



**The Efficiency of the Emirate of Granada's
Resistance During the Granada War from 1482
to 1492**

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Abstract:

In 1481, the Banū Naṣr (Naṣrid) dynasty of Granada (1232–1492) was aware that the Catholic queen and king, Isabella I of Castile (1474–1504) and Ferdinand II of Aragon (1479–1516), intended to conquer the Emirate of Granada in the summer of 1482. Consequently, the Banū Naṣr waged war against the king and queen in 1482. This eventually resulted in the fall of the Emirate of Granada, the last Iberian Islamic state in the southern Iberian Peninsula, in 1492. This research examines the Emirate of Granada's efficiency and military abilities during the war, as well as the efficiency of the military leadership of the Emir of Granada during that time. Scholars and historians have paid little attention to the Emirate of Granada's military abilities during the war due to their concentration on the political reactions of the Islamic states with greater religious and military prestige, such as the Ottomans and the Mamlūks. Furthermore, they have not clarified the factors that led to the steadfastness of the Granadan military forces against the military forces of Castile and Aragon that were receiving military support from several Western European states.

keywords: Castile, Aragon, Granada, sieges, campaigns, battles

فاعلية مقاومة إمارة غرناطة خلال حرب غرناطة من ١٤٨٢ إلى ١٤٩٢

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ملخص الدراسة:

في عام ١٤٨١، كان بنو نصر السلالة الحاكمة في غرناطة (١٢٣٢-١٤٩٢) على علم بنوايا إيزابيلا الأولى ملكة قشتالة (١٤٧٤-١٥٠٤)، وفرديناند الثاني ملك أراغون (١٤٧٩-١٥١٦) العازمة على احتلال إمارة غرناطة في صيف ١٤٨٢، لذلك أعلن بنو نصر الحرب على الملك والمملكة. وبدأت هذه الحرب عام ١٤٨٢، وأسفرت في النهاية عن سقوط آخر الدول الإسلامية في شبه الجزيرة الإيبيرية (الاندلس)، ألا وهي إمارة غرناطة، الواقعة في جنوب شبه الجزيرة الإيبيرية، في عام ١٤٩٢. يناقش هذا البحث كفاءة القدرات العسكرية لإمارة غرناطة خلال حرب غرناطة. كما يحلل كفاءة القيادة العسكرية لأُمير غرناطة أثناء الحرب. لم يركز المؤرخون والباحثون على القدرات العسكرية لإمارة غرناطة خلال الحرب المذكورة أعلاه؛ بسبب تركيزهم على ردود الفعل السياسية للدول الإسلامية خلال الحرب خاصتها الدول التي تتمتع بمكانة دينية وعسكرية أكبر، مثل: السلطنة المملوكية والدولة العثمانية. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك لم يوضحوا العوامل التي أدت إلى صمود القوات العسكرية في غرناطة ضد القوات العسكرية لقشتالة وأراغون، التي تلقت دعمًا عسكريًا من عدة دول في أوروبا الغربية. وعلاوة على ذلك لم تحظ التطورات العسكرية والسياسية في إمارة غرناطة خلال الحرب باهتمام من قبل الباحثين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قشتالة، أراغون، غرناطة، حصار، معارك، حملات

Introduction

Isabella I and Ferdinand II were married in 1469 in the Palacio de los Vivero in the city of Valladolid in the Crown of Castile.¹ Shortly thereafter, they proclaimed a joint project to end Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula through the conquest of the Emirate of Granada. In 1469, Ferdinand II stated that he was 'bound to fight against the Muslims of the Emirate of Granada, [the] enemies of the holy Catholic faith'.² The mission was reinforced when Isabella I and Ferdinand II ascended to the respective thrones of Castile and Aragon. They restated their intention to conquer the Emirate of Granada and claimed that it was necessary to end the Nasrid dynasty for the security of their realm and for the Christian faith.³ They believed they were servants of God.⁴ Nonetheless, the Catholic king and queen did not begin the war until Zahara de la Sierra, a town in the south-western of the Crown of Castile that was located near the Emirate of Granada, was captured by the Granadan forces in December 1481. In February 1482, the Duke of Cadiz, Rodrigo Ponce de Leon (d. 1492), captured the town of Alhama located 50 km from the city of Granada, the capital of the emirate.⁵

This palace had been built by the Castilian politician Alonso Perez de Vivero (d. ¹ 1453) during the first half of the 15th century. Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez. *El itinerario de la corte de Juan II de Castilla (1418-1454)* (Madrid: Silex, 2007) 219.

"El matrimonio de Fernando II e Isabel I en 1469," in *Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1821), 6:581. I translated this statement from Spanish.

Fernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo ³ (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1943), 2:3.

Amira K. Bennison, "Liminal States: Morocco and the Iberian Frontier between ⁴ the Twelfth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of North African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2001): 20.

Washington Irving, *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*, 2 vols, (New York: ⁵ G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), 2, 430.

Literature Review

Historians and scholars have discussed a number of the aspects and outcomes of the Granada War, including the weapons used against the emirate, the reactions of the Christian and Muslim states to the war – notably the Ottomans and the Mamlūks – and the persecution of Moriscos and Jews after the war. The American military historian Prisco Hernandez provides military insight into the weapons used by the Castilian and Aragonese forces during the Granada War. In his article *The Operational Use of Artillery in the War of Granada 1482–1492*, he discusses how and why the Castilian and Aragonese forces used artillery at the operational level.¹ In his book *The Last Crusade in the West: Castile and the Conquest of Granada*, O’Callaghan details the Castilian campaigns during the 15th century, including the campaigns of the Granada War. He improves on Hernandez’s description of the weapons used by the Castilian and Aragonese forces during the Granada War.² In addition, he describes the financial assistance supplied by the Catholic popes for the Castilian military movements against the Naşrid dynasty of Granada, from the papacy of Eugene IV (1431–1447) to that of Innocent VIII (1484–1492). Spanish historian Raúl González Arévalo focuses on the standpoint of foreign Christian communities in the Iberian Peninsula during the Granada War. In his article *Exilio, diversificación y superación. Estrategias de supervivencia de los Spinola de Granada ante la guerra final de conquista (1481–1492)*, Arévalo presents the situation of the Spinola family from Genoa.³ The Tunisian historian ‘Abd al-Jalīl al-Tamīmī has written many

Prisco Reis Hernandez, “The Operational Use of Artillery in the War of Granada 1482–1492,” *Field Artillery Journal* 4 (1999): 14–17.

Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *The Last Crusade in the West: Castile and the Conquest of Granada* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

Raúl González Arévalo, “Exilio, diversificación y superación. Estrategias de supervivencia de los Spinola de Granada ante la guerra final de conquista (1481–1492),” *Reti Medievali Rivista* 15, no. 2 (2013): 89–110.

books about the Ottoman Empire. One of his books focuses on the Ottoman Empire's responses to the Granada War and the persecution of the Moriscos up until their final expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in 1614. In his book *Al-Dawlah al-'Uthmānīyah wa al-qaḍīyah al-Mūriskīyah*, al-Tamīmī summarises the reaction of Bāyazīd II to the Granada War, claiming that the sultan made Istanbul a refuge for the Iberian Jewish and Muslim refugees beginning in 1490.¹ In her book *Convertir les musulmans: Espagne, 1491–1609*, French historian Isabelle Poutrin examines the forced conversion of the Granadan, Castilian and Aragonese Moriscos in the first three decades of the 16th century, and then their final expulsion between 1609 and 1614.²

The Granada War

The Granada War comprised several military campaigns mounted during the spring and summer months; the combatants returned home for the winter months each year. The war can be divided into three stages. It began with traditional-style warfare (1482–83) that was characterised by static urban defence and horse-borne battles, as the forces of Castile and Aragon did not have sufficient artillery at that time. Consequently, the Naṣrid dynasty of Granada was able to counter some of the military operations of the Castilian and Aragonese troops. During this stage of the conflict, in July 1482 a civil war broke out among the members of the Naṣrid dynasty. Consequently, the twenty-first Naṣrid emir of Granada, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī (1464–1482/1483–85), appealed to the Kingdom of Fez for reinforcements in August 1482.

¹ Abd al-Jalīl al-Tamīmī, *Al-Dawlah al-'Uthmānīyah wa al-qaḍīyah al-Mūriskīyah* (The Ottoman States and the Issue of the Moriscos) (Zaghwān: Centre d'Études et de Recherches Ottomanes, Morisques, de Documentation et d'Information, 1989).

Isabelle Poutrin, *Convertir les musulmans: Espagne, 1491–1609* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2012).

The second and more prolonged stage of the war (1484–89) consisted of annual siege campaigns that culminated in the exhaustive siege of Baza. This stage witnessed political interventions by two North African countries: the Kingdom of Tlemcen and the Kingdom of Fez. Additionally, many Berber volunteers – mostly from the Kingdom of Fez – went to the Emirate of Granada to fight against the military might of the Catholic forces. The Catholic forces had about 180 medium and large artillery pieces.¹

The final stage of the war (1490–92) began when Ferdinand II shifted from periodic assaults on all cities and towns of the Emirate of Granada to a strategy of encirclement and starvation. The final untouched city of the Emirate of Granada, its capital city of Granada, was targeted. This strategy forced the capitulation of Granada. The last emir of the emirate, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad XII (known to the Iberian Christians as Boabdil) (1482–83/1487–1492) signed the Treaty of Granada on November 25, 1491. The political authorities of certain North African countries did not intervene in this final stage, as they believed that the fall of the Emirate of Granada to the United Crown of Castile and Aragon was inevitable.

One of the reasons for the length of the Granada War was that Ferdinand sought to recover the border villages of Rousillon and Cerdagne that had been captured by France in 1484. However, Isabella convinced him to defer this concern until after the Granada War was resolved.² Therefore, we can conclude that there was no disagreement between Ferdinand and Isabella regarding the annexation of the territories of the emirate, because Castile was the

Albert D. Mcjoynt, “An Appreciation of the War for Granada (1481–92): A Critical Link in Western Military History”, in *Medieval Warfare in Societies around the Mediterranean* (Brill, 2003), 240.

Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo, 2:113.²

dominant partner; it annexed all territories of the emirate after the victory of the war.¹ In addition, before the Granada war, Castile captured many territories of the emirate, such as Gibraltar (Jabal Ṭāriq) in 1462. Gibraltar represented a link between the Iberian Peninsula and the Muslims of the northern cities of North Africa, particularly the Kingdom of Fez more than the Kingdom of Tlemcen. The Castilians also captured Archidona (Arshidūnah), which was located a few miles west of the city of Granada and considered a formidable bastion, in 1462.

Another reason for the length of the Granada War was the flourishing of religious knowledge among the inhabitants of Granada. It created community awareness that had contributed to dealing with the Castilian-Aragonese invasion of Granada. One example could be mentioned to support this view is the following within the Granada War, the Mālikī jurists of Granada, Ibn al-Azraq (d.1492) and Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Mawwāq (d. 1492), had declared Boabdil guilty of rebellion against God and Muḥammad due to his alliance with the Christians during his conflict with his father, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī at the beginning of the war.²

The First Stage of the Granada War from 1482 to 1483

Before the outbreak of the Granada War, the papacy had incurred many debts through the defence of Rhodes Island in Mediterranean and the recapture of the Italian city Otranto from the Ottomans in 1480 and 1481, respectively.³ Nonetheless, Pope Sixtus IV is said to have claimed that ‘the military operations against the Emirate of

Matthew Restall and Kris Lane, *Latin America in Colonial Times* (Cambridge: ¹ Cambridge University Press, 2011), 23.

Fernando de la Granja, “Condena de Boabdil por los alfaquies de Granada,” *Al-Andalus* 36 (1971): 145-155.

Pope Sixtus IV, “Pope Sixtus IV grants the cruzada to Ferdinand and Isabella ³ for the war against Granada, 10 August 1482,” in *Documents on the Later Crusades, 1274–1580*, ed. Norman Housley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 162–163.

Granada were a great exaltation of the Catholic faith'.¹ Pope Sixtus IV was aware that Isabella I and Ferdinand II had insufficient resources for the war against the infidels.² Consequently, the papacy supported the Catholic king and queen with crusading indulgences for those Western European and Iberian Christians who opted to fight or provide financial aid. Sixtus IV ordered 'all Christ's faithful, particularly those in the Iberian Peninsula, that they mightily and without ceasing assist, with their goods or in person according to their ability, the king and queen in defeating the Naṣrid dynasty, conquering the Emirate of Granada'.³ The religious aim of Sixtus IV was the 'salvation of the souls of barbarian peoples and their conversion to the faith'.⁴ This perspective has been brought forward into contemporary Spanish historiography.

At the beginning of the war, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī, had the power to face the campaigns and sieges of the Castilian and Aragonese forces. More than any of his predecessors in the Naṣrid dynasty, he had a large number of troops and other reinforcements, particularly in the form of artillery and cannons.⁵ Granada's rulers had hosted people of diverse origins, including Catalan, Genoese and Jewish, so the arms industry had developed in Granada.⁶ In addition, the industry development in the emirate was due to the abundance of raw materials in its lands, such as iron, lead, mercury, gold, and silver. Consequently, the Granadans constructed the impregnable castles and manufactured ammunition for the artillery.⁷ The emirate had

Ibid., 157.¹

Ibid.²

Ibid.³

Ibid., 156.⁴

Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo, 2:3–5.⁵

Ibid.⁶

Ibid.⁷

been steadfastness during the war, but the Banū Naṣr (Naṣrid) used their weapons, including mangonel against each other.¹

The emir ruled a state of approximately half a million people.² In addition, agriculture flourished in many cities and villages of the Emirate of Granada; it included wheat, barley, millet, oranges, apples and figs.³ This agricultural production provided food during the war. There were several factors for the flourishing of agriculture in the cities of the emirate, including, the weather of Granada, elaborate irrigation methods, and the experience of Granadan peasants.⁴

Many Iberian Muslims joined the emir's forces in April 1482 and brought supplies with them, particularly food; he thus had sufficient forces. 'His forces were equipped with horses, polished steel armour, exquisite silken robes, swords, spears, and shields embossed with gold, and silver.'⁵ On the other hand, the United Crown of Castile and Aragon's forces had insufficient amounts of artillery and did not use artillery effectively during the first stage of the war.⁶ Therefore, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī did not need assistance from the Islamic world (in particular, from the Muslim kingdoms and the sultanate of North Africa).

During the first stage of the war, 'Alī al-'Aṭṭār (d. 1483), the Granadan leader of the garrison in Loja located midway between Antequera and the city of Granada, was reinforced with three

O'Callaghan, *The Last Crusade in the West: Castile and the Conquest of*
Granada, 5

Henry Kamen, *Spain, 1469–1714: A Society of Conflict*, 4th edition (Abingdon: 2
Routledge, 2014), 14.

O'Callaghan, *The Last Crusade in the West: Castile and the Conquest of*
Granada, 5
Ibid.⁴

Aḥmad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥu al-ṭib min al-Ghuṣn-al- Andalusī al-Raḥīb*, ed. Iḥsān⁵
'Abbās (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 4:511.

Andrés Bernáldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Manuel⁶
Gómez Moreno and Juan de Mata Carriazo (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia,
1962), 123–125.

thousand troops. In July 1482, he defeated the Castilian and Aragonese siege of Loja, which included four thousand horses and twelve-thousand-foot soldiers.¹ The inhabitants of the Emirate of Granada likely became more confident and believed that they did not need assistance from North Africa. In addition, the attack probably raised the call for jihad, in the spirit of the Andalusian poets.²

Following the failed siege of Loja, the Iberian Peninsula experienced two battles in 1483 that were part of the Granada War. These battles demonstrated the temporary equality of power between the Castilian and Aragonese forces and the forces of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī and his brother, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Zaghal (d. 1494) in Malaga. On 20 March 1483, the Duke of Cadiz, Rodrigo Ponce de Leon (d. 1492) led the Castilian forces comprising three thousand knights and one thousand infantrymen to face Muslim forces commanded by al-Zaghal in Ajarquía (al-Sharqīyah), an area between Velez Malaga and Malaga.³ In this battle, al-Zaghal led the Granadan Muslims to capture approximately two thousand Castilian soldiers.⁴ After the battle, many of the Castilians made their way through dangerous passes with little sustenance.⁵ Therefore, we can theorise that al-Zaghal’s victory caused the Islamic states to believe that the Emirate of Granada did not need reinforcements and intervention during the war.

William H. Prescott, *The Art of War in Spain: The Conquest of Granada, 1481–1492*, ed. Albert D. McJoynt (London: Greenhill Books, 1995), 150–154.

Sami A. Hanna, “An Anonymous Andalusian Elegy on the War of Granada,” *Asian and African Studies* 9, no. 1 (2000): 51.

“Relación circunstanciada de lo acaecido en la prisión del Rey Chico de Granada, año de 1483,” in Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara, *Relaciones de algunos sucesos de los últimos tiempos del reino de Granada* (Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, 1868), 49.

Joaquín Durán y Lerchundi, *La Toma de Granada y caballeros que concurrieron a ella* (Madrid: los Huérfanos, 1893), 1:269–270. Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, 2:61–69.⁵

Several times during the first stage of the war, the Emirate of Granada under Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī also attempted to regain the town of Alḥama that had been captured by the Catholic forces in February 1482; Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī mustered between three and four thousand cavalymen to lead a three-week siege that began on 5 March 1482 to try to recapture the town from de Leon.¹ Although the Granadan besiegers blocked the water supply to the town, they were unable to recapture Alḥama because of the Castilians’ fortifications. The Naṣrid emir led another unsuccessful siege, beginning on 14 April 1482. Ferdinand II needed to raise reinforcements to protect the captured towns such as Alhama from further attacks. Consequently, internal reinforcements such as horses and foot soldiers were sent from Seville. External soldiers were also sent from Western Europe, such as Swiss mercenaries and a few German knights of the Order of the Trinity that was founded in 1198.²

A social factor greatly affected the emirate’s offensive ability during the first stage of the war. In short, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī did not comprehend the danger posed by a quarrel among his family members in the summer of 1482. This quarrel, more than the military movements of the Catholic forces, obliged him to appeal to the Kingdom of Fez for reinforcements. The family quarrel had erupted due to the jealousy of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī’s wife, ‘Ā’ishah (d. unknown), towards the Christian slave Isabel de Solis (d. 1510), who had converted to Islam under the name of Thurayah and who was the preferred second wife of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī.³ Thurayah intended to gain the throne of Granada for one of her sons, Sa‘ad or Naṣir;

Bernáldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 119.¹
 Alfonso de Palencia, *Guerra de Granada*, trans. Antonio Paz y Meliá (Granada: 2
 Universidad de Granada, 1998), 60–62.
 Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ‘Inān, *Dawlat al-Islām fī al-Andalus, al-‘aṣr al-rābi’*.³
niḥāyat al-Andalus wa-tārīkh al-‘arab al-mutanaṣṣirīn, 4th edition (Islamic State
 in the Iberian Peninsula, the Fourth era: the End of al-Andalus and the History of
 Arab Converts) (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Khānījī, 1997), 198.

accordingly, Thurayah pressured her husband to imprison ‘Ā’ishah and her son Boabdil to prevent them from gaining the throne, which Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī did in 1482.¹ ‘Ā’ishah and her son Boabdil then led a bloody coup against Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī on 15 July 1482. Boabdil took command of the city of Granada with the assistance of the Abencerrages, a noble Granadan Muslim family (Banū Sirāj). Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī fled to his brother al-Zaghal, the ruler of Malaga, and then he appealed for reinforcements to aid the defence against both his rebellious son and the movements of the Catholic forces. While the Kingdom of Fez was the closest North African state to the Emirate of Granada, its political authorities only responded once during the Granada War. In 1482, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī and his followers appealed to the Wattāsid sultan of Fez, Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Wattāsī (1471–1504), for reinforcements to aid the Granadan defence against the Catholic forces and Boabdil’s rebellion. Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī was particularly able to appeal to the Kingdom of Fez during the Castilian siege on the emirate’s coasts because he was in Malaga, a coastal city directly opposite the northern territories of the Kingdom of Fez. The Wattāsid sultan sent reinforcements to Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī on ships, but the Castilian fleets intercepted them.² The reinforcements were food and traditional weapons, such as spears and swords, from the coastal city of Badis rather than the port of Melilla in the northeast area of the Kingdom of Fez.³ Badis was far away from the Portuguese colonies in the northern cities of the Kingdom of Fez such as Ceuta, and most of its inhabitants were fishermen who could infiltrate the Iberian coasts.⁴

Ibid., 200. After the Granada War, Thurayah and her sons, Sa‘ad or Naṣir¹ converted to Catholicism and lived in Cordoba. ‘Inān, *Dawlat al-Islām fī al-Andalus, al-‘aṣr al-rābi‘*, , 200.

Palencia, *Guerra de Granada*, 48–49.²

Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Wazān, *Wasf Ifriqiya*, trans. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamīdah³ (Riyādh: Jāmi‘at Imām Muḥammad b. Sa‘ūd, 1979), 327–329.

Ibid.⁴

Moreover, the port of Melilla (Malilah) was not suitable for sending reinforcements to the Emirate of Granada. This port was the subject of regular disputes between the Kingdoms of Fez and Tlemcen in the 15th century due to its proximity to the frontier of the latter.¹

For two pragmatic reasons, the Kingdom of Fez did not try to send any more reinforcements to the Emirate of Granada after this failed attempt. First, there was the contract of marriage between the United Crown of Castile and Aragon and the Kingdom of Portugal; the eldest daughter of Ferdinand II and Isabella I, Isabella of Aragon (d. 1498), was betrothed to Afonso of Portugal (d. 1491), son of John II of Portugal (1481–1495) and grandson of Afonso V of Portugal (1477–1481).² As a result, Isabella of Aragon spent three years (1481–84) in the town of Moura in the south-east of Portugal with her future husband, who was six years old at the time.³

Through this relationship, Isabella I and Ferdinand II likely encouraged the Portuguese colonisation of the Kingdom of Fez's northern territories in support of the Granada War. It is probable that the king and queen asked the Portuguese garrisons in the Kingdom of Fez to intensify their efforts in order to prevent any potential coalition from forming between the Naṣrids in Malaga and the Wattāsids in the coastal cities that were not under Portuguese control. Moreover, the captains of the Castilian naval forces launched several attacks on the coasts of the Kingdom of Fez in 1483 and 1484.⁴ Gibraltar's strategic location also enabled them to

Rafaela Castrillo Márquez, "Melilla bajo los Medina Sidonia, a través de la ¹ documentación existente en la Biblioteca Real de Madrid," *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 11, (2000): 172.

"The Text of the Treaty of Alcáçovas in 1479," in *European Treaties Bearing ² on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648*, ed. Frances Gardiner Davenport (New Jersey: The Law Book Exchange, 2004), 33–48.

Ana Rodrigues Oliveira, *Rainhas medievais de Portugal. Dezassete mulheres, ³ duas dinastias, quatro séculos de História* (in Portuguese) (Lisbon: A esfera dos livros, 2010), 528, 534.

Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, 2: 145–146.⁴

monitor the movements and connections between Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī and his brother al-Zaghal in Malaga and the Waṭṭāsīd sultan in Fez. Before the end of the first stage of the Granada War, Isabella I and Ferdinand II caused the conflict among the Naṣrīds for the throne of Granada to be endless. Boabdil had been captured in the Battle of Lucena in April 1483 between the Castilian-Aragonese forces and the Granadan forces under the leadership of Boabdil; the Catholic king and queen exploited his desire to be the emir of Granada by releasing him in July 1483.¹

Two reasons drove Boabdil’s release. Firstly, Ferdinand II stated that ‘the release of Boabdil would foment division and warfare again among the Naṣrīds and their followers, and this would bring the Emirate of Granada to perdition’.² Secondly, the Crown of Castile and Aragon likely wanted to draw the attention of the Islamic world in North Africa away from the movements of the Castilian and Aragonese forces against the Emirate of Granada by drawing attention to the quarrel between Boabdil and his father.

The Second Stage of the Granada War from 1484 to 1489

During the second stage of the war (1484–89), the forces of Castile and Aragon were able to direct almost two hundred pieces of artillery against the Emirate of Granada’s towns and cities. This artillery was one of the reasons why many strongholds of the emirate fell to Castile and Aragon from 1484 to 1489.³ Nonetheless, the Castilian and Aragonese forces faced some difficulties when using artillery to

Luis Seco de Lucena Paredes, “The Book of the Alhambra: A History of the ¹ of Sultans

Granada,” (Leon: Editorial Everest, 1990), 60.

Antonio de la Torre, “La carta de Fernando II a su hermana Juana de Aragón,” ² reina de Nápoles, en agosto de 1483,” in *Documentos sobre relaciones internacionales de los Reyes Católicos*, (Barcelona: CSIC, 1951), 1:333–335.

Geoffrey Parker, “The ‘Military Revolution’ 1560–1660 – A Myth?” *Journal of* ³ *Modern History* 48, no.2 (1976): 203.

besiege certain towns and cities, such as Baza, where heavy surrounding vegetation prevented the forces from using the artillery to bombard the city's walls in 1489.¹ Furthermore, Malaga's geographical location presented difficulties because it was surrounded by mountains, meaning that the Catholic forces had to transport artillery by ship during their siege of the city. The Malagans were more secure than other cities because the city walls were strong, with over one hundred towers. The forces of Castile and Aragon therefore depended on the traditional style of siege in Malaga. For example, scaling ladders and wooden towers were built that would hold one hundred men, and leather mantles were used to protect soldiers assigned to undermine the city walls.² In addition, in the first year of this stage, the Muslims of the emirate did not need to appeal to North Africa because they had the support of Genoese merchants. Members of the Spinola family from Genoa, who were residents in the emirate, traded with its Muslims and provided them with food and some traditional weapons from their stores in early 1485. However, the Castilian forces then compelled the family to go to Cordoba to work with the Castilian authorities.³

During this stage, the military authorities of the Emirate of Granada were not well organised in 1484, which helped the Catholic forces to easily capture some towns of the emirate. One example in support of this view occurred when the Granadan Muslim fighters thought that the forces of Castile and Aragon would focus on Loja. The Muslim forces thus concentrated their efforts on Loja rather than on Alora, a gateway to Malaga, which was captured by the Catholic

Francisco García Fitz and João Gouveia Monteiro, *War in the Iberian Peninsula, 700–1600* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 186.

Palencia, *Guerra de Granada*, 203–205.²

Raúl González Arévalo, "Exilio, diversificación y superación. Estrategias de supervivencia de los Spinola de Granada ante la guerra final de conquista (1481–1492)," 109.

forces in June 1484.¹ This confusion arose due to the intensification of the conflict between Boabdil and his father and uncle from June 1484 to February 1485. In February 1485, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ordered the intensification of efforts to suppress his rebellious son in Almeria through his brother, al-Zaghal, rather than combatting the military movements of the enemy forces. Al-Zaghal seized Almeria, which was a centre for the rebellion of Boabdil and his brother, Abū al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf. Al-Zaghal killed Abū al-Ḥajjāj while Boabdil took refuge with the king and queen in Cordoba.²

In July 1485, al-Zaghal became Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī’s successor after his death. Al-Zaghal contacted polities in North Africa, beginning with Fez; he requested assistance from the Waṭṭāsid sultan in August 1485. The latter did not respond to al-Zaghal’s appeal because he was negotiating with the Catholic king and queen. The sultan of Fez sent ambassadors to Seville in 1485 who presented gifts to Isabella I and Ferdinand II with an appeal for them to prevent attacks on the inhabitants of Fez that were being generated by Castilian ships in the Alboran Sea (the western part of the Mediterranean Sea).³ Ferdinand II and Isabella I agreed to do so if the Waṭṭāsid sultan would agree to stop shipping reinforcements to the Emirate of Granada.

Following the Waṭṭāsid sultan’s rejection of al-Zaghal’s appeal in August 1485, hundreds of Muslim Berber volunteers known as Ghumārah invaded the Iberian Peninsula to join al-Zaghal’s forces.⁴ These volunteers belonged to the Maṣmūdah confederacy, whose territories extended from Tangier to inside the northern frontiers of the Kingdom of Tlemcen; a few of them lived within the Kingdom

Juan Luis Carriazo Rubio, *Historia de los hechos del marqués de Cádiz*¹ (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2004), 237.

Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católico*, 2: 135–139.²

José Enrique López de Coca Castañer, “Mamelucos, Otomanos y caída del reino³ de Granada,” *En la España Medieval* 28 (2005): 231.

Mu‘ādh al-Bakrī, *Qabā’l Ghumārah qirā’ah fī al-majāl wa al-turāth* (Ghumārah⁴ Tribe: Reading in the Field and Heritage) (London: E-Kutub Ltd, 2017), 45.

of Tlemcen. The authorities of Fez and Tlemcen could not prevent them from entering the Iberian Peninsula.¹

Al-Zaghal left Granada in August 1485 in the company of those volunteers to inspect his dominions and to fortify the village of Moclin in the north of the city of Granada. In September of that year, the volunteers helped al-Zaghal to kill more than one thousand of the Castilian troops who besieged Moclin. According to the anonymous Muslim chronicler of Granada who reported the defence of the village, 'we found the Castilians were killed on our road when we chased them after they were defeated in their siege of Moclin.'² Nonetheless, these volunteers did not prevent the Castilians from capturing the Muslim castles of Cambil and Alhabar in the north of the city of Granada, following a three-day bombardment in September 1485.³ The Catholic king and queen then rescinded the guarantee they had given to the ambassadors of the Waṭṭāsīd sultan in 1485. In June 1486, they ordered five hundred Castilian marines from El Puerto de Santa Maria in Cadiz to raid the coasts of Fez; four hundred Muslim captives were seized.⁴

In the second stage of the war, external military participation and assistance arrived in the Iberian Peninsula to assist the military operations of the Castilian and Aragonese forces. For example, Edward Woodville (d. 1488), an English lord, arrived with three hundred artillerymen and archers; he was injured during the second

Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Castilla y la conquista del reino de Granada*.¹
2nd ed. (Granada: Diputación Provincial, 1987), 41.

Anonymous, *Nubdhat al-‘aṣr fī akhbār mulūk Banī Naṣr; taslīm Gharnāṭah wa nuzūḥ al-Andalusīn ilā al-Maghrib* (An Overview of the Era in News of the Naṣrid Kings; the Capitulation of Granada and the Emigration of Muslims of al-Andalus to al-Maghrib), ed. Al-Farīd al-Bustānī (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīnīyah, 2002), 14–15.

Alphonso de Palencia, *Guerra de Granada*, 143–147.³

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad b. Iyās, *Badā’i‘ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i‘ al-duhūr* (Beautiful Flowers in the Events of Ages), ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (al-Qāhirah: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Aāmah li-Kitāb, 1984), 3, 230.

siege of Loja in 1486. The purpose of his participation in the Granada War was to serve God by waging war against the Muslims of Granada.¹

Additionally, Isabella I and Ferdinand II supported Boabdil with men, arms, money, wheat, horses and gunpowder through the United Crown of Castile and Aragon.² In September 1486, Boabdil entered the Albaicin quarter in the city of Granada and fought his uncle until he gained control of the city of Granada in April 1487. However, this did not block the Ghumārah from fighting with al-Zaghal in defence of Malaga in 1487.

During the siege of Malaga (May–August 1487), some of Malaga's Muslim inhabitants decided to surrender in order to receive safe passage to North Africa or other locations in the Iberian Peninsula. These inhabitants were subsequently killed by the Ghumārah volunteers; this struck terror into the remaining inhabitants, and their fear of the volunteers' reprisals prompted them to fight against the siege.³ It seems likely that the primary aim of these Berber volunteers during the siege of Malaga was either to defeat the Castilian and Aragonese forces or to be killed, thereby earning a direct passage to heaven in accordance with Islamic sources' statements. Specifically, I believe these volunteers wanted to die as martyrs, fighting for their faith, as they knew their abilities were not comparable with those of the forces of Castile and Aragon. In the end, the fighters of the Ghumārah tribe did not significantly change the course of the siege of Malaga. In addition, in July 1487, during the siege of Malaga, the emir of Tlemcen, Abū 'Abd Allāh IV (1468-

José Goñi Gaztambide, "The Holy See and the Reconquest of the Kingdom of ¹ Granada (1479–1492)," in *Spain in the Fifteenth Century 1369–1516: Essays and Extracts by Historians of Spain*, ed. Roger Highfield and trans. Frances M. López Morillas (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 364.

Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥu al-ṭīb min al-Ghuṣn-al-Andalusī al-Raḥīb*, 4:519;²

Anonymous, *Nubdhat al-'aṣr fī akhbār mulūk Banī Naṣr*, 21.

Bernáldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 182–184.³

1504), sent a delegation bearing gifts that included horses and golden harnesses for Ferdinand II and golden rings and perfumes for Isabella I. This delegation was an attempt to persuade them to guarantee the safety of his subjects in Malaga.¹ The Catholic king and queen accepted the gifts because the emir did not send reinforcing troops, weapons or provisions to the Muslim defenders of Malaga. Moreover, Christian merchants from anywhere in Europe enjoyed safety and freedom of movement in the territories of the Kingdom of Tlemcen with no fear of obstacles or danger.² The king and queen were likely ready to accept Abū ‘Abd Allāh IV’s deputation and to resume the diplomatic relations that had stopped after the last decades of the 14th century.

The emir of Tlemcen’s objective in this diplomatic mission was to secure the release of the merchants of Tlemcen who were in Malaga during the siege. Malaga was famous for manufacturing a specific brocade that was a favourite among the emirs of Tlemcen.³ The merchants of Tlemcen worked to supply their state with various goods through their travels throughout Africa and Europe.⁴ Tlemcen’s political authorities were, therefore, obligated to provide safety for their merchants, whether inside or outside the kingdom.

Ferdinand II allowed a few Muslims to safely leave Malaga with their goods, particularly the merchants from Tlemcen. However, one of the Muslim inhabitants of Malaga attempted to assassinate the Catholic king and queen in their camp close to Malaga. His attempt failed because he mistakenly targeted his attack at the tent of Dona

Ibid., 188.¹

Rashīd Būrwybah and others, *Al-Jazā’ir fī al-tārīkh* (Algiers in History) (al-² Jazā’ir: al-Mu’assasah al-Waṭaniyah II-Kitāb, 1984), 3, 479–485.

Aḥmad Mukhtār ‘Abādī, *Mushāhadāt Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb fī bilād al-³ Maghrib wa al-Andalus* (The Observations of Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula) (al-Iskindiriyah: Mu’assasat Shabāb al-Jāmi’ah, 1983), 59–76.

Al-Wazān, *Wasf Ifrīqiya*, 391.⁴

Beatriz de Bobadilla (d. 1511), the confidante of Isabella I.¹ It seems likely that the emir of Tlemcen was chiefly interested in his subjects and had neglected the Muslim inhabitants of Malaga; the perpetrator tried to assassinate Isabella I and Ferdinand II in order to halt the conquest. Henceforth, the king and queen worked to increase their personal security. Following the failed assassination attempt, some of the Muslim inhabitants of Malaga threatened to kill five hundred Christian prisoners – both male and female – who were under their control and then set fire to the city.

However, the defenders of Malaga did not fulfil their threats, as Ferdinand II warned them that ‘if any Christian captive were killed inside Malaga, you would not be left alive in the city’.² As a result of the continuous siege, many people in Malaga, including the Ghumārah volunteers, began to starve. They searched from house to house for food, and many were forced to eat the carcasses of horses and asses.³

After Malaga fell, Isabella I and Ferdinand II sent one hundred captive Ghumārah volunteers as a gift to Pope Innocent VIII (1484–1492) on September 11, 1487.⁴ One of the aims of the Catholic king and queen was likely to send a warning to any North African volunteer who might attempt to support the Granadan Muslim resistance. Additionally, Isabella I and Ferdinand II wanted to inform the pope about their victories in the war by sending the captives.

Many of the Ghumārah volunteers in Fez still intended to fight with al-Zaghal’s forces following the fall of Malaga until the Catholic

Washington Irving, *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1828), 1:134.

Bernáldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 186.²

Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 281.

Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, And the End of Slavery* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 330.

forces captured some of the emirate's coastal towns and cities on the Mediterranean, such as Almeria and Almunecar, in December 1489. Al-Zaghal noted that most of Almeria's inhabitants welcomed the conquering army of Castile and Aragon on December 26, 1489.¹ Consequently, he decided to depart for the Kingdom of Tlemcen in North Africa.

In addition, the position of Venice regarding the Granada War changed after the Catholic forces captured Malaga. At the beginning of the war, the Venetians provided the Granadans with foods and traditional weapons, such as swords, spears and daggers.² We can conclude that the strategic location of the port of Malaga in the Mediterranean caused the Republic of Venice to support the Emirate of Granada at the beginning of the war.

The Final Stage of the Granada War from 1490 to 1492

In the final stage of the war (1490–1492), Boabdil was the emir of the city of Granada, the last remaining stronghold of the emirate and its capital. In 1490, he was strengthened by the support of some of Granada's inhabitants who preferred to wage war rather than surrender to Catholic rule.³ Other inhabitants of Granada did not prefer the rule of Boabdil, but many of them were probably refugees from the cities, towns and villages that fell in the 1480s, such as Loja, Ronda and Marbella. Accordingly, they sought revenge against the Castilian and Aragonese forces. In addition, the remaining Ghumārah fighters who had survived the fall of Malaga captured the town of Adra (ʿAdhrah) on the Mediterranean located close to Almeria, in 1490.⁴ It is likely that they aimed to make Adra an entrance for reinforcements to enable Granada's inhabitants to

Alfonso de Palencia, *Guerra de Granada*, 297–298.¹

William H. Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic*, 3 vols. (Boston: American Stationers Company, 1937), 3, 45.

Anonymous, *Nubdhat al-ʿaṣr fī akhbār mulūk Banī Naṣr*, 29.³

L. P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain 1250 to 1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 308.⁴

maintain control of the city. We can here emphasise that the Ghumārah volunteers were not interested in the civil war between al-Zaghal and Boabdil; instead, these fighters were focused on the jihād so they could be killed as martyrs or protect the Islamic rule.

Boabdil besieged and captured Hamdan, a town around seven miles from the city of Granada; more than one hundred Christian captives were taken in July 1490.¹ It appears that this victory increased enthusiasm for Boabdil and the inhabitants of Granada to carry out other military movements. Therefore, in July 1490, Boabdil and his followers decided to capture the fort of Salobrena and the town of Almunecar on the Mediterranean Sea. The Granadan emir and his forces besieged Salobrena, but could not capture it, as they had heard that Ferdinand II was approaching the city of Granada.² However, the forces of the emir of Granada captured the town of El Padul, midway between the city of Granada and the fort of Salobrena.³

Boabdil's late victories did not improve his situation, as the Catholic king and queen imposed a siege on the city of Granada from April to November 1491. As a result, Granada suffered from starvation, and many nobles, knights, religious men and common inhabitants came to Boabdil's court to inform him of the status of the city's inhabitants. They tried to convince Boabdil to open negotiations in order to avoid repeating the situation that had occurred in Malaga; the Malagans, after all, had faced a harsh fate due to their prolonged resistance to the siege of the forces of Castile and Aragon. In addition, after the Kingdom of Fez had been approached many times, the followers of Boabdil were informed that no assistance would be forthcoming from the kingdom a few months prior to the surrender of the city of Granada.⁴ It seems likely that the presence of al-Zaghal

Ibid., 33; To know more about this town, see Aḥmad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥu al-ṭīb* ¹
min al-Ghuṣn-al-Andalusī+ al-Raṭīb, 4:523.

Anonymous, *Nubdhat al-‘aṣr fī akhbār mulūk Banī Naṣr*, 34.²

Ibid.³

Anonymous, *Nubdhat al-‘aṣr fī akhbār mulūk Banī Naṣr*, 40.⁴

in Tlemcen prevented Boabdil and his followers from appealing to the Zayyānid dynasty of Tlemcen for aid.

Accordingly, Boabdil accepted their advice and said to them, 'Give consideration to what seems best to you'.¹ Nonetheless, certain inhabitants of Granada accused Boabdil and his military leaders and ministers of having already made an agreement with Isabella I and Ferdinand II for the city to surrender. They found that the king and queen had agreed to grant all of Boabdil's requests related to the security, property and religion of the inhabitants of the city of Granada.² Furthermore, the military operations had been suspended on both sides since September 1490. It is possible that some Granadan inhabitants did not want to surrender, but the lack of reinforcements from North Africa and the desire of the authorities of Granada to cease fighting rushed the surrender. A few months after the capture of Granada, Isabella and Ferdinand expelled the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and supported Columbus's voyages to India.³

Conclusion

The lack of interest, the fear of attacks from Castile and Aragon and the belief that the emirate would inevitably be captured were the reasons why the North African reinforcements were not sent to the emirate during the Granada War. Nonetheless, the emirate was able to withstand the assault for a decade due to the capability of its military authorities.

The leadership spirit of Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī and al-Zaghal contributed to the steadfastness of Granada and the prolongation of the war. In addition, the desire of the Muslim inhabitants of the emirate to be

Ibid., 41.¹

Ibid.²

Jean Hippolyte Mariejol. *The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella*. Trans. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 289.³

ruled by the Banū Naṣr and the contributions of the North African volunteers were vital. However, the social factor represented in the conflict between the son, uncle and father weakened the military abilities of the emirate.

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