
500 years ago (1519-2019)
The Spanish Crown failed to Conquer the Maghreb
(Algeria)

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Abstract:

The article deals with the Spanish crown and its effort to conquer the Maghreb in the beginning of the 15th century. With great zeal and a Navel power and fleet, Charles V had determined to take over the major cities of the Maghreb, mainly those located at the coast of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Meanwhile, the presence of the Ottoman Turks in the region had successively prevented the Spanish to take over and to conquer the Maghreb.

Keyword :

Spanish crown; Charles 5; Ottomans-Turks, François I, Italy.

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By the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, the western frontier of the Mediterranean sea had entirely become a zone of conflict and piracy between different racial groups: Aragonese, Italians, Arabs, French and Turks. Although they differed from each other in character and style of government, their aim was the same, i.e. religious, military actions and commerce. The Spanish monarchs and the maghrebian dynasties stood face to face in this zone of conflict; both had been at war for many years and the Iberian peninsula was battle ground of their religious and political differences. From the Maghreb Spain had been conquered, and the Maghreb had served as a political support and a supplier of arms and armies in Spain. Now, the balance of power had entirely shifted to the side of the Aragonese and the Castilians, with their more advanced arms, greater financial support and well organized monarchy. The Christians this time, carried the war to the mainland of their enemy, to North Africa itself. For the maghrebians it was a question of supremacy and how to protect the frontiers which had come under offensive Christian attacks.

The involvement of the Spanish crown in maghreb in the first half of the sixteenth century fall into three stages. The first stage starts, from the catholic queen's death (1504) to the year of 1529, the year on which Charles V had been crowned emperor and took over some italian provinces, the year of the ottoman army advance toward the heart of Europe (Vienna), and the defeat of the spanish garrison in Algiers island (panion). The second stage, went from 1529 to 1535. Over this six years the balance of power in the western frontier of the Mediterranean had shifted to the spanish crown. Yet at the sometime, spanish monarsh lost some of his vital territories

inside his empire mainly to the French monarch (Milan). The third term goes from 1535 to 1557. Over this period, the spanish crown achieved a great success overseas with the submission of the Aztecs and the Incas to the Empire and as a result, the conquest brought great benefit to the crown. In Europe, too the emperor charles V succeeded in eliminating his rivals and built a large empire. However, in his third zone of conflict, (the Western Mediterranean Sea) the emperor failed to conquer the maghreb. His failure here was due to his involvement in many fronts, which placed the internal and external situation of his empire in a very diffecult situation: First in the level of financial support and second in the shortage of arms and a strong fleet. The internal dispute in europe, particulary between the french and the spanish monarchs, helped the Maghrebians and their coreligionist the Ottomans to break down all the spanish plans in the area. Furthermore they carried the war to the coastal line of the Iberia itself.

First stage: 1504-1529:

This period maybe divided into two terms, the first from Isabella's death in 1516, the second went all the way which Charles V reign (1517-56) under the catholic king Ferdinand, the Spanish monarchy reached her highest supremacy not only in europe but as well in the New world. The king established a relatively efficient diplomatic network inside his kingdom and outside it. He used resident secretaries and ambassadors aboard to look after the spanish affairs mainly in Italy and the Indies. Under his government, his minister of

colonial affairs, Juan Rodrigues Defonseca established Castilian laws and institutions in the new territories of the discovery. Many expeditions (1499-1508) from Spain were sent out to explore the northern coast of South America. In 1503, the king established a commercial network in Seville. The *Acasadel Contratacion*—in order to carry on trade between the Indies and Spain, on one hand, and to replace the dominion of private merchants who wanted more share in this trade, on the other hand. Genoa (1488-1514) and the Low Countries were the best example of this commercial competition policy. According to F. Braudel, the historian Carlos Pereyra "pale de folie espagnole apropos des payes- bas qui on tenglouti sinon tout, au moins une large part des trésors d'ameriques" The king's policy toward Flanders was also to be followed by Charles V. Their aims were to exchange or to receive Flemish-made artillery balls and powder. Neither Muslims nor Christians were able to dominate the commerce of the Mediterranean. Its safety depended on the control and protection of merchandise from any surprise pirate attack.

Moreover, the western Mediterranean formed a large market of African gold and became more attractive to the Maghribians and Europe alike.

In 1515, Hassan Muhammad el-Ouzani "Leon African" visited the area and wrote that "*les tissus vénitiens a Tombouctou se vendent a des prix exorbitants, et les nobles sont fortement en bétail auprès des marchands levantins ou mangrébins*".

The Spanish crown's involvement in North Africa was not only inspired by religious but also by military and commerce motives. The Christians' policy toward North Africa remained

largely that of prince Henry the Navigator who had attacked this area in the first half of the fifteenth century. He witnessed the wealth and the importance of the trans-Saharan trade and the role of arabs in it. The Portuguese were the first to turn the attention of the Castilians and the Aragonese to north Africa. That began in 1415 at Ceuta ended with the conquest of Arzila, Alebier, Seghir, and Tangier (1471), after the collapse of Granada in 1492 the Spanish Reconquista did not stop within the Iberia frontier but followed its march to the maghreb itself. The catholic king, presented the attacks on north Africa as a crusade and obtained a brief from popes Alexander IV and Julius II. More important than that, the last pope authorized the continuation of the tax known as the “cruzada” which should be paid for it. As a result of this financial and spiritual support the coastal town of the maghreb (Mellila) was the first victim of this new crusade, and come under the Spanish rules in 1497. From that time onward the Spanish offensive attacks on the maghrib continues. The Spanish expeditions were led and supported by ecclesiastics barons. Thus, Mellila (the eastern coast of Morocco) which was empty of troops fell to the duck of Medina Sidonia, with the support of the crown, and the expedition of Mers-el-kebir (1505) was financed and led by cardinal Cisniros. Soon, Pedro Navarro conquered the Panon de Velez (badis in the eastern coastline of the rif) in 1508, then Oran in 1509. One year later the Spanish army reached Algiers, Bougie, and Tripoli. In the meantime other coastal towns, like Tenes, Dellys, Charchal and Mustaghanem paid them tribute. These rapide Christian attacks and success were due to the weakness of the divided

maghrebian dynasties on one hand and to the presence of highly experienced leaders at the head of these expeditions on the other. For instance, cardinal Cisneros, was the real mastermind of the maghreb occupation and almost all these victories which had been achieved were due to his financial support and to his military leader count Pedro Navarro. As part of this Christian military superiority we may note the role of the general Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordoba (1453-1515)"the great captain" as was called by the king. Who played a great role in the maghrebian conquest as well as defending the spanish power in southern Italy (Naples), yet how far the Spanish crown's involvement in Italy prevented Spain from continuing her triumph over the maghreb.

Historically, Italy had been a zone of conflict between the french and spanish crowns on one side and the papacy and the german empire on the other side. Now, Italy had become more attractive not only to her neighboring christians but as well as to the turks. In Italy new thought, and science had been flourishing and trade shipbuilding had been developed. No doubt Italy had kept for long centuries the spirit of the roman and greek heritages and cultures, now her universities and schools formed the real light of the Renaissance time. In this sense Italy was attractive to the french and spanish monarchs. The clash between Spain and France was in Naples, Genoa and Milano.

Ferdinand fought in Naples in 1505 and reconquered this strategic maritime city from the french who broke the treaty of Granada (1500) and took for the second time over it (1494/1501-02). The king's success in Italy helped him to continue his wars in north africa. Before his death (1516), Milano formed the crucial

of the political differences between both monarchs. Ferdinand also achieved a military success in his conquest of Navarroy. Although Ferdinand had accepted the french reconquest of Milano (1515) it is hardly possible to maintain that, the era of conflict between both kings was definitely over. In the maghrib, the spanish army was defeated only once. In 1511 at Gerba (tunisia). It is doubtful that this defeat of the Spanish naval army in Gerba was largely due to the king wars with the french in Milano, Naples and Navarroy. Through a chain of captured coast line ports (presidios) in the maghreb together with Balearic sand Sicily, Ferdinand virtually dominated the western of the Mediterranean sea.

At the turn of the sixteenth century the maghreb had become a mosaic of independent emirates: the Wattasies in Fez, the Zayanids in Tlemcen and the Hafsids in Tunis. All failed to the Ibn-khaldouns theory which stress that, when group feeling became mixed with political and religious aims Arab and Berber unity would dissolve with in anarchy and disunity. The brilliant history and religious revivalism could transcend the particularisms, not only within north Africa society but also in Al-andalus after, the collapse of Granada and the success of Spanish Reconquista, north Africa was greatly influenced and impressed by the increase of Christian hostility toward the muslims and jews. Two year later (1494), Fernando de Zofra, a Spanish agent who was designated to prepare for the maghrebian expedition had reported that in Morocco the decision had been taken to abandon the coast (Mellila) and in Tlemcen "the whole kingdom is trembling with fear". Another

Spanish agent saw in the occupation of Mellila a strategic position, because the town remained at the end of the caravan routes "with the gold they bring from the Sahara". The disunity of the Maghrebians offered the Christians of the north more chance to take over the Maghreb. One Christian went so far as, to say that "a small fleet and 2000-3000 men could raid as far as Tunis. The inferiority of the muslims arms was also been well known to the Christians. As early 1500, Portuguese frontiersmen reported to Lisbon on the attempt of the muslim ruler of Morocco to buy European - made arms. Hess, point out, that in 1510 the crown learned that Spanish and French marchants had exchanged artillery balls, powder and contraband weapons for the agricultural products of the southern Morocco plains". However, this news about the wickness of their enemy had been very stressed and prepared.

Moreover, this news had come not from a preaching friars but from experienced men and administrators. Indeed, they were not far exaggerated or very remote from reality.

Under these circumstances, the arabs and their coreligionist, the Andalusian emigrants formed along the stone of the maghreb only small bands which depended on few ships and small crews in order to hold back the Christian attacks and if possible reach the Iberian mainland (the easternside-Valencia) in order to transport their relatives families to the maghreb. These small bands had become known later on as pirates or corsairs. They were intolerant toward the Christians whom they saw in their presence in the western Mediterranean as real threat to them. They fought them alone first and afterward they had were supported and helped by the Turkish

garrison which had already broken into the western Mediterranean frontier.

Without doubt, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 bore witness to the effectiveness of a turko-muslim army and also to their weapons and naval superiority. They defeated the Venetian fleet and in 1480 a unit of ottoman army under Gedik Ahmet pacha took over the Italian city of Otranto. This ottoman advance drove both Portugal and catholic Spain to dispatch naval units to assist the Christian counter attack and drove back the turks from Italy. One year later, after Muhammad the conqueror death (1481), the turks gave up their strong foothold on the Italian mainland. On one side, they were under Christians' pressure and on the other, the internal dispute which followed their leader's death persuaded them to evacuate Otranto. During Bayazid II's reign (1481-1512) the ottomans tried even to reach Spain and help the Andalusians to sail to the Maghreb. The ottomans' sailors learned how weak and damaged their Spanish coreligionists had become under the hostility of the catholic king.

Thus, the Maghrebians and Andalusians emigrants saw in the military of the catholic reputation of the turks in the Mediterranean a strong ally and a possible source of help. They asked the ottomans to wage war against the Spanish as well as to free the Maghrebians captured ports (presidios) from them.

Two of the most famous and successful corsairs, Uruc Reis and Hizir Reis, played a great role in the Maghrebian and Spanish conflict in the first half of the sixteenth century. Both brothers were engaged as "searovers" in Tunisia under the

Hafsid sultan Muhammad ibn al- Hassan 1493- 1536. Probably they entered the sultan's service in 1503, but the year of 1510 witnessed their first official help in repulsing the Spanish attack on the island of Gerba (Tunisia). Aruj or Uruc and his younger brother Hizir were foreigners to the region. Hizir emerged as the greatest muslim naval hero and the architect of the establishment of the ottoman rule in the Maghreb. He was called Khair al-din by the muslims and barbaossa "the bearded one" by those Europeans who had come into contact with him. However, both brothers allied themselves with local authorities and with conspiracy they expended their authority on the westside of Tunis. In 1510 they moved to central maghreb and entered the service of the berber chief of Bougie and in 1516 they reached Algiers, a maritime town in the central of the Maghreb. The berber chief's liman- thaaibi (thaaiba tribe) who occupied the town (Algiers) shortly before Pedro Navarros' complain of 1510 asked Aruj for help and to undertake to gether a counter attack on the port of Algiers which were under the Spanish control. The Spanish garrison had already constructed a fort upon these rocky island which faced the town just outside the harbor of Algiers (the Penon). From this penon, the Christians shot with their cannon fire at the inhabitants and brought serious damage to their houses. But, before the two allies could undertake their attack on the penon, they came in conflict and Salim was killed probably by the turks. The cause of this death is unknown, some argue that he did not accept Aruj authority over his city; others state that Salim had betrayed Aruj and linked with the Spanish of Algiers. However, from that

time on, the turks extended their authority in the central and the eastern Maghreb and created a new pattern in the Christians-muslims - They came from the greek island of Mytilene (Lesbos-ancient time) their father having been either a member of the Turkish garrison there or a greek converted to islam. conflict in the western Mediterranean frontier. But it would be wrong to assume that the turks were volutarity accepted as rulers in the maghreb.

One cannot say that the north African policy of Ferdinand ended in complete failure, until his death (1516) most of the important maghrebian coastline towns were under the Spanish hands. His heir and son Charles V continued his policy but with a little difference between the both men. Ferdinand made no effort to occupy the hinterland to the maghreb and the caravan trade across the sahara to the north escaped from Spanish's hands. Although, the Spanish " presidios" in the maghreb were well fortified, the Turks- muslim assistance helped the inhabitants of these presidors to revolt against the Spanish. They tried to break down all internal or external cooperation with them and for this reason the Spanish garrisons were dependent on spain for supplies and munitions. There is a doubt that spain was to pay a heavy price for the policy of limited occupation in later years.

In the following years (1516-1529), Charles V undertook a series of attacks not only in the maghreb but also against his European rivals. Charles V was a great statesman and very ambitious too. He followed the formula peace among Christians

and war against the infidels which gave him support from spiritual and secular powers. In one of his statement Charles V offers: "to pledge my kingdom domination and friends my own body and blood, my soul and my life in defence of Christendom". He believed strongly that without Christian unity there could hardly be an empire able to resist the ottoman enemy.

Charles V surrounded himself with highly experienced administrators and humanists, like his grand chancellor Gattinara, Alfonso de valdes, Erasmus and others. The chancellor Gattinara was the real architect and the mastermind of the crown involvement in Italy. He saw Italy as the centre of a new Christian empire and tried to persuade his master stake all on his domination there. Shortly, Charles V led his troops to Navarreo and reconquered it from the French who took over this province in april 1521. But Italy formed the main theatre of the war of supremacy between French and Spanish monarchs. In the same year (1521), Charles V sent an expedition into Lombardy and took Milano in the side of his empire. Gattinara's strategic policy was that, once the French would turn out of Italy he could easily make terms with the Pope and control all Europe. But Pope Adrian (pro-Spanish) had died shortly (1523) after had brought Venice, Florence and England together with Aragon and all, were allied against Francis I. With the arrival of Clement VII to the throne of the papal government Gattinara's policy would be less successful. Once again Francis I took the new pope in his side. Here conquered Milano in October 1524 and two months later, Clement VII concluded an alliance with France and Venice. The Pope had learned that Charles V was

looking for an imperial organization and to his plan to circle the ecclesiastical land, he allied with Francis I and the other rivals but, Charles V was determined to crash the French army in Italy in order to achieve his imperial destiny. However, after the French tragedy which cost them the head of their crown himself (Francis I) who was kept in Madrid prisoner for certain, the balance of power shifted to Spain. Before Francis I had been released, Charles V forced him to hand over the Italian and Flanders provinces including Burgundy to the Spanish crown.

But after he was released, the French organised the league of Cognac against Charles V. Francis found allies in Italy, the pope, Venice, Florence and even Henry VIII abandoned the Spanish alliance and stood by the side of French. Charles V's anger went so far this time, he invaded Italy (1527) and defeated his natural enemy (Francis I) at Naples and Milano. In his crucial moment, which followed the invasion of Rome which left a sort of fear among some faithful Christians, Charles V found in the Spanish humanist, Alfonso de Valdes a good answer and reply to the papal protest against the excess of Charles's troops and their invasion to Rome. With the assertion of the peace of Cambrai (3 August 1529) Francis I recognised Charles V sovereignly over Milano, Genoa, Naples, Flanders and Artois; where as Burgundy formed a real crucial from the beginning of the clash between the two monarchs. We could assume that, Gattinara's policy had triumphed but after had cost the crown many lives and a large sum of money. Moreover, the

empire was more than a dream in the age full of different ideas and philosophy. Which Charles V was deeply involved in western European matters, the Ottoman army stood face to face with the Habsburg army in Vienne. Meantime, the Spanish garrison in the Maghreb had already lost very important captured town there.

From 1516 to 1529, the Turks in the Maghreb had already expanded their territory westward until Tlemcen. The conquest of this rich city and the breakdown of the Ziyarid dynasty showed clearly that they intended to bring down the whole interior of the central maghreb from the plains of Mitidja to the high plateau of Constantnople. During this time the Spanish military activity was less effective. In 1520 Hugo de Moncado and diego de vera undertook a surprise attack on Gerba (Tunisia). They succeeded first but shortly they evacuated the island because they had being distracted by the french invasion of Navarro in 1521. They were also occupied with the revolt of the comuneros (may 1520 to april 1521). In 1525, Khair al-din become the real leader of Algiers and four years later he eliminated the Spanish fort at Algiers. From now on, Algiers, bougies harbor became a centre for the construction of shipbuilding for military and commercial reasons. However, the control of the Ottomans over the central maghreb had been brought about by a particular dispensation and totally different from the other muslim in European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Although, K hair al-din, placed the Ottoman sultans name in the Friday prayer and on the coinage, the day (chief) in Algiers represented the sultan, i.e he referred to Istanbul just to discuss important administrative affairs, such as budget, war...etc.

The second stage: 1529-1535

With the increase of the turko- muslim attacks on the Spanish garrison along the coast of the maghreb, the emperor turned his attention to north africans' affairs. Under his supervision a fleet of eighty-four vessels was filled out in the winter of 1533-1534 which he used in 1534 to occupy Tunis. But, before he launched his counterattack on Tunis, the emperor Charles V had learned that, Khair-al-din had already left Algiers for Istanbul and some galley had went with him. There as on for Khair-al-din travel to Istanbul is un- known, may be to ask for more support and enforcement from the Sultan himself. Or the sultan may have decided to reverse the decline that had started to affect the Ottoman navy.

Some argue that, Khair-al-din had becomes upset when the sultan saw the growth his supremacy in the Mediterranean and for that reason he was appointed kapudan pasha(captain-pasha). Because of this he could not return to Algiers. Nevertheless, Khair-al-din was the real founder of the naval fleet of the central maghreb which played a great role in maritime Mediterranean policy up to the eighteenth century. However, in 1534 the Spanish naval fleet had pushed eastward to the ottomans' Greece frontier and attacked Morea. Shortly other army abandoned their foothold and marched toward Tunis. Tunis, the capital city of the Hafsid dynasty was occupied by Khair-al-din's soldiers in the same year 1534. This ottoman military achievement had

been seen by the Spanish crown as a real threat to his fleet, i.e. the control over the side of Sicilian channel would allow the Ottomans to sail easily between the eastern and western basins of the Mediterranean. The emperor launched his attack on Tunis in 1535 and defeated the Ottoman-Berber garrison there. With a fleet of more than 400 ships and army of approximately 26,000 men and 2,000 horses the emperor took over the city. Then, before he left Tunis, the emperor restored Hafsid ruler to his throne but under terms of heavy tribute which would be paid to the Spanish garrison at the Golitta (Tunisia). This Spanish military action was a real blow to the Sultan's policy in Istanbul and to the Ottoman's in the Maghreb. Also, it showed clearly that the Muslims' resistance had been shattered by the shortage of the galleys and arms particularly after the departure of Khair al-Din to Istanbul accompanied with some galleys. In spite of this Spanish success, Charles V was unable to follow up this success in the Maghreb, his soldiers failed twice to establish Morea and Tunis as an outpost and advanced protected (poste) in the western Mediterranean frontier. In his way home, the emperor stopped at Oran where he appointed a Spanish nobleman, Count Alcaudete whose family had a long history in fighting Muslims in Spain. As a captain-general of Oran, after Alcaudete was given a full support from the crown, he attacked Tlemcen in 1535. Alcaudete was also supported by his ally, Ibn-Roduan who had been thrown out of his dynasty (Ziyanid) and replaced by another pro-Ottoman Zayanid chief; but both allies lost the battle of the Tidda fortress.

The third stage:1535-1559

Over this long period, the emperor was deeply concerned with northern African affairs but as well as with civil war in Europe and the march of the conquesta in the new world. The emperor had already learned that french king had concluded a treaty with the Ottoman Sultan and both allies determined to attack the Spanish territories and Venice. This treaty, however, was denounced by the pope himself. As a result of this french plot and conspiracy Charles V also entered into negotiations with Kair al-din who was in Algiers in the time of negotiations (1538). These protected negotiations ended with no result, partly because of the lack of confidence on both sides. It has been agree that, the emperor agreed to recognize Khair al-din as king of Algiers, Bona, Bougie, Tunis, Tripoli in return for his help in undertaking a common attack on france and venice. In the same year 1538 Charles V had granted Malta and Tripoli to the knights of St John, his motive was to break down all ottoman reinforcements to the french across the Sicilian straits. Without doubt, the failure of the negotiations with Khair al-din formed the background for charles V answer tothe ottomans's assault and to the attack on Algiers in 1541.

In 1541, the emperor himself led the expedition against Algiers. It consisted of about 500 ships, accompanied with 24,000 foot soldiers and about 12,000 marines. As Abu-nasr J.M, point out, the expedition was a mammoth one by the standards of the time. Distinguished experienced generals like Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, and Alcaudete, the chief of

Oran took part. But the deputy of Khair al-din in Algiers, Hassan agha (1536-1543) had already learned about the emperor's plan and started to collect arms and men in order to defend the city (Algiers). He asked the chiefs of Bougie, Bone (Annaba) to join him with some men and galleys. In addition agha Hassan sent envoys to the interior of the country and asked native people for help. In October 1541, the emperor's fleet was caught near Algiers because of the stormy weather and as a result of this "natural" defeat, Algiers was saved from the Spanish crown's attack. Thus, the Muslims explain this emperor as a god's will. From now on ward, Spanish prestige in the Maghreb was at its lowest ebb after this failure. One year later the Ottoman Hassan agha attacked Marsa al-kebir (Oran) but he failed. Alcaudete had taken advantage of this Turko-Berber failure and attacked Tlemcen in the following year 1547. But he failed to conquer it. Then Alcaudete retired to Spain, leaving his son Don Martin in command of Oran. The maritime city of Oran was entirely under Spanish control until the 18th century. But, the Spaniards lived in a state of siege of the rest of the central Maghreb. In 1551, the Ottomans took over, Tripoli and in 1557 they pushed westward until the strait of Gibraltar.

After the Spanish crown failure to conquer the Maghreb, the emperor made a final decision that the unity of Europe was more important than success against the Turko-Muslim alliance. From 1546 onward the emperor opens negotiations with the Sultan Suleyman concerning the North African affairs and the Ottoman conquest of the Danube regions. Some argue that the foreign wars of the emperor belong of the most part rather to the general history of Europe than to the national history of Spain. But the fact that

Spain after the end of the Reconquista if we assume that it ended by 1492—had faced Islam virtually on her own. The French who were the best contributors to the Christian Reconquista had become by the sixteenth century the first enemy of the empire (Spain). We had seen how several times the French attacked Italy (Milano, Naples, Genoa) in the absence of the Spanish crown and his involvement in North Africa or the indies. Just when the news from the crown's military and financial catastrophe in the maghreb spread throughout the mediterranean, Charles 5 enemies mainly the French took prompt advantage of an emperor without a fleet and attacked the valois in (1542-1544). But, did the Spaniards see that Charles V was in North Africa and elsewhere damaged the national interests of their country.

No doubt, Charles V wider interest lay not only on Spain but in other parts of Europe. The wars of Europe formed the most devious explanation for Spain's failure to establish itself effectively in North Africa, the Spanish arms and well organized foot soldiers in the time of the great captain had served the crown interests indeed particularly in Italy. In the new world too, the crown established the Aztec empire of Mexico under Hernan Cortes (1519-1521), by 1540 the conquest reached its highest level in the indies. It seems clear that Christian world "conquista" did not imply essentially the crown's policy toward North Africa. The Spanish crown was concerned to establish a Spanish "presence" and outpost strong points along the coastal line of the maghreb. But this limited

policy, caused Spain to commit many lives and resources to prevent the growth of another threat to Iberia from Muslim North Africa.

Conclusion:

The failure of the Spanish crown to conquer Algeria was not dependent only on the struggle and maritime confrontation in the western side of the Mediterranean, between the two great antagonistic powers, of that of the Ottomans on one side and the Spaniards on the other side, but also, it was due to the emergence of Algiers as a strong maritime city particularly after the collapse of its stronghold port (the Penon, on the 27th of May, 1529), and its garrison and chief Martin de Fargas was made prisoner by Khier El-Dine Pacha. This blow and defeat extended to other coastline towns and cities, like Cherchel (1531), Hunaine (1534), and Annaba (1540).

Nevertheless, Charles V wanted to fulfill his will and the will of his allies mainly the Roman Church to conquer Algiers. He tried hardy in several occasions (1516-1519...), but he failed to put an end to its challenge to Algiers at the Mediterranean and above. As a consequence, trade and commerce had shifted dramatically to Algiers' side. Moreover, with its strategic geographical position and strong emergent navy, Khier El-Dine had managed successively to turn its port to a stronghold in the Mediterranean during the whole 16th century onwards. Charles V's catastrophic defeat and the loss of his Armada which he had launched against Algiers was a major blow to the Spanish crown indeed. The Roman Emperor, Charles V's defeat in 1541 had put a total end to his enterprise wars at the Mediterranean Sea, forever, i.e., until the end of his life.

Finally, we assume that, the failure of the Spanish crown to conquer Algiers was due to the strong tie and military cooperation with the Ottomans and the Algerians who had successively turned the Mediterranean Sea to their domain and turn it again to a vital geopolitical enterprise in the region through the whole Modern time (16th -18th centuries).

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