

This chapter examines the Genoese formal colonization of Corsica starting with Sampiero Corso's rebellion. Through the rule of the Signoria, the Genoese Republic deployed a full administrative structure in the mid-sixteenth century. Portraying Corsicans as barbaric and rebellious, the Genoese interpreted Corsicans' so-called ignorance as justification for colonization. In reality, Corsica was a buffer-state between Italy and Spain, Genoa's only ally. Because of Corsica's proximity to the Ligurian coast, maintaining Genoa secure entailed transforming the island into a formal colony, including subjugating the population.

The chapter follows three main themes. First, it assesses the realpolitik for the Genoese colonization of the island, including the economic pressures of the Republic, the fear of Muslim attacks, the establishing of a colony of "devout" Catholics on the island, and the empowering of Genoa through a colonial organization, excluding local Corsicans from administrative charges. Second, it explores the symbiotic relationship between the Genoese Church and state in assimilating Corsica. Unlike Genoese officers who rarely entertained first-hand rapport with the islanders, religious envoys and missionaries truly came into close contact with them. The Genoese used the narrative deployed by the priests about Corsicans as justification to carry on their colonizing mission. Third, as the loss of commercial hegemony forced Genoa to find other markets to exploit, it examines how colonizing the island was part of a politics that turned the Republic into a Leviathan.