated a significant portion of the realm's incomes from indirect taxation to a consortium of Iberian *patrons*, which included owners of galleys added to the royal fleet, investors tasked with supplying the vessels, and aristocrats serving as ships' captains.²⁰ These individuals, seeking privileges and incomes through royal service, played a pivotal role in contributing to the preparation of the Crown's fleet for the campaigns in Sardinia and Corsica, later funding the fleet and army during the first attempt to conquer Naples. Unlike other instances, however, the agreement between the two parts – which was formalised in front of a notary – resulted in surrendering these individuals such an extensive authority that the island's fiscal administration was effectively co-managed by the Crown and the above-mentioned consortium of *patrons*.

2. Recovering the royal patrimony

Following the election of Ferdinand I of Trastámara as the new King of Aragon at the meeting held in Caspe (1412) – after his predecessor, Martin I of Aragon (1396-1410), died without a living heir –, the monarch turned his attention to Sicily, which had been permanently reabsorbed into the Crown in 1409. Between 1410 and 1412, the island had experienced a devastating civil war between the Queen regent Blanche of Navarre and the *magister iusticiar-ius* Bernat Cabrera, both competing for control of the realm until the election of the new king. During these turbulent years, both factions exploited Sicilian resources, distributing royal lands and incomes among their followers in exchange for political support and immediate funds to sustain their armies and ambitions. When Ferdinand I's emissaries (*ambaxiatores*) arrived in Sicily in the Spring of 1413, they stripped both contenders of their authority and begun the reconstruction of the royal demesne, reclaiming lands and incomes that had been alienated during civil war.²¹

²⁰ As summarised by Burguera-Puigserver, “«Pro vestris meritis»,” 101, *la contribución privada contempló tanto la propiedad de las embarcaciones, cedidas al rey, como el armamento de las mismas, en colaboración o no con el monarca, y/o el patronaje, es decir, el comando de las expediciones en galeras, hubieran sido éstas armadas por el monarca y cedidas en régimen de comanda, o armadas por los mismos individuos*. For more on the hiring and arming of vessels in the late-medieval Crown of Aragon, see Del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani*, chapter V, which focuses in particular on commercial ships and fleets.

²¹ Baviera Albanese, “L'istituzione dell'ufficio di conservatore,” 5.

To restore the royal demesne and recover its resources, in 1414 the King's emissaries established a new financial office, the *conservator maior regii patrimonii*, which was tasked with overseeing the realm's royal patrimony, halting the alienation of public resources, and curbing excessive public spending.²² As part of this effort, the *conservator* Juan Sanchez Salvatierra ordered all Sicilian officers managing public monies to submit detailed reports on their incomes, including those derived from the farming out of the *gabelle* and the exports of grains. This information was essential for enabling more accurate calculations of royal expenses and verifying the legitimacy of feudal possessions, revenues, and various other rights held by the realm's subjects.²³ Ferdinand I of Aragon's strategy clearly aimed at fully recovering Sicilian finances, even at the risk of displeasing his Sicilian subjects. This is evidenced by his order to reduce the number of offices and the amounts of salaries in Sicily, a task assigned to Alfonso Fernandes de la Ribera, a clerk in the *conservator* office.²⁴

On the other hand, in Sicily, the local viceroys and other high-ranking officers sought to exploit the resources of the royal demesne to secure the support of the local political elite for the Crown, thereby hindering the full recovery of the royal patrimony.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, in 1415, the treasurer Andreu Guardiola complained that authorities had already allocated all of the next year's incomes from the *secretie* and *vicesecretie*. This situation prompted the Crown to strengthen the role of the Sicilian treasury in collecting and managing royal revenues, with the purpose of improving fiscal oversight and, in theory, ensure greater control over the kingdom's financial resources.²⁶

This lack of clarity in the implementation of the economic program persisted during the early years of Alfonso the Magnanimous' reign, which featured both significant economic concessions to some of his most loyal subjects – such as the payment of 1,000 florins of Aragon to the *uxer d'armes* Ludovico de Vilarosa²⁷ or the list of the Crown's beneficiaries in 1417²⁸ – and efforts to strengthen Sicilian finances. Therefore, at the end of 1416, the monarch reduced the extension of the new viceroys Domenec Ram and Antoni Cardona's authority (*abdicaciò de potestat*) in distributing fiefs and feudal goods, as well as in appointing officers responsible for Sicily's main castles (*castellani*). Although the viceroys were permitted to grant offices and allocate economic revenues to Sicilian subjects, these revenues were capped at

²² On the *conservator*, see “L'istituzione dell'ufficio di conservatore,” Corrao, *Governare un regno*, 364–80; Silvestri, *L'amministrazione del regno di Sicilia*, 171–96 and 349–92.

²³ Silvestri, *L'amministrazione del regno*, 180–1.

²⁴ ACA, RC, reg. 2429, fol. 53r, [1415].

²⁵ Corrao, *Governare un regno*, 374–6.

²⁶ The reform of the Sicilian treasury between 1415 and 1416 is examined in Silvestri, “L'amministrazione finanziaria,” which also include a transcription of the ordinance.

²⁷ ACA, RC, reg. 2429, fol. 96rv, 19 Aug. 1416, and fol. 96v, 19 Aug. 1416.

²⁸ ACA, RC, reg. 2429, fols. 145v, 10 May 1417, and 146r, 13 May 1417.

1,000 florins of Florence per year.²⁹ At the same time, to impose tighter control over royal finances, the monarch appointed treasurer Andreu Guardiola as the principal authority for collecting demesne revenues, entrusting him with the responsibilities of the major financial offices of the *magister portulanus* and *magister secretus*, which were abolished.³⁰

More broadly, Alfonso the Magnanimous aimed to retain direct control over incomes and expenditures in Sicily, thereby preventing the dispersal of resources, contributing efficiently to the recovery of the royal patrimony, and accumulating funds to meet potential future economic needs of the Crown. Despite these efforts, the monarch did not fully achieve his goals. The treasury reform most likely fell short in controlling the entire realm's incomes and expenses, as evidenced by Andreu Guardiola's continued criticism of Sicilian viceroys for excessive spending in 1417.³¹ Additionally, the recovery of royal resources alienated during the previous decades remained incomplete.³² This issue is explicitly addressed in a decree issued by Alfonso V of Aragon in 1418, wherein he ordered the Sicilian viceroys to immediately reintegrate into the royal patrimony all resources alienated during the reign of Martin I of Sicily.³³ At the same time, the Crown reformed the distribution of grants among its Sicilian subjects to avoid the dispersal of the incomes generated from the immense concessions of grain exports initiated in the 1390s, as well as to maintain stricter control over the realm's grain actual supplies. As a part of this initiative, in 1418 King Alfonso replaced the grant of free *tratte* in favour of his Sicilian recipients with revenues generated by other royal incomes.³⁴

The loss of the treasurer's accounts and the Sicilian chancery's registers of this period makes it difficult to determine in detail whether, and to what extent, the recovery of the royal patrimony was successful. Yet the fact that since late 1417 Alfonso the Magnanimous increasingly relied on Sicilian resources to address the Crown's economic needs – either by using Sicilian incomes directly or by issuing bills of exchange to be paid in Sicily³⁵ – suggests that the island's economic conditions had improved.³⁶

²⁹ ACA, RC, reg. 2429, fol. 104r, 12 Nov. 1416, and fols. 123r-v [1417]. For more information on the definition of the viceregal authority in Sicily, see Corrao, *Governare un regno*, 189–200.

³⁰ Silvestri, "L'amministrazione finanziaria," 142–3.

³¹ The correspondence between King Ferdinand I, Andreu Guardiola and Juan Tudela, has been examined by Corrao, "De la Vostra Gran Senyoria."

³² Notably, as soon as Alfonso became King of Aragon, he ordered his brother Juan, who was viceroy of Sicily, to give full support to the actions of the *conservator* Salvatierra for the full recovery of the island's royal patrimony (ACA, RC, reg. 2429, fol. 91v, 20 Jul. 1416).

³³ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 26r, undated [July 1418].

³⁴ Epstein, *An Island for itself*, 280–1.

³⁵ This is the case, for instance, of the sum of 500 florins of Aragon that treasurer Andreu Guardiola was ordered to pay to the banker Pietro Gaetano, who had transferred this amount to the treasury of the Crown of Aragon (ACA, RC, reg. 2803, fol. 26r, 3 Dec. 1417).

³⁶ See, for instance, the growing distribution of grants and royal incomes in the letters transcribed in ACA, RC, reg. 2803.

Archival sources indicate that the monarch appointed Manuele de Cassi as a lieutenant of the Treasury to handle daily operations, while the head of the Treasury, Andreu Guardiola, was personally involved in various Crown affairs across the Mediterranean.³⁷ For instance, between 12 May and 31 October 1418, Guardiola carried out numerous tasks on behalf of the monarch, including *fer moltes e grans despeses* to fund various royal court activities. Notably, he met with Alfonso in Majorca, bringing an exceptional amount of money from Sicily, which, although not explicitly stated, was likely intended to complete the conquest of Sardinia and initiate the invasion of Corsica, which remained under Genoese control.³⁸

3. *Winds of War*

Since 1416, Alfonso the Magnanimous engaged in protracted negotiations with the *corts* of Catalonia and Valencia, seeking to secure economic and political support to wage war against Genoa. However, even the looming threat of losing Sardinia failed to persuade the members of the Iberian parliamentary assemblies to back their sovereign, ultimately compelling him to renew the truce with Genoa for another three years. Drawing on the political experience he had gained since ascending the throne, from 1418 onwards Alfonso managed to shift the political balance in his favour and thereby strengthen his grasp over his Iberian territories, which were eventually compelled to support the sovereign's new Mediterranean agenda.³⁹

While overseeing the preparation of a thirty-vessel fleet, which, according to his plan, was intended to bring him to the Kingdom of Sicily – a journey Alan Ryder described as a smokescreen to conceal the king's true strategy – Alfonso turned his attention to a variety of funding sources. These included loans, clerical subsidies, and inquiries into alienated lands. He also sought papal support, by requesting *aquelles gràcies de usures e coses pies* that Pope Clement VII (1378-94) had previously granted to John I of Aragon (1387-96) to fund his campaign to invade Sardinia.⁴⁰ Furthermore, to increase the number of vessels under his direct control, Alfonso ordered his subjects to provide ships to the Crown. For instance, he required *una galea armada pagada per tres meses* from the Kingdom of Majorca and its cities and instructed the Kingdom of Valencia's general bailiff to secure a *galeotta* by funding vessel owners.⁴¹ In

³⁷ ACA, RC, reg. 2803, fols. 45v-46r, 31 Dec. 1417.

³⁸ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 48v, 22 Oct. 1418, and fol. 48v-49r, 18 Oct. 1418: "making many and huge expenses."

³⁹ Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, 48-64.

⁴⁰ Ryder, 64-5. The reference is in ACA, RC, reg. 2668, 2v, 10 Mar. 1419: "those grants on usuries and pious matters."

⁴¹ The sovereign's insistence in preparing the fleet is clear in a number of records, such as in the letters to the general bailiffs of Valencia (ACA, RC, reg. 2668, fol. 41v, 22 Apr. 1419) and Aragon (*ibidem*, fol. 43r, 22 Apr. 1419). As mentioned in Muñoz Pomer, "Le corti valenzane," 22, note 61,

both cases, Alfonso ostensibly claimed his intention was to travel to Sicily and visit his distant realm.⁴²

The substantial incomes Alfonso the Magnanimous collected for his overseas enterprise – including the aforementioned contributions from the Kingdom of Sicily – enabled the monarch to reopen negotiations with the Catalan and Valencian *corts*, explicitly emphasizing the Crown's need for men and supplies to secure full control of Sardinia.⁴³ In 1419, these assemblies agreed to fund the sovereign with 60,000 florins and 40,000 florins, respectively, in exchange for significant concessions. For the Kingdom of Valencia, this is evidenced by the establishment of an autonomous *mestre racional* and independent archives for the realm in the same year,⁴⁴ as well as by the full support of the Valencian aristocracy.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Kingdom of Majorca was required to contribute vessels and supplies, which Alfonso the Magnanimous initially sought to obtain through the voluntary support of shipowners and merchants and by issuing *guiatges*, safe-conducts protecting those joining the royal fleet from prosecution for any crime. However, when this policy failed, the monarch resorted to seizing all ships traveling near the island's seas for a period of three months.⁴⁶

Records explicitly indicate that Sicily was fully involved in the preparation of the royal fleet alongside other territories of the Crown of Aragon at this time, as attested by various instructions and letters King Alfonso sent to his viceroys in January 1419, requesting two armed galleys with their crews.⁴⁷ To expedite the operation, he appointed the royal counsellor and Valencian noble Bernat Centelles as their *patró*⁴⁸ and entrusted him with selecting two vessels

between January and May 1419, Valencia borrowed six galleys, commanded by Pere Centelles, Frances Bellví, Joan Pardo, Nicolau Jofre, Joan de Bardaxi and Romeu Corbera, master of the order of Montesa, while Nicolau de Valldaura was in charge of the royal galley.

⁴² On the requests sent to Majorca and Valencia, see respectively ACA, RC, reg. 2668, fol. 5v, 16 Mar. 1419 (“a galley armed and paid for three months”) and fol. 4v, 14 Mar. 1419. More details on the preparation of the vessels in Majorca can be found in ad hoc *memorial* transcribed *ibidem*, fol. 6v, undated.

⁴³ On 2 September 1419, Alfonso the Magnanimous declared before the Valencian *corts* his need for funding to support his Sardinian campaigns, as reflected in a passage from his speech cited by Muñoz Pomer, “Le Corti Valenzane,” 22, note 58: *per alsunces rahons necessàries tocants molt nostra honor, en special, per lo recobrament de Cerdunya, on se mostra gran disposició axí per falta que hi és de gents ab los rebel·les com de virtualles, per satisfer a nostra honor nafrada per tenir títol de cosa que del tot no possehisem, e per visitar lo nostre regne de Sicília* (“for some necessary reasons concerning our honour, especially for the recovery of Sardinia, where there is a great need due to the lack of people to fight the rebels, and provisions to satisfy our wounded honour for holding the title of something we did not fully possess, and to visit our Kingdom of Sicily”).

⁴⁴ Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, 68-9. On these subjects, see respectively: Cruselles, *El Maestre Racional* and López Rodríguez, “El Archivo Real.”

⁴⁵ Sáiz Serrano, “Nobleza y expansión militar.”

⁴⁶ Burguera-Puigserver, “Servei i guerra,” 347-50.

⁴⁷ King Alfonso ordered his viceroys to find *vagabunts e mal homes difamats* to be employed as rowers in the two galleys (ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 80r, 8 Feb. 1419) and give them a *guiatge* in exchange for their service (fol. 81r, 9 Feb. 1419).

⁴⁸ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, c. 77v, 31 Jan. 1419. As suggested by Corrao, *Governare un regno*, 322, Bernat Centelles was involved in Sicilian politics since the age of the Martins.

from the four available: the galley moored in Catania, the newly built galley in Messina, the galley *Falco*, or the *galea morisca* in Palermo.⁴⁹ Alfonso's decision to entrust Centelles with this critical mission was influenced by the latter's previous experience in Sicilian politics and his significant financial contributions towards the preparation of the galleys. To compensate him, Alfonso pawned the port of Sciacca (*li obligam e posam entres mans lo port de Xacca*) to Centelles,⁵⁰ allowing him to collect its incomes until he had recovered the 6,000 florins he had provided, along with interests amounting to 8,575 *sous* of Barcelona, and an annual grant of 2,000 florins from the port's revenue.⁵¹ At the same time, the monarch was increasingly relying on Sicily to supply provisions for the vessels in the royal fleet. This is evidenced by the case of the galley led by *armer maior* Gutierre de Nava, who required supplies such as ship biscuit, cheese, oil, tuna, fish, and legumes to outfit the galley, supposedly intended to transport the monarch himself to Sicily.⁵²

Whether due to the viceroys' goal to avoid disrupting the Sicilian royal patrimony or the island's major cities aiming to retain control over their vessels, the monarch's requests went unfulfilled. This prompted Alfonso to issue a stern warning in a memorial dated March 1419, addressed to his viceroys Antoni Cardona, Ferran Vasques Porrado, and Martin Torres, in which he threatened to postpone his journey to Sicily.⁵³ The *memorial* included a detailed list of requests by the monarch, ranging from the dispatch of hundreds of knights and infantrymen from Sicily to Sardinia to the supply of ship biscuit and stones and saltpetre for the bombards, as well as the preparation of galleys and freighters (*tafaree*) to transport men, horses, and supplies to Sardinia. Most crucially, the monarch ordered Sicilian viceroys to arrange *manleutes e emprenyoraments quels seran vists fahedors, fahents obligacions e seguretats que seran necessàries per forma que les pecúnies que hi son mester se haian prestament e a menys dan de la cort que fer se puxa*.⁵⁴

At this stage, completing the conquest of Sardinia and potentially expanding the war against the Genoese in Corsica had become a priority on Alfonso the Magnanimous' political agenda, a goal he intended to fund with Sicily's substantial incomes. Yet, the island appeared indifferent to the monarch's economic demands and its role in preparing and supplying the royal fleet.

Several months after issuing his orders, Alfonso continued to express frustration over the delays and resistance he had encountered in Sicily. In a letter to his viceroys, he noted that while the Valencian nobles *han nos servit*

⁴⁹ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, c. 74r-v, 28 Jan. 1419.

⁵⁰ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 78r-v, 31 Jan. 1419: "we transfer and put in his hands the port of Sciacca".

⁵¹ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 78v-79r, 27 Jan. 1419, and fols. 79r-v, 27 Jan. 1419.

⁵² ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 88r, 10 Mar. 1419.

⁵³ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fols. 108v-109r, undated.

⁵⁴ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 109r: "finally, to properly fulfil all these matters, they shall arrange loans and pledges deemed necessary, making commitments and securities to ensure that the required funds are promptly available at the lowest possible cost to the court".

per a nostra partida de XXXX^m florins, the requests sent to Sicily through the aforementioned *memorial* remained unanswered. No vessels, provisions, or troops had been dispatched from the island to Sardinia, despite its critical role in supporting the royal army and ensuring adequate supplies for the campaign.⁵⁵ A telling example of this impasse is the refusal by *la universitat de la ciutat de Meçina* to loan *la galea appellada del Falco*, which, as Alfonso emphasised, *ensemps a la galea nova que havem feta fer en la dita ciutat, havem assignada a mossen Bernat Centelles*.⁵⁶ According to the monarch's plans, the newly appointed governor and viceroy of Sardinia, Centelles, required these *legeres et bones* Sicilian vessels – designated *per servir en lo dit regne e no altre part* – to successfully conduct his campaigns in Sardinia.⁵⁷

The absence of a functional channel of negotiation, such as the *corts* in the Crown's Iberian territories, likely complicated bargaining between the King and Sicily's local political society. This challenge is plainly illustrated by the complete failure of the general taxation attempt in 1421, when the Countess of Caltabellotta actively supported her subjects' uprising against royal tax collectors.⁵⁸ Rather than risking the spread of rebellion across the island, Sicilian authorities abandoned efforts to organize direct money collections, relying instead on the substantial incomes of the royal patrimony, which, despite its incomplete recovery, remained the most stable and practical source of revenue for the Crown. As discussed below, authorities exploited the royal patrimony and its resources as bargaining chips to secure immediate cash from shipowners and other private investors. In doing so, the latter gained direct control over a significant portion of public resources, particularly revenues generated through indirect taxation and customs duties in the realm's *secretie* and *vicesecretie*, as well as incomes from the grain trade in the demesne ports.

⁵⁵ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 133r, 6 Oct 1419: *they have served us for our departure with 40,000 florins*. This register also includes a letter in which Alfonso the Magnanimous summoned Count Nicola Peralta in Sardinia, where the King is travelling in person with his fleet and armies. This record is followed by a long list of all the Sicilian counts, barons, and other noble landlords ordered to bring their troops to Alghero, in Sardinia, to provide their military support to the sovereign: Thomas Spatafora, Giovanni Ventimiglia, Matteo Moncada, Giovanni Moncada, Artale de Luna, Ruggero dell'Arca, Pietro Moncada, Giovanni Montalto, Filippo Ventimiglia, Giovanni Ventimiglia, Ruggero Pollicino, Antonio Barresi, Sancho Ruyz de Lihori, Corrado di Modica, il barone di Castelvetro, il barone di Buscemi, Giovanni Afrono, Berenguer d'Oriols, Riccardo Filangeri, Ugo Rosso, Gulot de la Valva, Miano Russo, Perrone de Iuen, Ruggero de Barut, Giovanni Caltagirone, Giovanni Apatella, Giovanni Bandino, Francesco del Bosco, Simone Campolo, Palmiero de Caro, Nicola Manso, Iofre de Mancayuni, and Gilabert Centells (ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 132r-v, Oct 1419). The organization of the campaign in Sardinia with a focus on the role of Sicily is recorded in ACA, reg. 2571, cc. 88r-89v, undated.

⁵⁶ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 118r, 4 May 1419: the refusal "of the universitas of the city of Messina" to loan "the galley called del Falco, which, as Alfonso emphasized, together with the new galley that we have had built in the said city, we have assigned to Mossèn Bernat Centelles".

⁵⁷ ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 118r, 4 May 1419: "to serve in the said kingdom and no other place".

⁵⁸ Silvestri, "*Pagari certa quantitati*," 84-5.

4. *Squeezing the Kingdom*

The onset of this new financial strategy coincided with the removal of the Sicilian treasurer Andreu Guardiola from his post, allegedly due to a series of embezzlements in the treasury accounts dating back to the reign of the Martins until 1418-19. Whether these accusations were valid or not, they provided the monarch with a pretext to dismiss an officer who had consistently advocated a strict financial policy focused on rebuilding the Sicilian royal patrimony and preventing the dispersal of public resources.

Before the conclusion of the inquiry, Alfonso the Magnanimous suspended Guardiola and appointed Nicola Speciale, a seasoned officer in financial affairs, as the treasury's regent in September 1419, and later as the realm's treasurer in February 1420. Like his predecessor, Nicola Speciale managed the incomes directly assigned to the treasury and oversaw the network of *secretie* and ports within the royal demesne. In doing so, he became the architect of resource accumulation to support the political and military agenda of Alfonso the Magnanimous.⁵⁹ Although Nicola Speciale's accounting books (*libri*) were lost, surviving quittances issued by the Sicilian accounting office reveal an extraordinary fluctuation in proceeds and expenses during his short administration. Over roughly two years and five months, Speciale increased the treasury's expenditures from 10,715 *onze* (1419-20) to 38,827 *onze* (1420-21), marking a growth of over 262%, followed by a significant decline during the last four months of his tenure, with expenditures amounting to just 3,680 *onze*. Altogether, Speciale spent a total of 53,222 *onze* – equivalent to 266,110 florins of Aragon – on behalf of the monarch during his 29-month administration, with the majority of these funds directed towards supporting and supplying the Catalan-Aragonese armies and fleets operating in the Mediterranean.⁶⁰

These fluctuations in expenditures reflect a similar trend in incomes, which were derived from both ordinary revenues (*a secretis et magistris procuratoribus, vicesecretis et viceportulanis dicti regni Sicilie*) and extraordinary profits, amounting to 52,425 *onze* (equivalent to about 262,125 florins of Aragon).⁶¹ From 1420 onward, a growing share of these earnings came from the alienation of royal lands, assets, and rights by the Crown in exchange for immediate cash and military support from shipowners, aristocrats, high-level administrators, and entrepreneurs. In return, these individuals gained control over exceptional fiscal revenues pertaining to the

⁵⁹ When, in 1421, Nicola Speciale decided to resign from his position as treasurer, describing it as *tediosu e molestu* ("boring and annoying"), the monarch attempted to persuade him to remain in the role (Silvestri, *L'amministrazione del regno*, 216).

⁶⁰ See the details of the treasury's incomes and expenditures under Nicola Speciale's administration in Silvestri, "I conti di Nicola Speciale," Table 1, and Appendice, docs. 1 and 2., 30 May 1422.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

realm. Unlike earlier practices, this transfer of resources was not merely an exchange of royal revenues for loans; it was formalized through a legal contract signed by the monarch and various shipowners before a public notary in the city of Majorca on 13 May 1420.⁶² Unsurprisingly, the Sardinian campaign was launched that same month, immediately after Alfonso the Magnanimous committed to funding the *patrons* of the royal fleet's vessels for six months by allocating to them the substantial revenues from the Kingdom of Sicily's grain trade ports.⁶³

4.1 The contracting party

The surviving records reveal that the consortium included twenty-six *patrons*, twenty-four of whom were galley owners or co-owners, with just two recorded as possessing *galeotte*, which were faster and smaller vessels compared to the *galee*.⁶⁴ The group consisted almost entirely of members of the Iberian aristocracy, the majority of whom were from the Kingdom of Valencia, such as the members of its *corts*' military branch Andreu Aguiló, Francesc Bellví, Lluís Carbonell, Bernat Centelles, Pere Centelles, Manuel Díez (also known as Didaci), Joan Pardo de la Casta, Joan Martínez d'Eslava, and Joan de Vallterra. The consortium also included the grand master of the Order of Montesa, Romeu de Corbera, who – although being of Catalan origins – belonged to the ecclesiastical branch of the Valencian parliamentary assembly and *frater* Berenguer Domenge, *comendador maior* of the Montesa order, who is attested as an accountant of the parliament's *diputació*.⁶⁵ Whether these

⁶² According to Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, Book XIII, chapter 4, Alfonso the Magnanimous arrived in Majorca on 9 May 1420, just a few days before signing the contract with the *patrons*.

⁶³ I found the exact date in which the contract between the Crown and the consortium of shipowners was signed in ASPa, PR, reg. 21, fol. 209v, 26 June 1420: *li patruni di li galei, li quali su in serviciu di lu serenissimu signuri re, comu consta per tinuri di unu puplicu instrumentu confectiu in la chitati di Maiorca sub anno domini Mº CCCCº XXº, die tricesimo madii scriptu et subsignatu per manu di Franchiscu d'Arinyo secretariu di lu predictu signuri re e notariu puplicu* ("the galleys' patrons who served our most serene highness, as attested by a public instrument issued in the city of Mallorca on 13 May 1420 and subscribed by the aforementioned lordship's secretary and public notary, Franchiscu d'Arinyo"). On the beginning of the campaign, see Burguera-Puigserver, "Servei i guerra," 348; on its organisation, see also Unali, "Le flotte di Alfonso V d'Aragona".

⁶⁴ On the Crown of Aragon's galleys and vessels, see Pujol i Hamelink, *La Construcció naval a Catalunya*.

⁶⁵ All these individuals are mentioned in the documents produced by the Valencian parliament of 1417-18: Cortés Escrivà, Josepa, ed. *Corts d'Alfons el Magnànim*. Moreover, in his *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, Book XIII, chapter 1, the chronicler Jerónimo Zurita accounted the preparation of Alfonso the Magnanimous' fleet, mentioning some of the galleys' captains appointed by the King in 1420: *Nombró por capitanes de sus galeras, de la real a Nicolás de Valdaura ciudadano de Valencia, muy diestro y valeroso capitán en las cosas de la mar, y al maestre de Montesa, don Pedro de Centellas, don Francés de Belvis, Juan Pardo de La Casta, Nicolás Joffre, Juan de Bardají hijo de Berenguer de Bardají y Juan de Eslava* ("he appointed as captains of his galleys, from the royal fleet, Nicolás de Valdaura, a citizen of Valencia, a very skilled and

individuals were summoned to join the royal fleet or chose to participate voluntarily, this list demonstrates the extensive involvement of the Kingdom of Valencia in supporting the monarch's military and political agenda.⁶⁶

The remaining *patrons* came from various territories of the Crown of Aragon, though notably none from Sicily. They included Joan Bardaxí and Gonsalvo Monroy from Aragon; Dalmau ça Cirera, Bernat de Corbera, Hug de Mur, and Bernat Vilagut from Catalonia; Gabriel Sunyer and Bernat Safortesa from Majorca; and Berenguer Carroz, the Count of Quirra and a Valencian aristocrat, from Sardinia. Moreover, the consortium funded with Sicilian revenues included individuals from outside the Crown of Aragon's domains. These were the Castilians Gutierre de Nava, Pedro de Ledesma, Sancho Delmo, and Ferdinando d'Almazán, as well as the Corsican Salones d'Istria, and Oddo di Lusignano, Count of Tripoli and brother of the King of Cyprus.⁶⁷ The social background of the Iberian *patrons* of vessels appears remarkably uniform, despite their various origins. With the exception of the merchants Bernat Vilagut and Gabriel Sunyer, all the other shipowners and shipmasters – variously identified as *nobiles* or *milites* – belonged to the upper strata of the Iberian aristocracy.

Moreover, they possessed extensive military experience, enabling them to lead attacks and sieges against enemy cities and fortresses, as well as to conduct naval warfare against the Genoese. In this regard, some of these shipowners and military professionals are mentioned in the chronicles written during the age of Alfonso the Magnanimous, as in the case of Gutierre de Nava and Bernat Centelles, who participated actively to the later Aragonese attack against Marseille in 1423, as mentioned by the chronicler Gaspare Pellegrino in his *Historia*.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the Majorcan Gabriel Sunyer had alternated his mercantile activities with raids along the Catalan and Valencian coasts, while also supporting the Crown in defending Sardinia from piratical attacks. As a well-known corsair and expert shipmaster, he thus was a formidable asset to the royal fleet, alongside figures such as Bernat Safortesa and Salones d'Istria, who shared similar profiles and expertise.⁶⁹

Some members of the *patrons*' consortium were even equipped with significant expertise in Sicilian and Sardinian politics, with Sicily and Sardinia respectively being the primary source of funding for the military campaign and the theatre of warfare. While the Catalan Romeu Corbera had been Sicilian *ambaxiator* and later *vicegerens* (1413-14), Berenguer Carroz had been

brave captain in naval matters, and the master of Montesa, don Pedro de Centellas, don Francés de Belvis, Juan Pardo de La Casta, Nicolás Joffre, Juan de Bardají, son of Berenguer de Bardají, and Juan de Eslava").

⁶⁶ On the role of Valencia and its political society in the campaigns of Alfonso the Magnanimous, see, Sáiz Serrano, *Caballeros del rey*.

⁶⁷ Appendix, doc. 1.

⁶⁸ Pellegrino, *Historia*, Liber I, 106.

⁶⁹ Burguera i Puigserver, *Els perills de la mar*, 276-7; on Bernat Safortesa and Salones d'Istria, see 135 and 156.

viceroys of Sardinia (1410-13 and 1415-16), where his Valencian origins' family had transplanted in the fourteenth century.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the Valencian Bernat Centelles had navigated Sicilian politics since the age of the Martins, later becoming counsellor of Ferdinand I of Aragon. Thanks to his economic and political support to the Crown, he had been able to acquire significant possessions and incomes in the island. Moreover, he also successfully connected the Centelles family with Sicilian main aristocracy through the marriage he architected between his younger brother Gilabert and Costanza Ventimiglia, heiress to the County of Collesano.⁷¹ The majority of the other *patrons*, however, had no prior experience with Sicily, which the agreement between them and the Crown transformed into a land of opportunities for both enrichment and social advancement.

4.2 The contents of the agreement

To fulfil the agreement, the consortium of *patrons* appointed two *milites*, Ramon Xammar and Nicolau Jofre, as their procurators in Sicily. Their mission was to take control, on behalf of the consortium, of all the urban centres, ports and other infrastructures assigned to them under the contract with the Crown, as well as to collect the revenues owed to shipowners and shipmasters.⁷² As per the detailed agreement between the two parties, in exchange for the use and management of those vessels during the Sardinian campaign, the monarch pledged *als dits patrons tots los ports e tretes del Regne de Sicilia e los fruyts, pecunies e comoditats* for a period of six months, starting from March until the full repayment of their service, at a rate of 1,000 florins of Aragon per month for each galley.⁷³

This arrangement not only temporarily surrendered Sicily's most profitable fiscal resource to a group of private individuals and investors but also granted them full control over the realm's demesne ports and the urban centres hosting them. As part of the agreement, shipowners and shipmasters were entrusted with the authority of appointing the officers and guards responsible for administering ports and castles in the cities and towns where revenues from grain export duties (*tratte*) were collected, using incomes of the local *secretie* (i.e., from customs duties) to pay their salaries.⁷⁴ With the

⁷⁰ On the Carroz family, see Villanueva Morte, "Nicolás Carroz," and bibliography therein mentioned.

⁷¹ On Bernat Centelles, see Corrao, *Governare un regno*, 541; on his matrimonial policy, see 212-3.

⁷² Appendix, doc. 1.

⁷³ Appendix, doc. 2 (the monarch pledged "to the said *patrons*, all the ports and revenues of the Kingdom of Sicily"), as well as the fruits, monies, and commodities. The agreement is recorded also in ACA, 2571, fols. 87r-88r, 2 June 1420.

⁷⁴ Appendix, doc. 2. The agreement established that the amounts had to be paid according at a rate of 12 carlins for each Florentine florin and 9 carlins for each Aragonese florin.

only exception of Palermo, Catania, and Messina where their authority was limited to control over ports' staff – the *patrons* could appoint and remove *tants vegades com bon vist los serrà*⁷⁵ all the royal urban officers (*capitans, catapans, iurats, secrets, visportulans e altres officials*) who, in turn, were required to pledge an oath of loyalty to the shipowners as a guarantee of full repayment *per lo servey que fet hauran ab les dites galeres*.⁷⁶

This exceptional transfer of sovereignty to private individuals was not merely theoretical but was enacted twenty-two days after the Crown and the *patrons* signed the private contract and agreement, following their transcription into Sicilian registers⁷⁷ – a crucial step to give the agreement full legal validity on the island.⁷⁸ On 24 June 1420, upon request of the *patrons*' procurators Ramon Xammar and Nicolau Jofre, the *viceportulanus* of Trapani Antonio Mararanga appeared before the viceroys and *manibus eorum fide et homagium prestitit*, pledging that, from that day forward, he would use the grain export revenues from Trapani exclusively to repay the owners of the vessels (*omnium galiarum et galiottarum*) at the Crown's service.⁷⁹

This oath was followed by similar pledges taken by the ports' officers of Catania, Termini, Licata, Agrigento, Vendicari, Marsala, Augusta, Brucoli, Sciacca and Siracusa, as well as by the castellans of Licata and Sciacca, who were entrusted to manage their castles on behalf of the shipowners.⁸⁰ This is the case, for instance, of the castellan Giovanni della Terra, who, on 26 June 1420, swore to safeguard and manage the castle of Sciacca not only on behalf of the monarch, but also *per nomu et parti di li patruni di li galey supradicti fini in tantu ki a li dicti patruni sia satisfactu di lu debitu conventu et concordatu infra lu predictu signuri re et li predicti patruni*.⁸¹ In practice, this oath explicitly attests the castellan's dual responsibility to both the Crown and the consortium of *patrons*, thereby ensuring the fulfilment of the obligations outlined in the agreement.

4.3 *The distribution of resources*

As part of this agreement, nothing was left to chance. The shipowners were even granted the autonomy to decide how to allocate the Sicilian ports and resources among themselves, following a plan approved by Alfonso the

⁷⁵ Appendix, doc. 2: "as many times as they shall see fit".

⁷⁶ Appendix, doc. 2: "the service they will have carried out with the said galleys".

⁷⁷ The two documents, both dated 24 June 1420, are respectively recorded in ASPa, PR, reg. 21, fols. 205r-206v and 206-8r.

⁷⁸ On the record-keeping methods in late-medieval Sicily: Silvestri, "That register."

⁷⁹ ASPa, PR, reg. 21, fol. 208r-209r, 1420, 24 Jun. 1420.

⁸⁰ ASPa, PR, reg. 21, fol. 209v, 24 Jun. 1420.

⁸¹ ASPa, PR, reg. 21, fol. 210r, 26 Jun 1420: "in the name and on behalf of the above-mentioned galleys' *patrons*, until these *patrons* have been fully satisfied of their credit, as agreed between them and the above-mentioned King".

Magnanimous, who, on 9 August 1420, while in Alghero, ordered his viceroys to transfer all those assets to the shipowners and shipmasters of his fleet.⁸² As shown in Table 1, with the sole exception of the ports of Cefalù, Messina, Milazzo, and Taormina in the northeastern part of Sicily, the Crown ceded control of the sixteen major export infrastructures of the island to the *patrons*. These structures included twelve ports and five *caricatori* (Alcamo, Brucoli, Castellammare, Roccella, and Vindicari) – specialized facilities for the grain trade – distributed along the entire Sicilian coastline (see Illustration 1).⁸³

In the Crown's plans, this distribution of ports was intended to facilitate and expedite the repayment of the amounts owed to each *patró*.⁸⁴ This is evidenced by the King's immediate actions: the day after the plan's approval, he ordered his Sicilian viceroy to pay 300 florins of Aragon for maintaining the galley of Pedro Ledesma.⁸⁵

Following the Crown's agreement with the *patrons*, Sicilian urban elites – most probably, those residing in the cities and towns whose ports and castles were alienated – exerted significant pressure on viceroys to oppose the exceptional alienation of cities and ports from the royal demesne in favour of foreign individuals, as control over localities and their fiscal resources (i.e., crucial pathways to political and economic advancement) was at stake. According to a contract issued by Alfonso the Magnanimous, likely in October 1420, the monarch appeared to meet the request from *nonnulli vassalli civitatum et locorum eiusdem regni nostri fideles* – unfortunately the contract did not give details of the subjects involved – and to reconsider his decision.⁸⁶ In doing so, he agreed to the *desobligacione, luicion e reedempcion dictorum castro- rum, villarum et portuum* in exchange for a loan of 12,000 florins of Aragon provided by an unspecified number of Sicilian lenders (*siculis prestatoribus*). The contract stipulated that this sum would be used to repay the shipowners and shipmasters for their vessels and support, while revenues generated from the ports would be allocated to reimburse the Sicilian lenders for their loan.⁸⁷

However, the absence of a date or the mandatory *iussio* – a chancery formula required to confer full validity to the king's orders – at the bottom of the recorded agreement, along with the lack of witnesses' and the notary's subscriptions, suggests that the proposed agreement between the Crown and its

⁸² ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 17v-18r, 9 Ago. 1420.

⁸³ On the ports and *caricatori* for grain export in Sicily, see Bresc, *Un monde*, vol. 1, 103-8. More broadly on the Crown of Aragon's grain policy, see Del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani*, chapter 3.

⁸⁴ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 17v-18r, 9 Ago. 1420.

⁸⁵ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 17r, 10 Ago. 1420.

⁸⁶ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 32r-33r, undated: "some of our faithful vassals from cities and places of this realm".

⁸⁷ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols 32r-33r, undated: "regarding the release, payment, and redemption of the said castles, towns, and ports".

Sicilian subjects was never executed.⁸⁸ Most likely, the monarch deemed the loan proposal from his Sicilian subjects insufficiently beneficial to the Crown's needs and instead opted to proceed with the agreement with the *patrons*. On the other hand, subsequent records confirm that the contract between the monarch and the shipowners' and shipmasters' consortium was fully implemented. In January 1421, for instance, the monarch issued a payment order of 6,000 florins of Aragon – 3,000 of which as an extra grant – on the incomes on the ports of Alcamo, Castellammare, and Palermo in favour of Bernat Vilagut, who had fought alongside Alfonso for five months to capture the castle of Longonsardo and besiege Bonifacio and Calvi in Corsica.⁸⁹ Similarly, in February 1421, another payment order was issued for 1,000 florins of Florence to be paid from the incomes of Augusta, Terranova, and Vindicari in favour of the *patró* Joan Bardaxí,⁹⁰ thus further attesting the execution of the above-mentioned agreement.⁹¹

Interestingly, all the individuals listed in the shipowners' column of the aforementioned Table 1 were partners in the agreement, except for the Sicilian noble Giovanni Moncada, who was entitled to receive an annual payment of 350 *onze* from the incomes of Sicilian ports because of his personal support to the Crown's warfare.⁹² To ensure Moncada received this payment, Alfonso was compelled to write to *tots e qualsevols patrons de galeres e galiotes armades*, instructing them to arrange the payment annually. This order further demonstrates that the management of the ports had been entirely transferred from public authorities to private individuals, who were even in charge of paying the recipients of the Crown's grants.⁹³

As discussed by Sáiz Serrano, in 1419 Alfonso the Magnanimous called upon *las diferentes jerarquías nobiliarias de sus reinos y del patriciato urbano* to join his Sardinian campaign *de forma voluntaria y sin recibir soldada alguna*, that is, in exchange for the opportunity to obtain grants and incomes as a reward, as discussed with reference to the Kingdom of Valencia.⁹⁴ This call to arms extended to naval warfare. As suggested by Victòria Burguera i Puigserver – who examined the case of the Kingdom of Majorca – it became

⁸⁸ Nevertheless, it should be noted, some prominent members of the Sicilian political elite appear to have contributed politically and economically to King Alfonso's following Neapolitan campaign of 1421-3.

⁸⁹ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols 61v-62r, 9 Jan. 1421.

⁹⁰ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols 99v-100r, 24 Feb. 1421.

⁹¹ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols 99v-100r, 24 Feb. 1421.

⁹² ACA, RC, 2571, fol. 19r, 16 Ago. 1420.

⁹³ ACA, RC, 2571, fol. 19v, 16 Ago. 1420. ACA, 2571, c. 43r. Despite the transfer of ports into the hands of the *patrons dels naus*, recipients of royal grants continued to receive their payments from the incomes of the demesne ports. For example, the nobles Pietro and Beatrice Cardona were allocated annual payments of 150 *onze* and 100 *onze* respectively, drawn from the revenues of the Sicilian ports (*ibidem*, fol. 44r, 30 Oct. 1420). Similarly, the powerful aristocrat Sancho Ruyz de Lihori was entitled to an annual payment of 3,000 florins of Aragon from the port of Agrigento (*ibidem*, fol. 34r-v, 4 Nov. 1420).

⁹⁴ Sáiz Serrano, *Caballeros del rey*, 22.

una oportunidad rentable para un sector experto en la marinería, en la técnica naval o en los negocios marítimos, attracting aristocrats, merchants, urban centres, and even corsairs.⁹⁵ However, this support came at a steep cost. Significant investments were required to prepare and arm vessels, with no guarantee of secure returns and the constant risk of losing their galleys and *galeotte* to damage or destruction, as reflected in the lack of surviving contracts between the Crown and its subjects.⁹⁶ The enormous fiscal resources of Sicily thus became the tool through which Alfonso the Magnanimous could fund its campaigns and secure broader support from the Iberian shipowners and investors, who were directly entrusted with the management of Sicilian ports. As a result, the *patrons* not only ensured the Crown's naval strength but also established deeper connections with local political societies, allowing them to enjoy substantial, regular incomes guaranteed by a formal contract, as well as to receive further grants and rewards for their service.

Therefore, while the agreement between the Crown and these individuals indisputably served Alfonso the Magnanimous' goal of maintaining and supplying the royal fleet, it also became a powerful mechanism for the *patrons* to achieve social and political advancement, as well as financial enrichment, for instance, by securing new posts and fiscal resources. The most prominent example is Bernat Centelles, who leveraged his service to become viceroy of Sardinia – a region where his family had longstanding connections – holding this position until his death in 1433.⁹⁷ Yet, for most members of the consortium, it was Sicily – with which they had no prior connections – that presented the greatest opportunities for transforming their political capital into financial and social gains. One notable example is Gonsalvo Monroy, who, between 1420 and 1421, quickly ascended the ranks of the Sicilian aristocracy, initially obtained the town and castle of Motta Sant'Anastasia⁹⁸ and the fief of Fraxini,⁹⁹ and later acquiring the islands of Malta and Gozo in exchange for 30,000 florins of Aragon.¹⁰⁰

In other circumstances, the members of the consortium secured various incomes from the Sicilian royal patrimony. For instance, the Crown granted the *patró* Ramon Xammar *in perpetuum* the fiscal right to collect two *grana* for every *tratta* of supplies exported from Sicily in exchange for military service.¹⁰¹ Similarly, the *patró* Joan Bardaxí received an annual income of 1,000 florins of Aragon from the profits generated by the ports of Augusta, Vendi-

⁹⁵ Burguera-Puigserver, “«Pro vestris meritis»,” 101.

⁹⁶ Burguera-Puigserver, 102. She explains that, despite the Iberian subjects supported the Crown by providing freely the monarch with galleys and crews, it is difficult finding information among the surviving records, *puesto que no aparecen en los registros de contratos de flete ni en los de pagos de salarios*.

⁹⁷ Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, 76.

⁹⁸ ASPa, PR, reg. 23, cc. 47r-49r, 14 Jan. 1421.

⁹⁹ ASPa, PR, reg. 23, cc. 55r-57v, 14 Jan. 1421.

¹⁰⁰ Silvestri, “I conti di Nicola Speciale,” 57.

¹⁰¹ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 92v-93r, Dec. 1420.

cari, and Torrenova.¹⁰² Even family members of the *patrons* benefited from these opportunities. Bernat Vilagut's brother, Guillem, obtained the right to collect one *granum* for every *tratta* of supplies exported from Sicily.¹⁰³ Moreover, in the *darrer codicil* of his will, the *patró* Lluís Carbonell transferred to his nephew Ioan Roqua the sum of 3,000 florins of Aragon still owed to him for the galley he had provided to the Crown.¹⁰⁴

5. Conclusion: From Sardinia to Naples

Although Sicily's financial support was initially intended to fund the Sardinian campaign, the island's revenues were soon redirected to fund the campaign for the conquest of Corsica. This shift followed the Viscount of Narbonne's renunciation of his rights to the judgeship of Arborea – traditionally the Crown's main rival in Sardinia – in August 1420.¹⁰⁵ During that same month, however, Queen Joanna II of Naples (1414-35) adopted Alfonso the Magnanimous as her legitimate heir in exchange for his protection against her enemies.¹⁰⁶ As a result, Sicily's contributions became even more critical to the monarch's political and military agenda. The chronological terms of the contract with the *patrons* were seemingly extended until approximately 1422, allowing their galleys to continue drawing on Sicilian incomes to supply their vessels and maintain control over the island's ports.¹⁰⁷ This is evidenced by the appointment of Hug de Foxà as castellan of Agrigento, *per securitati de li obligacioni facti a li patruni di li galei super lu portu di Girgenti*,¹⁰⁸ as well as by the payments recorded in July 1421 in favour of the master of Montesa Romeu Corbera – now titled *admiratus nostrorum marium* –, and of Joan de Vallterra and Nicolau Jofre, respectively drawn from the incomes of the port of Agrigento and from the ports of Brucoli, Catania and Roccella.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, as the monarch's focus shifted from Sardinia to Naples, Sicily's role in supplying the royal fleet grew increasingly significant. The island – where Alfonso the Magnanimous himself resided for a few weeks in the spring of 1421 – became the natural base for providing galleys and *galeotte* with continuous material support, including foodstuffs, supplies, and repair

¹⁰² ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 99v-100r, 24 Feb. 1421.

¹⁰³ ASPa, PR, reg. 23, fols. 86v-87v, 31 Mar. 1421.

¹⁰⁴ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 109r-v, 20 Mar. 1421

¹⁰⁵ Anatra, "Dall'unificazione aragonese ai Savoia," 347-50.

¹⁰⁶ Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, 77-80. These events are thoroughly documented by Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, Book XIII, ch. 5.

¹⁰⁷ For instance, see the money transfers to the *patrons* attested in the accounts pertaining to the administration of the ports of Agrigento, Siculiana and Montichiario during the 15th (1421-2) and 1st (1422-3) indictions, in RC, reg. 57, cc. 107r-108r, 16 Jan. 1426.

¹⁰⁸ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 135r, 20 May 1421: "for the security of the obligations towards the patrons of the galleys the profits from Agrigento's port".

¹⁰⁹ See respectively, ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 157r, 27 Jul 1421, and ACA, RC, reg. 2811, fol. 31r, 30 Jul. 1421.

services whenever necessary.¹¹⁰ For instance, on 14 May 1421, the king ordered the distribution of specific quantities of ship biscuit, *a quintar e pes de Barchinona*, to the *patrons* of *les nostres naus e galeres armades*,¹¹¹ including those shipmasters – referred to as *patrons* – entrusted with commanding the vessels owned by shipowners (see Table 2). Among them were Joan Pagès, captain of the galley belonging to the count of Quirra, Berenguer Carroz,¹¹² and the King's shipmasters Pere Saragossa, Pere Doy, Pere Montrós, Bartomeu Pisà, Jaume Fàbregues, and Joan Valldossera, all of whom were permitted to retrieve ship biscuit and other foodstuffs to supply their vessels.¹¹³ Messina, on the other hand, became the primary shipyard (*tarsana*) of the royal fleet, as exemplified by the reparation of the main mast of the Barcelona galley, led by the aforementioned *patró* Joan Valldossera,¹¹⁴ as well as the maintenance and repair of numerous cargo ships (*tafaree*) and galleys over time.¹¹⁵

Initially conceived as an exceptional measure to fund the Sardinian campaign, the transfer of the Kingdom of Sicily's fiscal resources to shipowners and shipmasters gradually evolved into a permanent mechanism to support warfare. However, the direct control of the island's port infrastructure by the *patrons* did not evolve into absolute or permanent control over the fiscal resources derived from grain trade and foodstuff exports. Rather, it served as a secure guarantee ensuring that the *patrons* would be fully compensated for their service and efforts in managing and supplying their vessels during a period of urgent need. In this context, it is unsurprising that the *patrons* did not retain their incomes and possessions in Sicily once the monarch stopped this mechanism for funding his fleet, but for the exceptions of the Monroy and the Centelles, the latter of whom were already fully integrated into the island's aristocratic system.

Additionally, it should be noted that, beside the members the members of the *patrons'* consortium, other shipowners and shipmasters also benefited from Sicily's support. For instance, the *capitaneus trium navium* Guillem de Muntayans, who later served as viceroy of Sicily between 1427 and 1431,¹¹⁶ ob-

¹¹⁰ Jerónimo Zurita clearly suggested the crucial role of Sicily in supplying Alfonso the Magnanimous' vessels, which *pasaron a Sicilia, y tomando algunas naves cargadas de vituallas y municiones navegaron la vía del reino, y entraron en el puerto de Nápoles a 6 del mes de septiembre* (Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, Book XIII, chs 5 and 6: the vessels "went to Sicily, and after taking some ships loaded with provisions and ammunition, they sailed toward the kingdom and entered the port of Naples on the 6th of September").

¹¹¹ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 122v, 14 May 1421. For instance, the specific licence granted to Gon-salvo Monroy to collect wheat in Sicily is recorded in ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 156r, 15 Jun. 1421.

¹¹² The connection between Berenguer Carroz and Joan Pagès is documented in ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 107v-108r, 22 Mar. 1421, which pertains to the maintenance of the galley and its crew using the revenues generated from Agrigento's port.

¹¹³ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 139r, 8 Jun. 1421.

¹¹⁴ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 111r-v, 28 Jun. 1421.

¹¹⁵ For instance, see respectively, the reparations of the *tafaree* of Simone d'Orso (ACA, RC, reg. 2806, c. 160r, 10 Feb. 1423), and of the *patró* Gabriel Sunyer's galley (ASPa, Real cancelleria, reg. 54, c. 385r-v, 12 Jun. 1423).

¹¹⁶ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fols. 61v, 5 Mar. 1421. On Guillem Muntayans as Sicilian viceroy, see Cal-darella, "Un Viceré di Sicilia ignorato".

tained the city of Marsala and its castle in exchange for a loan of 4,200 florins of Aragon.¹¹⁷ Similarly, several members of the Sicilian political elite, such as the Count of Adernò Giovanni Moncada and the Count of Caltabellotta and Sicilian admiral Artale de Luna, had contributed to Alfonso the Magnanimous' political agenda by providing vessels and armies following the Crown's call to arms for the Sardinian campaign in October 1419.¹¹⁸ As a reward, both of them received substantial revenues from ports under the *patrons*' control to fund their fleets, as in the case of the sum of 6,000 florins of Aragon to support Artale de Luna's galley and fifteen *salme* of grain to be transported to Naples in favour of Giovanni Moncada.¹¹⁹

In addition to the participation of the main aristocracy, the involvement of various members of Sicilian society in King Alfonso's wars is further evidenced by the issuance of hundreds of *guidatici* or *guiatges*, which, as discussed earlier, were tools through which the monarch enlisted men for his military campaigns.¹²⁰ The licences facilitated the recruitment of hundreds of knights, infantrymen, artillerymen, seamen, carriers, and other individuals employed in the war effort, who in turn had to be compensated for their service and sustained through Sicilian incomes and resources.¹²¹

Due to the Crown's growing need for funds to sustain the costly Neapolitan campaigns, Alfonso the Magnanimous swiftly changed his financial strategy. He removed control over Sicilian ports from the *patrons* and transferred their incomes to the Venetian merchant Antonio Morosini, whom he appointed *magister portulanus* (master of the ports) of the realm.¹²² This appointment was a reward for Morosini's service to the Crown, including transporting vast quantities of grain to Aragonese troops in Naples and later funding the Crown *de propria substancia cum grandi summa di dinari* while continuing supply-

¹¹⁷ ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 134v, 31 May 1421.

¹¹⁸ The letters the royal chancery sent to Sicily in October 1419 are recorded in ACA, RC, reg. 2804, fol. 132r-v. Unsurprisingly, both Giovanni Moncada and Artale de Luna are mentioned by Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, Book XIII, ch. 8.

¹¹⁹ See respectively ACA, RC, reg. 2806, 130r, 15 Jul. 1422, and ACA, RC, 2811, cc. 53v, 25 Ago. 1421.

¹²⁰ As discussed by Burguera-Puigserver, "Servei i guerra," also in Majorca monarchs relied on the *guiatge* to enlist people.

¹²¹ For instance, a *guidaticum* dating back to 1419 (ACA, RC, 2804, c. 80r-v, 9 Feb. 1419) stated that *per millor expedició de les galeres, les qual de present se armen en lo dit regne de Sicilia, havem guiats e assegurats en nostra bona fé reyal totes e sengles persones de qualsevol condició o stament sien qui en les dites galeres iran de tots e sengles crims, excesses e delictes de que sien enculpats o haïen comises en qualsevulla part* ("For the better preparation of the galleys currently being armed in the said Kingdom of Sicily, we have granted safe conduct and solemnly assured, in our royal good faith, that all persons, of any condition or status, who shall embark on the said galleys shall not be prosecuted for any crimes, excesses, or offenses of which they may be accused or which they may have committed in any place whatsoever"). Note that there is a significant number *guidatici* recorded in Sicilian registers, such as those transcribed in ACA, RC, reg. 2571, including those in favour of foreign merchants, such as the *guidaticum* granted to some Venetian merchants *ibidem*, fol. 131r, 26 May 1421.

¹²² ACA, RC, reg. 2806, fols. 31v-32r, 6 Mar. 1422.

ing King Alfonso's army and fleet in Naples.¹²³ Although Alfonso continued to exploit Sicilian resources to fund the galleys owned or led by the *patrons*,¹²⁴ the urgent need for substantial immediate loans led the monarch to increasingly rely on transferring the island's fiscal resources – such as profits from grain exports and from the *gabelle*'s management – to foreign merchants and other investors, including members of the Sicilian aristocracy and urban elite, in exchange for exceptional cash advances.¹²⁵ While this practice had been used in the past, it was during the reign of Alfonso the Magnanimous that the transfer of fiscal resources to private individuals – alongside the extensive alienation of royal demesne – became a standard financial strategy. This approach not only allowed the Crown to secure immediate funds to meet pressing needs but also provided opportunities for social advancement and significant enrichment for those with the capital to invest in the Crown's military campaigns.

¹²³ See respectively ACA, RC, reg. 2806, fols 32v-33r, 15. Mar. 1422 and fol. 33r, 7 mar. 1422.

¹²⁴ As highlighted in the grant of the Sicilian ports' incomes in favour of the merchant Antonio Morosino (ACA, RC, reg. 2806, fols 32v-33r, 15. Mar. 1422), the monarch explained that *per satisfaccioni di li quali li havimu assignatu et obligatu tucti li introyti di li porti, deducta la mitati di li patruni dilli galee et alcuni altri assignacioni de quo li simu tenuti per sacramentu* ("to satisfy him, we have granted him all the ports' profits, except for the half allocated to the galleys' patrons and a few other grants to which we are bound by oath").

¹²⁵ More broadly, on the role of merchants in the fifteenth-century Crown of Aragon, see Del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani*.

Tables and illustrations

Table 1. The distribution of the Sicilian ports among the *patrons* (ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 122v, 14 May 1421).

Ports	Shipowners
Termini	Gonsalvo de Monroy, Gutierre de Nava, Sancho de Nava, and the Count of Quirra Berenguer Carroz
Alcamo, Castellammare, and Palermo	Bernat Vilagut and Gabriel Sunyer
Trapani	The Count of Tripoli Oddo de Lusignano and Dalmau Sacirera
Marsala	Joan Martínez d'Eslava
Mazara	Bernat Corbera
Sciacca	Manuel Díez, Hug de Mur Luís Carbonell, Joan Pardo de la Casta
Agrigento	Andreu Aguiló, <i>patró</i> of the Count Artale de Luna's galley, Giovanni Moncada and Salones d'Istria
Licata	Bernat Centelles (for 2 two galleys), Pere Centelles, Francesc Bellvis, and Ramon Xammar
Terranova, Vindicari, Syracuse and Augusta	Joan Bardaxí and Romeu de Corbera, master of the Order of Montesa
Brucoli, Catania and Roccella	Joan de Vallterra, Nicolau Jofre, Bernat Safortesa, Ferrando d'Almazán, Pedro Ledesma

Table 2. The distribution of shipbiscuit produced in Sicily among the vessels of the royal fleet (ACA, RC, reg. 2571, fol. 122v, 14 May 1421).

<i>Patrons</i>	Quantities of ship biscuit in Barcelona's <i>quintars</i>
Romeu de Corbera, master of the Order of Montesa	102 <i>quintars</i>
Bernat Centelles	254 <i>quintars</i>
Joan Bardaxí	70 <i>quintars</i>
Gonsalvo Monroy	35 <i>quintars</i>
Pi d'Esplugues	70 <i>quintars</i>
Bernat Safortesa	87 <i>quintars</i> · 50 <i>llibres</i>
Mateu Puiades	35 <i>quintars</i>
Bernat Corbera	41 <i>quintars</i> · 25 <i>llibres</i>
Bernat Vilagut	200 <i>quintars</i>
Pedro Ledesma	235 <i>quintars</i>
Joan Pagès	300 <i>quintars</i>
Joan de Morella	30 <i>quintars</i>
Joan Roca	202 <i>quintars</i>
Berenguer de Sentmenat	70 <i>quintars</i>
Lança de Liper	116 <i>quintars</i> · 6 <i>llibres</i>

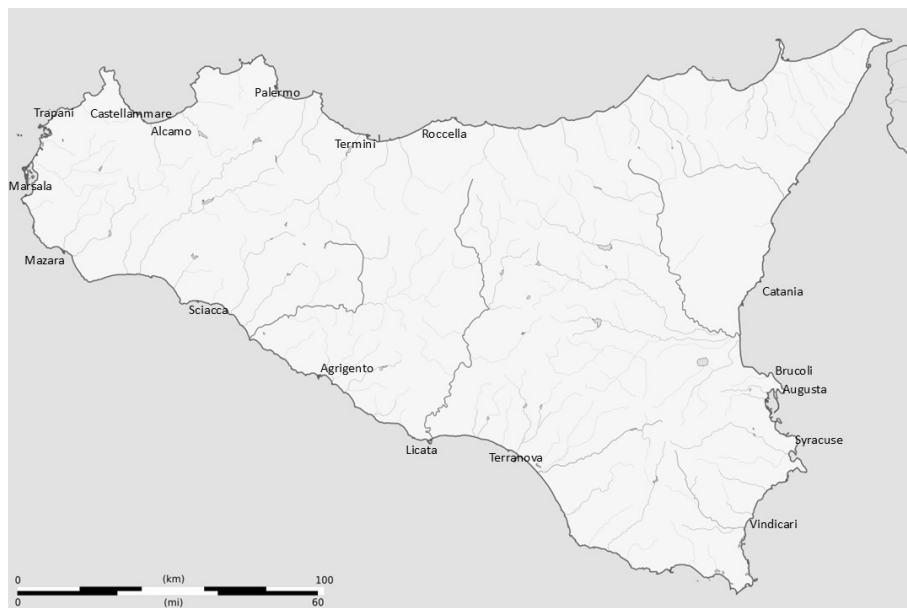


Illustration 1. The ports the Crown granted to shipowners in Sicily in 1420 (ACA, 2571, fols 17v-18r, 9 Ago. 1420).

Documents

1

24 June 1420, Palermo

The shipowners and shipmasters who reached an agreement with King Alfonso the Magnanimous on 30 May 1420 – granting him the use of certain vessels for his campaigns in exchange for a payment of 1,000 florins per month for each ship, to be paid on the export duties on grain (*tratte*) from the ports of the Kingdom of Sicily – appointed Ramon Xammar and Nicolau Jofre as their representatives on the island through a notarial instrument to implement the terms of the agreement. On one hand, Ramon Xammar and Nicolau Jofre were tasked with presenting the agreement and other relevant documents to the Sicilian viceroys and main officers, as well as requesting direct control over all ports and castles transferred to the shipowners and shipmasters. On the other hand, they were instructed to replace the officers managing the ports and castles with new personnel and to collect all due incomes and profits.

ASPa, Protonotaro del regno, reg. 21, fols. 206v-208r. Authentic copy produced at the same time of the original document, in good condition. The record is preceded by a text showing the viceregal order for transcription of the mandate: «eodem die ad mandatum prefatorum dominorum positum et registratum est infrascriptum procuratorium tenoris subsequentis».

Noverint universi quod nos Audetus de lu Sinya comes Tripolis, frater Romeus de Corbaria magister milicie beate Marie de Montesio et sancti Georgii, Berengarius Carros comes de Quirra, Bernardus de Scintillis, Petrus de Cintillis et Franciscus de Bellvis, Gondisalvus de Munroy, Iohannes Bardaxio, Manuel Didaci et Uguettus de Muro, Salones d'Istria, Iohannes Pardo de la Casta, Andreas Aguilo, Bernardo de Corbaria, Ludovicus Carbonell, Bernardus de Vilagut, Iohannes de Vallterra, Iohannes Martini Dezlava, Gutterrius de Nava, Petrus de Lodesma et Ferdinandus dal Mazan, Bernardus Çafortesa, Gabriel Sunyer, Sancius Delmo patroni galearum, frater Berengarius Domenge comendator maior Montesie et Dalmacius ça Cirera patroni galeattarum, omnes simul et quilibet nostrum in solidum, considerantes illustrissimum dominum regem ut melius et facilius et cum minori eius dampno nobis satisfiat et exsolvatur solidus sive stipendium ratione dittarum nostrarum galearum et galeottarum cum quibus tenemur servire dicto domino regi per sex menses, qui currere ceperunt prima die aprilis proximo preteriti ad rationem, videlicet mille florenorum auri de Aragonia pro qualibet galearum predictarum nobis assignasse, obligasse et intra manus misisse trattas universas portuum et caricatoriorum regni Sicilie ac iura trattarum ipsarum, castellanas quorum terrarum portuum iamdictorum et alia facere pro ut in capitulis inter dominum regem predictum et vos initis, concordatis atque firmatis, in posse notarii infrascripti lacius continetur, confisi ad plenum de industria, fide et legalitate sepiissime approbatis vestri honorabilium Raymundi de Xatmar et Nicolai Iufre militum presencium et onus procuracionis huiusdem suscipiencium facimus, constituimus et creamus vos et vestrum unum in solidum procuratores nostros certos et speciales et ad infrascripta generales.

Ita quod occupanti condicio peior non existat, seu quod per unum vestrum infrascriptum fuerit per alium mediari valeat prosequi et finiri, videlicet ad impetrandum et presentandum pro nobis et nomine nostro viceregibus aut aliis quibuscumque officialibus regni Sicilie supradicti omnes et quascumque cartas, licteras sive provisiones domini regis iamdicti aut alterius cuiuscumque principis et persone aut alias quasvis scripturas facientes in et super pre et infrascriptis et de imitatione earundem et de quibusvis aliis per vos et utrumque vestrum huiusmodi virtutis fiendis instrumenta publica tot quot volueritis et vobis videbitur pactendum fieri, requirendum, faciendum atque firmandum, nec minus ad petendum, habendum et administrandum possessionem corporalem seu quasi villarum, castrorum, et locorum et aliorum omnium et singularum predictorum, removendumque ac destituendum officiales et castellanos quoscumque villarum, castrorum ac portuum eorundem et alios seu eosdem met si vobis et utrique vestrum in solidum fuerit bene visum, constituendum in eisdem et quolibet ex ... et iterum destituendum totiens quociens vobis fuerit bene visum;

et in super ad habendum, recipiendum et colligendum ac haberi, recepi et colligi faciendum per quem seu quos volueritis personas eorundem ad vestri libitum [pro] variando omnes et singulas pecunias, fructus, redditus, proventus et emolumenta ex eisdem portubus et tractis quomodolibet proventuras et de hiis que receperitis apocam vel apocas fines ab soluciones ac atque cessiones faciendum, firmandum et eciam concedendum, pro ut vos omnes et quilibet vestrum in solidum facere possemus iuxta formam dictorum capitulorum, si eisdem interessemus aut essemus personaliter constituti, dantes et concedentes vobis et utrique vestrum in solidum potestatem plenissimam substituendi ad predictam omnia et singula per agendum loco vestri ac pocius nostri unum vel plures procuratorem vel procuratores, quibus tribuere possitis tantam et tam amplam potestatem, quantam nos vobis dominis procuratoribus nostris tribuimus serie cum presenti; et eosdem procuratorem vel procreatores per nos ut predicatur substituendum vel substituendos destituere si vobis videbitur et alios de novo substituere et variare totiens quociens vobis visum fuerit;

et generaliter possitis omnia alia et singula facere et liberaliter exercere in et super predictis omnibus et singulis et dependentibus incidentibus et emergentibus ex eisdem ac eis connexis quocumque et quomodocumque nos facere possemus personaliter contituti, eciam si maiora vel graviora sint superius expressata et mandatum exigant speciale.

Quoniam nos omnes in simul et quilibet nostrum insolidum committimus et tribuimus vobis et vestrum utrique plenarie vices nostras cume libera et generali administracione et plenissima facultate promittentes habere tamtum gratum validum atque futurum quotquid per vos et vestrum utrique super predictis omnibus et singulis et circa ea actum fuerit et procuratum quomodolibet sive gestum et nullo tempore revocare sub bonorum nostrorum omnium cuiuslibet nostrum omnium ubique habitorum et habendorum obligacione. Actum est hoc Maioricis, die tricesima madii, anno a nativitate domini millesimo CCCC^o XX^o. Signna nostrum Audete de Lusinya, fratris Romei de Corbera, Beringarii Carroç, Bernardi de Cintillis, Petri de Cintillis et Francisci de Bellvis, Gondisalvi de Morroy, Iohannis de Bardaxino, Manuelis Didaci, Ugueti de Muro, Salinis d'Istria, Iohannis Pardo de la Casta, Andree Aguilo, Bernardi de Corbaria, Ludovici Carbonell, Bernardi de Villagut, Iohannis de Valterra, Iohannis Martini Dezlava, Gutierrez de Nava, Petri de Ledesma et Ferdinandi Dalmaciu, Bernardi za Fortesa, Gabrielis Sanchii Delmo, fratris Beringarii Domenge et Dalmacii ça Cirera patronorum predictorum qui predictam laudamus, concedimus et formamus.

Testes sunt qui ad predictam presentes fuerunt distincti Dominicus Daziron de scribania domini regis ac Petrus Montlober notarius.

Signum mei Francisci d'Arimyo secretarii domini regis, notarii puplici per totam ipsius dominationem et terram, qui predictis interfui eaque scribi feci et clausi absque firma tamen Audeti de Sinya, Beringarii Caroç, Bernardi de Corbaria, Bernardi de Villagut, Petri de Ledesma, Ferdinandi Dalmacii, Sanchii Delmo, fratris Berengarii Demonge et Dalmacii za Zirera predictorum qui abstentes erant, ideo in eorum signo presenti non fuerunt apposita; corrigitur autem in XXIIII^a linea nostrum omnium etc.

2

2 June 1420, Majorca

The terms of the agreement between King Alfonso V of Aragon and the *patrons* of the galleys and *galeotte* serving in his royal fleet, to whom control of the island's ports and grains' export facilities (*caricatori*) are granted, so they may be compensated for their support with a sum of one thousand florins per month for each vessel. For the *patrons'* greater security, they are also granted control over the castles located in the areas where the ports and grains' export facilities are located, as well as the authority to dismiss and appoint the personnel of all these structures.

ASPa, *Protonotaro del regno*, reg. 21, fols. 205r-206v. Authentic copy produced at the same time of the original document, in good condition (another copy is recorded in ACA, *Real Cancillería*, reg. 2571, fols. 87r-88r). In the right margin of the first folio an annotation shows the recipient of the document: «pro nobili Raymundo Xacmar et Nicolao Iuffrè militibus procuratoribus patro-

norum galearum armate domini regis». The record is preceded by a text showing the viceregal order for transcription of the mandate: «XXIII^e die mensis iunii XIII^e indicionis apud Thermas ad mandatum dominorum viceregum recepte sunt et in hoc registro redacte infrascripte lictere serenissimi domini domini nostri regis Alfonsi, videlicet».

N'Alfonso per la gracia de Deu rey d'Aragó, de Sicília, de València, de Mallorques, de Cerdanya e de Còrsega, comte de Barchinona, duch d'Athenes e de Neopatria et encara comte de Rosselló et de Cerdanya. Als nobles e amats consellers en visoreis nostres en lo regne de Sicília e a tots e sengles oficials e sotmeses nostres constituïts en lo dit regne e que ara són e per temps seran, salut e dilecció. Significam vos que en dies passats per tuició e segurtat dels patrons de les galeres e de certs galiotes armades per nostre servir, zo és per paga a aquels faedora del sou a ells pertanyent, entra Nos de una part et los dits patrons de la altra foren concordats e firmats certes capitols e entre l'altres los que-s seguxen.

Et per mayor contentació e segurtat de les dits patrons per lo sou pertenyent a aquells del temps que serviran lo dit senyor ab lures galeres de mitant marc o del dit mes de marc en avant en cas que lo dit senyor volgués allongar sa partida per tot lo dit mes en la forma dessús ditta, lo dit senyor en pignora e per títol de pinyora met entre mans als dits patrons tots los ports e trettes del regne de Sicília, los fruyts, pecúnies e comoditats de aquella e de aquelles generalment o particular segons los dits patrons eligiran tro a tants temps e fins que de les pecúnies de les dites trettes los dits patrons sien pagats de ço que lles serrà degut per causa del dit sou.

Et per segurtat e tuició de aquells, per zo que non maior favor puxen haver les comoditats, fruyts e drets de les dites trettes e pagat se de aquelles del sou que debut los serrà, a rahó de mil florins d'or d'Aragó lo mes per galera, lo dit senyor metrà e de fet met en mans e poder dels dits patrons e comana a aquells o a qu-els voran les castellanies de les villes e lochs on les trettes demunt dits serran ab tants companys e guards e ab tants salaris e sou com vui se costuma de donar en pagar, zo és, de la secrecies de les dites villes e lochs segons és acostumat.

E vol lo dit senyor que durant lo dits temps, zo és, tots fins a tant que sian contentats e pagats, los dits patrons que puxan metre e meter posan en constituesquen en les dites villes e lochs e ports tots e sengles oficials, axí com capitans, catapans, iurats, secrets, visportulans e altres oficials e pusquen remover e distrahir aquells e metre'n altres tantes vegades com bon vist los serrà e de aquells pendre sacrament e homayge e tots altres segurtats que sien necessàries a tot profit e segurtat dels dits patrons segons a ells o aquel o aquells ho comaneran ben vist serrà.

En axí que tots aquells dits castellans o oficials, axí de les dites villes e lochs com de los ports, tenguen e regesquen los dits officis per los dits patrons fin que sien pagats íntegrament e complida de zo que-l serrà degut de sou per lo servey que fet hauran ab les dites galeres.

És com per entès que en les ciutats de Palerm, de Mecina e de Çaragosa e de Cathania, los dits patrons puxen metre e constituir oficials tan solament en los ports e als cuntes de les trettes d'aquells e no altres en ninguna manera, e que los capitànies castellanies e altres oficials e regiment de les dites ciutats remanguen en libera dispocició del dit senyor.

És mes convengut e concordat que lo dit senyor per lo dit temps de le dit sis mesos sie tengut fer los comptes a la dita rahó de mil florins d'or d'Aragó lo mes per galea, pagats e assegurats en la forma dassús dita e en la paga del dit sou, volem e és convengut que lo florí de Florència sia pres a for de dotze carlins segons corriblement val per lo regne e lo florí d'Aragó a for de nou carlins.

Ítem més, avant és concordat que lo dit senyor fatza prestar e iurar sacrament e homanatge als visreis que de present són en lo dit regne de Sicília o d'ací avant serran e a altres oficials segons als dits patrons अपarrà que non contravendran en alguna manera directament o indirecta als pactes o condicions damunt dits e expressats, ne a als presents capitols, ne coses en aquells contengudes, ans de lur poder doneran tot efforç que aquells sian meses en execució e exseguits e complits segons sa sèrie e tenor.

Et si lo dit iurament excuseran fer, que de continent e de fet lo dit senyor ara per lavors e lavors per ara los haia e ha per privats e remots e les priva, remou e revoca. E a zò sia entès en tots al-

tres visreys e officials que lo dit senyor hi volgués mudar fins los dits patrons plenariament sian satisfets e contentats de lur sou que degut los serrà per tot lo dit temps.

Més avant, lo dit senyor promet que de continent e de fet donerà e dona poder bastant a a-quells persona o persones que los dits patrons eligiran e farrà commissió basstant e aquells els donerà tots provisiones necessàries per prendre e liurar la possessió dels castells e ports e tretes e regiment de les villes e lochs de aquells en la forma dessus dita en lo dit regne de Sicília e a noms dels patrons e que egles volran e ordenaran a missions e salaries del dit senyor.

E com nos ayam a cor d'atendre e complir zò a que sien tenguts segons series dels primers capitols a vós e a cascun de vós dehim e manam de certa sciència e expressament sots pena de deu milia florins e incorriment de nostra ira e indignació que los dits capitols e cascú de aquells e les coses en aquelles contengudes tengats, exeguescats e servets segons sèrie e tenor de aquells e als procurador o procuradors dels dits patrons liurets la vacua et expedita possessió del dits castels, ports e trettes e altres coses dassús recitades, tota dilació, excusació e consultació remogudes, car vos deliberatament volem que axi-s faza, tollent vos tot poder de fer lo contrari.

Dada en Mallorques sots nostre sigil comú dels negocis de Sicília a dos dies de juny en l'an de la nativitat de nostro senyor Mil quatricent vint. Rex Alfonsus. Registrata.

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