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Marie Christine Duggan
Keene State College (United States of America)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9244-4658

From Bourbon Reform to Open Markets in California, 1801-1821

Abstract

The *Consulado de México* was the mercantile guild that acted as commercial nerve-center of Spain's empire in the Americas. From 1801 to 1821, one of its members, Pedro González de Noriega, influenced California's economic growth by putting his nephew, José de la Guerra y Noriega, into the colony's military supply line. In 1801, for what purpose did De la Guerra y Noriega come to California? Whatever his intention, his life-plan changed in 1810, when insurgency broke out in New Spain, and military payroll ceased to arrive in California. Between 1811 and 1821, how did De la Guerra y Noriega adapt to this structural change by negotiating with international merchants from Manila to San Blas and Lima to supply California? As Spain's empire unraveled, we follow the microhistory of the Noriega mercantile network, as it reconfigured to the macroeconomic context of political transformation of the Pacific Rim in the context of Mexican independence from Spain. The De la Guerra Collection at the Santa Bárbara Mission Archive-Library reveals that Guadalajara was Mexico's emerging center for Pacific commerce, with San Blas as Guadalajara's principal port. By Mexican independence in 1821, De la Guerra had established Santa Bárbara, California as the center of his family's business, rather than Mexico City. Even as Manila merchants relocated to Tepic, he maintained ties with them. He also traded with the British in Callao, Peru, which is how he came to send his son to be educated in Liverpool with the Brotherston family.

Keywords: California, China Trade, *Consulado de México*, Noriega, presidios, Pacific Rim commerce, otter hides, Manila, San Blas, Lima, Bourbon Reform, 1810

De las reformas borbónicas a los mercados abiertos en California, 1801-1821

Resumen

El Consulado de México fue el gremio mercantil que operó como centro neurálgico comercial del Imperio Español en las Américas. Entre 1801 y 1821, uno de sus miembros, Pedro González de Noriega, influyó en el crecimiento económico de California al situar a su sobrino, José de la Guerra y Noriega, en la línea de abastecimiento militar de la colonia. ¿Con qué propósito De la Guerra y Noriega fue a California? Fuera cual fuese su intención, sus planes vitales cambiaron en 1810, cuando la insurgencia estalló en Nueva España, y el situado dejó de llegar a California. ¿Cómo se adaptó a este cambio estructural De la Guerra y Noriega, entre 1811 y 1821, en sus negociaciones con comerciantes internacionales de Manila a San Blas y Lima para abastecer California? En el contexto de desmoronamiento del Imperio Español, seguimos la microhistoria de la red mercantil de Noriega, que se adaptó al contexto macroeconómico generado por la transformación política en la cuenca del Pacífico y por la independencia mexicana de España. La De la Guerra Collection en la Biblioteca-Archivo de la Misión Santa Bárbara revela que el centro emergente de México para el comercio del Pacífico fue Guadalajara, con San Blas como su puerto principal. Con la independencia de México en 1821, De la Guerra había establecido Santa Bárbara, en California, como el centro de negocios de su familia, en lugar de la Ciudad de México. Incluso cuando los comerciantes de Manila se relocalizaron a Tepic, mantuvo sus lazos con ellos. También comerció con los británicos en el Callao de Perú, gracias a lo cual pudo enviar a su hijo a educarse en Liverpool con la familia Brotherston.

Palabras clave: California, comercio con China, Consulado de México, Noriega, presidios, comercio en la costa del Pacífico, pieles de nutria, Manila, San Blas, Lima, Reformas Borbónicas, 1810

De les reformes borbòniques als mercats oberts a Califòrnia, 1801-1821

Resum

El Consolat de Mèxic va ser el gremi mercantil que va operar com a centre neuràlgic comercial de l'Imperi Espanyol a les Amèriques. Entre 1801 i 1821, un dels seus membres, Pedro González de Noriega, va influir en el creixement econòmic de Califòrnia en situar el seu nebot, José de la Guerra y Noriega, en la línia d'aprovisionament militar de la colònia. Amb quin propòsit De la Guerra y Noriega va anar a Califòrnia? Fos quin fos, els seus plans vitals van canviar el 1810, quan la insurgència va esclatar a Nova Espanya, i el *situado* va deixar d'arribar a Califòrnia. Com es va adaptar a aquest canvi estructural De la Guerra y Noriega, entre 1811 i 1821, en les seves negociacions amb comerciants internacionals de Manila a San Blas i Lima per aprovisionar Califòrnia? En el context d'esfondrament de l'Imperi Espanyol, seguim la microhistòria de la xarxa mercantil de Noriega, que es va adaptar al context macroeconòmic generat per la transformació política a la conca del Pacífic i per la independència mexicana d'Espanya. La De la Guerra Collection a la Biblioteca-Arxiu de la Missió Santa Bárbara revela que el centre emergent de Mèxic per al comerç del Pacífic en va ser Guadalajara, amb San Blas com al seu port principal. Amb la independència de Mèxic el 1821, De la Guerra havia establert Santa Bárbara, a Califòrnia, com el centre de negocis de la seva família, en lloc de Ciutat de Mèxic. Fins i tot va mantenir els lligams amb els comerciants de Manila quan aquests es van relocalitzar a Tepic. També va comerciar amb els britànics al Callao del Perú, amb què va poder enviar el seu fill a educar-se a Liverpool amb la família Brotherston.

Paraules clau: Califòrnia, comerç amb la Xina, Consolat de Mèxic, Noriega, comerç a la costa del Pacífic, pells de llúdria, Manila, San Blas, Lima, Reformes Borbòniques, 1810

Corresponding author: e-mail: mduggan@keene.edu

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Introduction

The Bourbon *visitador* José de Gálvez orchestrated Spain's settlement of California in 1769, and his antagonism to the *Consulado de México* and its monopoly of Spain's trade with Asia is well-known (Priestley 1916, 172-209; Salvucci 1983, 225; Díaz-Trechuelo 1965, 3-30; Bonialian 2017, 13). Nonetheless, there are hints that by 1791 Mexico City financiers of trade with Asia controlled California's military supply line. By 1801, there was a definite link between the Consulado de México and California in the person of José de la Guerra y Noriega. His uncle Pedro González de Noriega was a member of the Mexico City business guild with interests in a wide range of activities, from sugar to cochineal to supplying Mexico City with meat (Del Valle 2012, 86, 92, 96-97, 182; Hamnett 1971, 160, 180, and 1980, 58). In approving his 1796 request to export otter hides to Manila, the viceroy described González de Noriega as a "*sujeto bien conocido en el comercio de esta capital…un comerciante de formalidad, conocimiento en la profesión, crédito y facultades.*"[1] González de Noriega was an ally of Gabriel Yermo when the latter led the Consulado's attempt to bring down Viceroy Iturrigaray in 1808 (Del Valle 2012, 85, 182). Yet when the Crown asked for donations to battle its enemies in 1809, González de Noriega was among the most generous (Hamnett 1980, 71). We can say, then, that Pedro González de Noriega was wealthy and powerful.

His sister's son, José de la Guerra y Noriega, arrived in California in 1802 as supply master (*habilitado)* for the port in Monterey—California's capital. De la Guerra earned $400 as *alférez* (sub-lieutenant), a salary augmented by a potential $1,000 commission for selling *presidio* supplies (Bancroft 1884, 335). Although this commission was roughly twice the pay of a lieutenant in California (Bancroft 1884, 335), De la Guerra's father consoled him from afar:

[1] An "individual well-known in commercial circles of this capital…a merchant of education, experience in business, credit and ability." Source: June 10, 1796, Archivo General de la Nación México (AGNM), Gobierno Virreinal, general de parte 51, vol. 75, exp. 336, fojas 336-337.

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"Even though the pay may not be much, a position such as this is of great honor and merit" (Pubols 2009, 18). The permit De la Guerra's uncle obtained in 1796 to export otter hides to Manila provides the only clue as to why such a well-connected man would come to the tiny town of Monterey. Below, we explore the possibility that De la Guerra suppressed California's contraband export of otter hides to New England ships between 1802 and 1804, perhaps redirecting the hides to his uncle's associates. His intention was to return to Mexico City in 1810. Yet his world changed when insurgency broke out. Instead, he became commander of *Presidio* Santa Bárbara in 1815 and died in California in 1846. De la Guerra wound up guiding California's economy into global trade during the turbulent decade 1810 to 1821—with Hispanic merchants from Lima and Manila, but also with US and English merchants with ties to Canton and India. In doing so, he became an independent regional commercial agent in the northern Pacific Rim, the very sort of person who had long chafed under the monopoly rights of the *Consulado de México*.

De la Guerra's business correspondence at the Santa Bárbara Mission Archive-Library (SBMAL) provides insight into the mercantile actors beyond California to which the Noriega family name gave him access. Local military men also number among his correspondents. In contrast to De la Guerra, they had moved up the ranks through battle and deprivation at the margin of empire. As Granovetter (2005, 34) would put it, De la Guerra's status as an outsider to the tight-knit community of men in multi-generational military service, is precisely the reason that he offered to them social ties in the wider world of the Pacific Rim. One reason why the mercantile dimension of his role in California has been underexplored, is the challenges inherent in research into contraband trade. The methodology used here is microscopic archival analysis of geography, timing, and relationships to identify motive, opportunity and strategy in a period of structural change. Critics of microhistory argue that the intense focus on human

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relations in a tiny space omits analysis of larger context (Levi 2001, 100). Yet José de la Guerra's ties to merchants in Spain, Panamá, Lima and Manila were global, and his adaptation to the collapse of the Bourbon system in 1810 makes this a study of institutional change. In that sense, this research brings together regional history with the study of global institutions, defying the convention that global historians of sweeping change steer clear of details (Crossley 2008, 3). Finally, this research bridges the cultural divide between Spanish-language literature on members of the *Consulado de México* such as González de Noriega, and English-language scholarship on De la Guerra.

In recent Spanish-language literature, Bonialian (2017, 14-27) has argued that the Bourbon government was too effective at undermining the power of Mexico City's business guild, and inadvertently pushed New Spain's Pacific commerce into the hands of the British. Through the Pacific ports of Acapulco and Callao, the *Consulado de México* had been supplying South America at lower cost than Spain could at Portobello. After 1743, the Crown undermined the Consulado's hold on South America by granting permits to private ships to sail from Spain around Cape Horn to Lima. Yet by 1790 the ships tended to be British and US whalers (Bonialian 2017, 21; Trejo 2006c, 23-25). By 1765, the Bourbon Crown cut into the *Consulado de México*'s market in Spain by opening up the Cádiz-Manila route around Africa, a faster means to bring Asian imports to Spain than Mexico City's Manila-Acapulco galleon. By 1767, the *nao* was carrying less than half the cargo of pre-1750 years (Bonialian 2017, 15). By 1815, the Manila community tied by kinship and credit to Mexico City's *Consulado* wrote that goods exported from Manila paid duties of 42% upon arrival in New Spain. As a result, even the

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merchants of Guadalajara preferred duty-free British contraband by way of Panamá over the galleon as the source of supply (Bonialian 2017, 30; Cabañas 1944, 170).[2]

Yet others argue that the problem was not that Bourbon Reformers undermined the merchants of Mexico City, but rather that neither those merchants nor the Bourbon government opened up legal paths for ambitious men of modest means (Trejo 2006a, 359; 2006b, 712-14). The absence of legal avenues to improve their fortunes left men open to engaging in contraband trade (Trejo 2006c, 26). In the context of 18th century California, a man of talent could slowly rise to be an officer in the local military. Gálvez made the reward for a military man who reached retirement half pay and communal grazing rights for 50 cattle. The veteran was prohibited from buying out his neighbor on the grounds that this would cause inequality to emerge. Though the veteran also had access to irrigated land, he was banned from producing either a vineyard or an olive grove, two activities for which much of California's land was suited (Priestley 1916, 256-267; Altable 2013, 422).

The story below of a scion of the *Consulado de México* in California illustrates how Mexico City merchants could find ways to compensate men if they cooperated in evading Bourbon restrictions on commerce between New Spain and Asia. Raymundo Carrillo and José Darío Argüello were ambitious and talented soldiers in California who rose over decades to command ports in the Pacific. De la Guerra's marriage to Carrillo's daughter and the business training he gave to Argüello's son illustrate how Mexico City merchants used Bourbon institutions to regain some control over trade out of California. This history also suggests that the unraveling

[2] The *Consulado de Manila* (and hence, Bonialian) overstates the case; in 1815, General José de la Cruz began charging duties on British goods imported via Panama (Trejo 2006a, 363).

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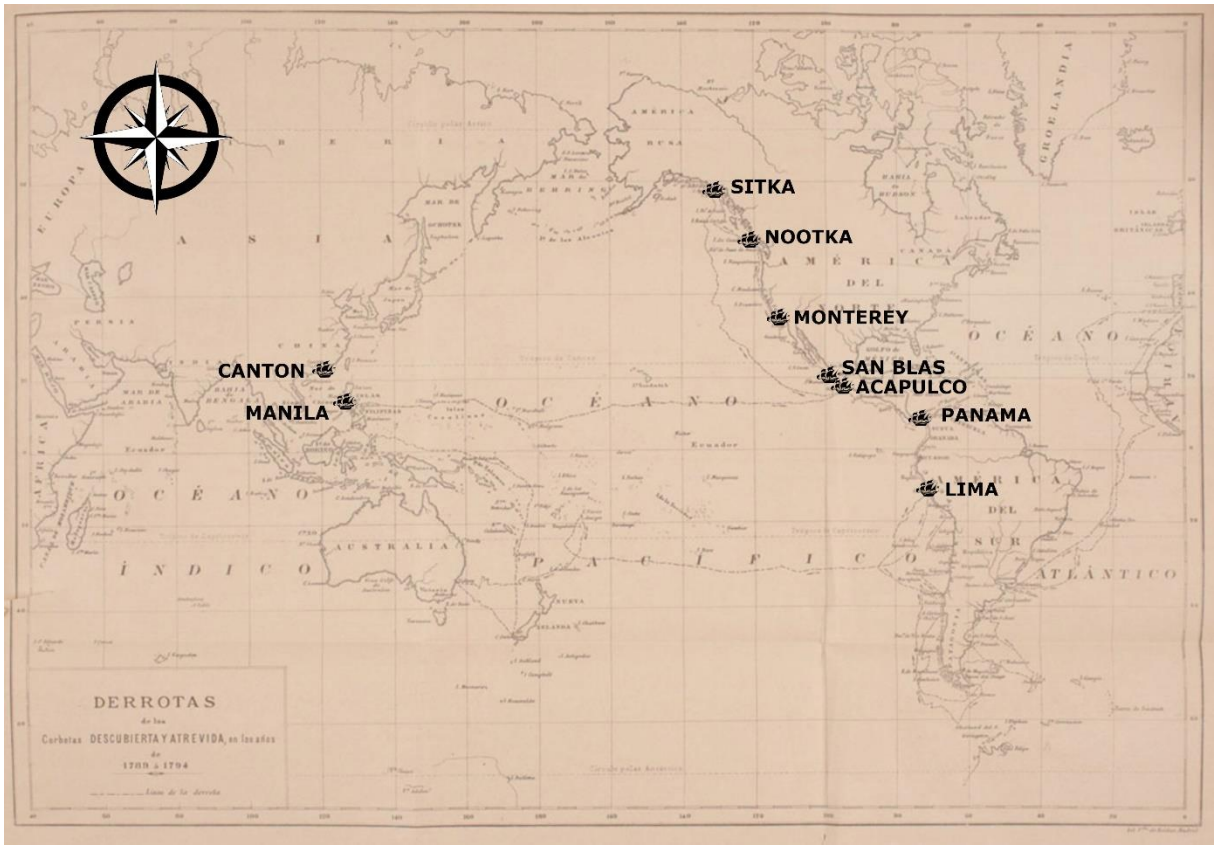
of Bourbon institutions—rather than Bourbon Reform—was the ultimate undoing of Mexico City's commercial control over the Northern Pacific.

Part 1. How the game was played up to 1810

Consulado de México and supply of California

In 1798, José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega entered military service by going to work for Manuel Cárcaba, the *habilitado general* for the Californias in Mexico City (Pubols 2009, 16; Sánchez 2018, 367). This office supplied presidios in Alta and Baja California, with a budget of about $150,000 pesos per year. De la Guerra had departed Asturias at age 13 in 1792 to learn

FIGURE 1. Monterey in the Pacific Rim



Source: Base map by Malaspina, 1792, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks.

accounting with his uncle, Pedro González de Noriega, in Mexico City. The *habilitado* stationed at each *presidio* in the Californias operated a sort of general store, where troops received their pay in kind (Pubols 2009, 33). Accounting skills were valued in *habilitados*, giving mercantile

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families an opening to station one of their own at the three major ports on the China trade route through California: San Francisco, Monterey, and San Diego (see Figure 1).

The fact that González de Noriega put his nephew into Cárcaba's employ implies that the *Consulado de México* had a hand in *presidio* supply. In 1769, California supply had been managed by *factor* Juan José de Echeveste, a merchant involved in Asian trade, who was also a personal friend of José de Gálvez (Yuste 2007, 221; Priestley 1916, 311). The next *factores* were also men of business, first Ramón Manuel de Goya and then Pedro Ignacio de Arístegui. Both were China trade merchants (Del Valle 2016, 62).[3] In 1734, the navigational guide for the Manila galleon recommended approaching land in California below Point Conversión (see Figure 2), and suggested making repairs in the Santa Bárbara Channel (González 1734, 334). Yet in 1777, the Crown decreed that the galleon should stop further north in Monterey. Pilots found the dense fog at Monterey hazardous to their valuable cargo, and the first *nao* anchored at Monterey only in October 1784, after a four-month journey from Manila, followed by six more weeks to Acapulco (Díaz-Trechuelo 1956, 43-51). California's location on the Manila-Acapulco route is perhaps why China traders in Mexico City tended to hold the position of *factor*. We may wonder if Arístegui had any connection to María Pascuala de Arístegui, who was married to Juan Bautista Ustáriz of the mercantile family in Cádiz (Herrero 2013, 61). Ustáriz, San Ginés and Company had obtained a permit from the Bourbon Crown in 1779 to trade between Asia and Spain, and between Asia and the Americas (Permanyer 2020, 15), thus offering an alternate source for Spaniards and Spanish Americans to obtain Asian products outside the galleon system.

[3] Sept. 26, 1790 Conde de Revillagigedo in Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Presidios de California. ES 47161 AGS/SGU, Leg, 7040, 7.

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By 1791 the position of *factor* had been transformed into Manuel Cárcaba's new position of *Habilitado General de las Californias.* The change was made ostensibly to permit an official with California military experience to hold the position. However, Cárcaba had no such experience. He was able to post a $6,000 surety.[4] Perhaps Gálvez' death in 1786 undermined Arístegui's hold on California supply. Given Cárcaba's later employ of De la Guerra, this 1791 change in management of California supply raises the possibility that control may have shifted from men sympathetic to Bourbon Reform to allies of merchants in Mexico City. In 1801, De la Guerra accompanied the supplies to California to become *habilitado* at Monterey from 1802 to 1806.

González de Noriega and otters

In 1786, the governor of California estimated the annual harvest of otter in California at 20,000 hides (Bancroft 1884, 440). By 1790, the Chinese were paying $120 per otter hide (Ogden 1941, 6), which in 2019 dollars is $1,865. California's otter harvest had the potential to yield $2.4 million per year in 1790 dollars.[5] Between 1789 and 1792, Vicente Vasadre received the Bourbon Crown's blessing to collect hides in California, because he proposed to exchange them in Manila for Chinese mercury, which would reduce the chronic shortage of that metal essential for refining silver at New Spain's mines. Yet in Manila, the Company viewed the trade of otter hides with China as their own purview, and such conflicts caused delay which reduced profit (Ogden 1941, 15-24; Cook 1973, 107-108; Ortega 2001, 118).

The San Blas navy had been exploring the prime otter grounds of Nootka Sound since 1774. By 1789, the otter boom motivated the British East India Company (EIC) to send ships and

[4] Desde 1791 hasta 31 de Agosto de 1799 Expediente sobre dar nueva forma a la Factoría de los Presidios de Californias. AGS, SGU, LEG, 7040, 7.

[5] US dollars were backed by Mexican silver pesos, $1 = 1 peso.

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build an establishment at Nootka. The Spanish navy seized the ships, and took them to San Blas. Britain credibly threatened war. Spain's ally France was distracted by social unrest, so Spain acquiesced, and gave Britain the right to settle north of the northernmost Spanish settlement by the Nootka Convention of 1790. Dispute over this boundary lead to new negotiations at Nootka in 1792. Spain put on a show of strength with seven ships and a fort, and so only after the Third Nootka Convention of 1794 was the fort transferred to the British in 1795. Although the agreement prohibited the British from engaging in contraband trade with Hispanics in the Pacific, the Nootka destination provided a plausible excuse for sailing from British India to Spanish American waters (Cook 1973, 236-239, 413, 422).

From Mexico City, Cárcaba was by 1791 funneling beads to Santa Bárbara to facilitate the otter trade (Perissinotto 1998, 172, 212). *Presidio* troops could convert a portion of their pay into beads, the better to trade for otter pelts with the Chumash, for whom the beads were a medium of exchange. Because the Chinese provided the demand for otter pelts, the trade unofficially tied California's economy to Asia. A number of *proyectistas* pointed out that California could be supplied from Manila with the goods of lowest price and highest quality.[6] Yet the Bourbons chose to supply California from Mexico City via San Blas.

Imperial commerce in late Bourbon period

In 1765 as fiscal to the *Audiencia* of Manila, Francisco Leandro de Viana argued that Spain should create a company modeled on the EIC, with ships sailing from Cádiz to Manila via the Cape of Good Hope. The *Buen Consejo*, a ship of the royal armada, made the journey in 1765 with cargo from private merchants on board, and the Bourbon reformer Simón de Anda sailed on its return trip in 1767, testifying first hand that the journey to Spain from Manila could be

[6] For example, Bancroft Library (BL) Simon de Anda y Salazar to Julian Arriaga, Feb. 16, 1775 to May 19, 1776, MSS Z-E1.

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accomplished in only five months. In 1778 and 1779, the Crown sent around the Cape of Good Hope two more naval ships carrying merchandise for the *Cinco Gremios de Madrid*, the *Astrea*, and the *Venus*. In 1779, Casa Ustáriz, San Ginés y Cía obtained the right to send duty-free cargo Cádiz to Manila. Merchants in Manila tied to Mexico City interests undermined traders plying the Cádiz-Manila mercantile route because they knew direct ships to Cádiz would render unprofitable Asian goods imported to Spain by way of the galleon to Acapulco. Nonetheless, reformers won out with the establishment in 1785 of the Royal Philippine Company, which initially had the right to trade only Cádiz to Manila, but as we will see below, would also sail at times from Asia to San Blas. (Díaz-Trechuelo 1965, 14-19).

Meanwhile in the Atlantic, in 1765 the Crown decreed *comercio libre* which forced Cádiz to share the Spanish American market with other ports in Spain. These nine ports gained the right to trade not only with Veracruz and Portobelo, but also with Havana, Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico (Stein and Stein 2003, 147). In 1778, the Crown permitted five additional Iberian ports to export to the Americas, and added Buenos Aires, Peru and Chile as legitimate destinations in the Americas. Trade between Acapulco and Lima had been suppressed by the Crown since 1634. Starting in 1774, ships could ply the route if cargo were limited to "*efectos de la tierra*." Yet in 1779, the Crown legitimized trade even in Asian goods from Acapulco for silver from Lima (Bonialian 2014, 243). The immediate cause of this about-face was war between Spain and Britain from 1779 to 1783—due to Spain's support for the Thirteen Colonies. Conflict in the Atlantic hindered Cádiz from supplying Lima. In addition, the Crown appeased merchants of México City during wartime due to their donations and loans to fund defense (De Valle 2016, 9-10).

The 1779-83 opening of trade between Manila, Acapulco, and Lima should have been a boon for México City merchants' Manila galleon. Yet rivals out of Spain posed a new threat to their

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market share in the Spanish American Pacific. In 1779, Ustáriz, San Ginés y Cía sailed the ship *Hércules* around the Cape of Good Hope to Manila, and war in the Atlantic hindered her return. The Bourbon governor of the Philippines granted this commercial house out of Cádiz the right to ship Asian products from Macao to the Americas. The *Consulado de Manila*'s vehement argument that a rival would ruin the profits of the Manila galleon rang hollow given the war-induced scarcity in South America.[7] The *Hércules* arrived from Macao in San Blas in 1785 (Herrero 2016, 3, 20, 360; Pinzón 2011, 257). In the same year, the Company began supplying Spain with Asian products by sailing Cádiz-Manila via the Cape of Good Hope. By 1801, Company ships would be docking at San Blas (Pardo 1994, 53; Valdés 1987, 172), and Company ships returned there in 1806 and 1807 (Pardo 1994, 53).

San Blas naval ships returning from expeditions to Manila were an alternate source of supply from Asia. In 1767, a courier from San Blas carried news of the Jesuit expulsion to Manila. In wartime between 1779 and 1783, the naval connection to Manila flourished. It was customary for the crew to supplement pay by carrying merchandise (Pardo 1994, 33, 83). In 1779, Benito Cambón of Mission San Francisco sailed from San Blas to Manila on *La Princesa* to purchase ornaments to outfit the new church (Mancini 2018, 107-118). In 1781, the *San Carlos* brought him back from Manila to San Diego before heading for San Blas (Galvin 1964, 494, 505).

In 1794, the Crown granted special permits for trade between Spain and the Pacific. Anticipating the arrival in California of Cádiz merchant Ramón Márquez on the ship *Levante* belonging to the *Cinco Gremios Mayores* de Madrid, Governor Diego de Borica authorized *habilitados* to spend one-quarter of their budgets in California at such ships. However, it was

[7] April 1780, testimony of Governor José Basco y Vargas on Philippine Commerce, Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Filipinas 106-1-7. Copy in BL MSS, ZE 1, Carton 1, Folder 13. 1779-80.

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not until 1797 that the first ship from Cádiz, *Neptuno*, arrived at San Blas,[8] and the ship did not sail further north.[9] 1794 was the same year in which *habilitado general* Cárcaba took the opportunity to put his own kin, Manuel Rodríguez, age 26, into the California military. Rodríguez had in the 1780s been working as a China trader in Mexico City (Del Valle 2016, 62-71). Rodríguez was a cadet, a gentleman's position in which private funds were meant to supplement the meager government salary. Cárcaba paid the $20 to $25 per month so Rodríguez could take the position (Bancroft 1885, 98).

In the Northern Pacific, the expansion of commercial privileges to ports beyond Acapulco and Manila finally occurred in the 1790s. In 1795, the *Consulado de Guadalajara* was founded, which stimulated the 1796 change in the status of San Blas from military to commercial port, with the right to trade with Lima (Trejo 2006b, 215-217). 1796 was also the year that merchants of Spain were granted the right to travel Spain-India-Spain, without stopping in Manila (Cheong 1970, 4, 11). This change should have further reduced the profits of the *Consulado de México*'s Manila galleon. Yet war with Britain broke out yet again in that year, so ships from Spain were afraid to actually make the trip to India by way of Africa until war ended in 1802.

The commercial opening of the northern Pacific is the context in which Pedro González de Noriega received in 1796 the viceroy's permission to export otter hides from San Blas to Mexico.[10] In 1798, González de Noriega arranged for De la Guerra to work in Cárcaba's office in Mexico City, while Cárcaba's kin Rodríguez became *habilitado* at *Presidio* San Diego. The

[8] March 27, 1796 Antonio Bonilla to Viceroy Branciforte, AGI Guadalajara 104-B-21, transcript in BL Carton 11: 28 Item 144.
[9] Dec. 11, 1794 from Monterey. BL, Provincial State Papers xii, 182-183; Trejo 2006c, 16.
[10] AGNM, Gobierno Virreinal, general de parte 51, vol. 75, exp. 336, fojas 336, 297, 337.

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potential rewards of the otter trade in a more open Pacific may explain why powerful merchants of Mexico City were taking an interest in the military supply line of the Californias.

California's "trade with neutrals"

In 1796, war broke out between Spain and Britain, which made it difficult after 1797 for goods to arrive from Cádiz to the Atlantic coast of the Americas. To alleviate scarcity, Spain decreed on November 18, 1797 that ships of neutral nations could carry goods into Spanish America. Between 1796 and 1803, a number of US merchants were trading goods for otter hides in California (Ogden 1941, 32-41). The *Consulado de México* protested US competition in Spanish American markets, so Spain did indeed suspend the decree on April 20, 1799, before peace was declared in 1802 (Pearce 2007, 191-196). However, US merchants and Hispanic settlers had by then developed personal ties, so that the sale of foreign goods by US merchants in the Spanish Pacific Northwest had solidified into a permanent change.

In 1798 when Rodríguez assumed the post of *habilitado* at San Diego, he found competition from New England merchants in the otter trade. Cárcaba from Mexico City no doubt sent the same trade goods in shipments of supplies to San Diego as he sent to Santa Bárbara. Rodríguez would have permitted his men to collect their pay in such goods, which they could then trade to the Kumeyaay in return for furs, which their commander would purchase. Yet it appears New England merchants offered a higher price than the *habilitado*. In 1798 and again in 1800, the ship *Eliza* out of Boston was in San Diego, followed in 1801 by the *Enterprise* and then in 1803 by the *Alexander*. In that year, the commander of the naval supply ship *Princesa* wrote that it

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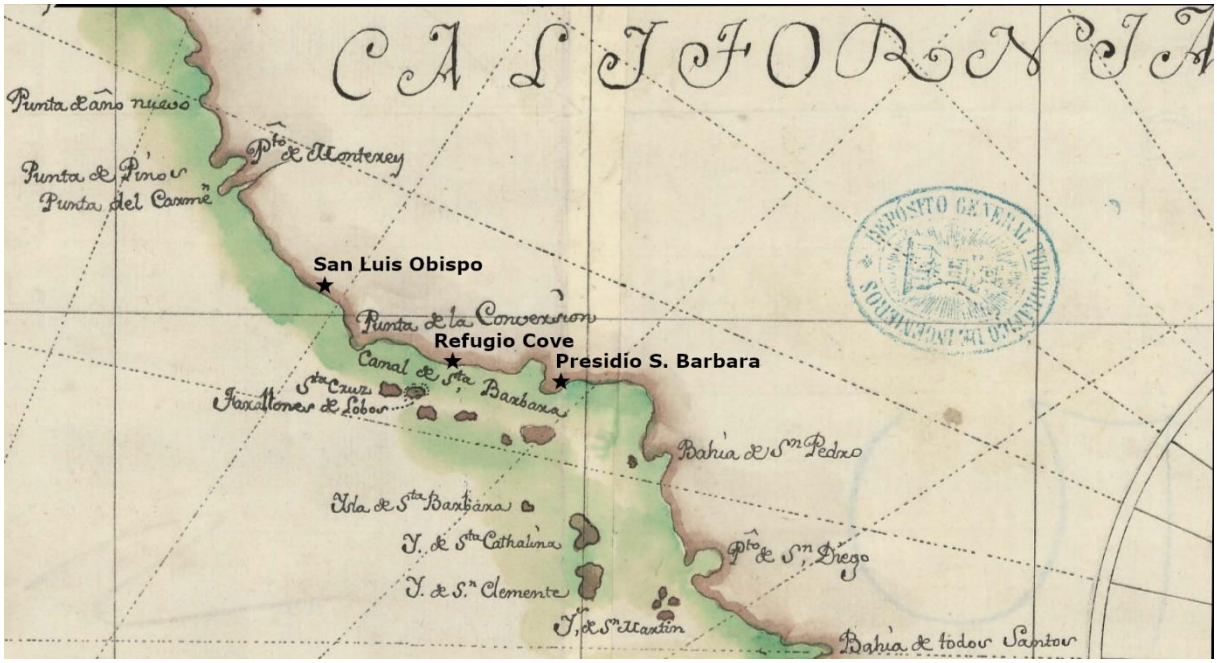
was typical for his ships to pick up 1200 hides in San Diego, but that the ships had only obtained 240 "*porque los Americanos las pagan bien*."[11]

FIGURE 2. Monterey, Santa Bárbara and San Diego



Source: Plano de la Costa del Sur corregido hasta la Canal de Santa Bárbara" by Miguel Constanzó ,1769. Archivo General Militar de Madrid, Spain. Pre-1824 Maps (2017). 51 [online]. https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/hornbeck_spa_1_a/51.

In 1798, the Viceroy intervened to put Rodríguez on the fast track so that he became Commander of *Presidio* San Diego in 1800 (Bancroft 1885, 98). In 1802, De la Guerra joined him in California as *habilitado* at Monterey (see Figure 2). By 1803, De la Guerra became engaged to the daughter of Raymundo Carrillo, Commander of *Presidio* Santa Bárbara. Carrillo was precisely the sort of self-made man that Enlightenment reformers had in mind when they championed unleashing self-interest. At 24, he assisted in putting down the 1775 Kumeyaay revolt, and made corporal. From 1783 to 1795, Carrillo served as sergeant at Santa Bárbara. He

[11] "[B]ecause the Americans pay well for them." Nov. 26, 1803. Braulio de Ota Lorca y Oquendo to Commander of San Blas, AGNM California 62, Fojas 414-416; cited in Trejo 2006c, 19.

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was commander at Monterey in 1800, then at Santa Bárbara from 1802 to 1807, finally at San Diego where he died 1809.

When the nephew of a *Consulado de México* merchant asked Carrillo for his daughter's hand in marriage, the commander seized the opportunity to improve the Carrillo family's lot (Pubols 2009, 18, 26). We see that the institutional structure which Gálvez placed in California failed to offer incentives to men such as Carrillo that would lead them to refuse to carry out the will of the merchants in Mexico City. Gálvez made rules, but did not give ambitious men opportunities to improve their family's fortune by adhering to them (Salvucci 1983, 227, 234). In contrast, the *Consulado de México*'s man made a credible promise to Carrillo to move his family up the social ladder.

After Rodríguez was Commander at San Diego and De la Guerra *habilitado* at Monterey and also future son-in-law of the Santa Bárbara commander, the two men appear to have put up a forceful resistance to trade with New Englanders. In 1803, Rodríguez seized 491 hides from Captain Brown of the *Alexander* (Ogden 1941, 36; Bancroft 1885, 15). Later that year, Rodríguez broke up another attempted sale of other hides by his troops to William Shaler of the *Lelia Byrd* (Ogden 1941, 38).

By 1804, "Boston traders along the coast… encountered a new administrative attitude… This time all doors were closed," writes Adele Ogden (1941, 42). The 1796 permit for Mexico City merchant González de Noriega to sell otter hides from San Blas to Manila, coupled with the kinship ties that De la Guerra and Rodríguez had to the *habilitación*, are in combination circumstantial evidence these two men came to California to block the sale of hides by soldiers to New Englanders. In 1807, Rodriguez was promoted to *habilitado general* in Mexico City.

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As Carrillo's son-in-law, De la Guerra could by 1804 influence the older man's decisions so that he had gained control of the Santa Bárbara Channel. Santa Bárbara is not a port like San Francisco, San Diego and Monterey. Until 1816-1822, the Northern Channel Islands were inhabited by the Chumash, and the Southern Channel Islands by the Tongva. These two ethnolinguistic groups constructed plank canoes (Heizer and Massey 1953, 300-303; Johnson 1999, 104; Morris et al. 2019, 93), which makes it theoretically possible that they could come out to the galleon to trade food and water for Chinese products. The island peoples were known by 1602 to be "*muy amigos*" of the Spaniards (Wagner 1929, 437).

Although the Manila galleon still passed through the Santa Bárbara Channel, its merchants opposed stopping in Monterey, which is where De la Guerra was stationed in 1802 (Schurz 1939, 10, 126, 226). Perhaps De la Guerra courted the daughter of the commander at Santa Bárbara in order to gain easier access to the galleon. In his 1796 permit, the Viceroy gave González de Noriega authorization to use the galleon to ship otter hides to Manila: "*[P]ueda embarcar pieles de nutria en la próxima nao con dirección a Manila*."[12] De la Guerra's cousin, Diego de Ágreda, was in 1801 the authorized agent in New Spain of the *Consulado de Manila* (Hamnet 1980, 71; Yuste 2007, 168). Yet the years 1804-1810 coincide with troubles on the line: no galleon sailed from Manila in 1802, 1803 or 1805 (Cheong 1971, 153; Yuste 2007, 367), and in 1806, the British captured the *San Fernando* (Cheong 1971, 153).

Hispanic alternatives to the galleon on the Manila-New Spain route

An alternate method that De la Guerra may have used for shipping otter hides to Manila was the military supply line. Between 1806 and 1807, De la Guerra moved from Monterey to San Diego because Rodríguez had been promoted to Mexico City as *habilitado general* (Bancroft

[12]"[h]e may embark otter hides on the next galleon heading for Manila."

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1885, 98-99). In Mexico City, José Antonio Noriega had succeeded González de Noriega in managing business. Correspondence between the cousins reveals them calling Rodríguez their muleteer because he transported goods on their private account between California and Mexico City (Pubols 2009, 36). The Naval Department of San Blas shipped goods up to California, and carried wrapped packages (*fardos*) back. Navy ships that sailed from Santa Barbara to San Blas linked with other navy ships that sailed from San Blas to Manila.

Whether otter hides arrived in Manila by galleon or by naval ship, the market for California's pelts was China. Initially, Hispanic merchants negotiated the sale of otter hides to the Spanish-speaking Catholic Chinese community in Manila (Ogden 1941, 22-23). One Hispanic merchant who passed through California on the Manila galleon in 1778 was Luis Pérez de Tagle (Yuste 1984, Table 8). In 1801, Pérez de Tagle submitted from Manila a petition to King Carlos IV to become governor of California.[13] Mexico City merchants were required after 1769 to operate through men with permanent residence in Manila (Yuste 2007, 154), which raises the possibility that Pérez de Tagle was the resident to whom Noriega intended to consign his shipments of otter hides. By the late 1780s, negotiations between Hispanic merchants and the Chinese tended to take place in Canton, where the Chinese merchant who dominated the market with the Spanish was Pan Zhencheng (Permanyer 2012, 532).

Although *presidio* soldiers had ceased to sell otter hides to Anglo-Americans by 1804, New England merchants found a way to stay in the otter trade. North of San Francisco, the Russians were hunting otters with Alaskan native islanders (*Alutiiq*) in kayaks (Ogden 1941, 45-65). The Russians had an agreement to trade with the Chinese, but only through Siberia (Bao 2006, 212).

[13] April 7, 1801 Luis Pérez de Tagle, Marqués de Salinas, petitions King of Spain. Copy in Bancroft Library (BL) Provincial State Papers MS xvii 105-13), MSS C-A 11.

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In order to sell otter hides at Canton, the Russians engaged in joint ventures with US merchants in California (Ogden 1941, 45-52). The Alutiiq came on board New England ships and hunted otter directly in the sea, while US merchants then negotiated sales of hides in Canton. So long as the Alutiiq did not land, the California military did nothing to stop them. Thus, the potential million-dollar payoff from otter hides was not one that the *Consulado de México* ever monopolized.

Based on new evidence—the 1796 permit to González de Noriega—we hypothesized that De la Guerra arrived in California in 1802 to enlist the aid of commanders in California to end the sale of hides to US merchants. After De la Guerra's marriage in 1804 to the daughter of Santa Bárbara's Commander Raymundo Carrillo, *Presidio* commanders in general began the concerted and effective campaign of blocking the export of otter hides by *presidio* soldiers to foreigners. Whether and how De la Guerra funneled those hides to his uncle is not clear, but both the Manila galleon and the military supply line connected California to Manila.

If this hypothesis is correct, what did De la Guerra and the *Consulado de México* offer the *presidio* commanders to obtain their cooperation? Commander Carrillo at Santa Bárbara hoped that with his daughter's marriage to De la Guerra, his family could advance into mercantile ranks—indeed we will see below that De la Guerra kept the implicit promise. A second commander was José Darío Argüello of San Francisco, who—like Carrillo—had a distinguished career that had resulted in his promotion to commander. Yet prior to De la Guerra's arrival, Argüello's only means of accumulating wealth beyond his modest salary had been to engage in contraband trade in the otter hides that abounded in California. De la Guerra provided Argüello's son Santiago with business training (Pubols 2009, 48).

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In 1810, Rodríguez died and the position of *habilitado general* in Mexico City became vacant. De la Guerra was promoted to the post, and Carrillo prepared to send his fourteen-year-old son José Antonio to accompany his daughter and son-in-law on the journey, so that the young man could apprentice in the Noriega family business in Mexico City. De la Guerra and his wife María Antonia left Santa Bárbara with three-year-old daughter Rita and the boy on the naval frigate *La Princesa,* which sailed to San Blas. Unbeknownst to them, San Blas had been taken by insurgents who took De la Guerra and his brother-in-law prisoner upon arrival. After marching them 140 miles inland to Ixtlán, the two men were imprisoned awaiting execution (Pubols 2009, 37-40; Fuster 1998, 618).

Before turning to post-1810 developments, preliminary conclusions can be drawn regarding how Bourbon institutions incentivized the practice of commerce by Hispanic subjects in California. The amount of merchandise brought in on mail ships from Manila could not have been large, Casa Ustáriz sent few ships, and Company ships arrived rarely. Indeed, if we return to our case study of California, we find that the Bourbons only haltingly opened the market up to rivals to the *Consulado de México*. Gálvez managed initially to find a way to supply California that did not grant *Consulado* merchants a monopoly. Yet as soon as Gálvez died—or perhaps as soon as otter hides reached a high price in China—the *Consulado de México* gained influence over California supply.

Part 2. Opening of trade, 1810 to 1821

War opens San Blas

We left De la Guerra awaiting execution by insurgent José María Mercado just outside San Blas. In January 1811, the royalist General José de la Cruz routed Mercado's forces and liberated De la Guerra and his brother-in-law. How De la Guerra's wife managed when her husband was seized is not known, but her young daughter died in the chaos (Pubols 2009, 40).

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In May 1811, De la Guerra returned with his wife and her brother to Santa Bárbara. Since their original destination was Mexico City, this return to California symbolizes how the Pacific Northwest of New Spain was by 1811 cut off from its traditional line of supply. Internal roads were blocked and Acapulco was under siege.

Between 1811 and 1813, General Cruz unleashed in San Blas an institutional structure close to the open trade in the Hispanic Pacific that Bourbon Reform had never delivered. Until 1815, trade was duty-free. Suddenly, merchants of Guadalajara supplanted Mexico City as financiers and distributors of imports in the northern Pacific (Trejo 2006a, 378; Trejo 2006b, 716-723). Asian imports from Manila arrived in San Blas regularly by way of the galleon, navy ships and private carriers.[14] Other ships sailed from Lima, with stops in Guayaquil and Panamá en route to San Blas. In ports such as Realejo and Sonsonate, they picked up some of the Company's cargo of British East India cotton (Valdés 1987, 233). Panamá was a source for British imports brought across the isthmus from Jamaica; in 1809, the Crown legalized their sale in Spanish America (Trejo 2006a, 353-358, 376; Pardo 1994, 86-89; Bonialian 2017, 27). The unexpected openness of the northern Pacific permits us to explore whether trade unleashed the type of productive energy in California that Enlightenment thinkers had foretold.

De la Guerra began to work on commission for San Blas merchant Juan José Zestafe who resided in Tepic, just inland from the port. Zestafe accepted cargos of Asian goods on behalf of Mexico City merchants. In May 1811, De la Guerra brought Zestafe's goods with him to California. In September 1811 the first private ship from San Blas, *El Mexicano*, arrived in San Francisco Bay, under José Arze, out of Guayaquil (Price and Duran 1958, 112). Arze was

[14] Zestafe to De la Guerra, August 12, 1812 (1045 L3) in De la Guerra Collection (DLG) in SBMAL.

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buying tallow, for which he paid 11 *reales* per *arroba*.[15] In August 1812, Zestafe wrote to De la Guerra that on his way back from Guayaquil, Arze had careened his damaged ship in Acapulco. Instead, Zestafe would be sending Nicolás Noé in *La Flora*. Noé sailed from Panamá to California in 1812 (Trejo 2006a, 368).[16] He brought $4,000 in goods, for which Californios made half the payment in tallow, the rest a check from De la Guerra on the *habilitación* (Bancroft 1885, 202).

Merchants from Guadalajara financed Noé's voyage from Panamá to California.[17] Zestafe arranged for De la Guerra to collect tallow from the nineteen missions and two pueblos to hold at the *presidio* ports in advance of Noé's arrival. Zestafe urged De la Guerra to get the missions organized, authorizing him to pay 10 to 12 *reales* per *arroba*. The voyage was a success, Antonio Linares wrote from San Blas, "*Los efectos que han producido estos* [unclear] *en los famélicos comerciantes ha excitado la codicia en todos.*"[18] Zestafe sent Noé on the *Flora* back to California in 1813.[19] In 1813, Juan Bandini in *La Reina de Los Ángeles* brought $7,000 of goods from Panamá.[20]

The last galleon, the *Magallanes*, departed Manila in 1811 (Cheong 1971, 149). In 1812, Zestafe told De la Guerra that this galleon had passed through San Blas in July. In 1813, the Cortes in Spain decreed the suppression of the Manila galleon and the opening of trade along its route to private ships financed by the Manila commercial community (Elizalde 2013, 341-342; Cheong 1971, 146; Valdés 1987, 231; Pérez 2015, 8). The San Blas navy ship *Activo* (José

[15] Sept. 22, 1811, José Viader of Santa Clara to Fr. Guilez of El Colegio de San Fernando, Mexico, Huntington Library, HM 19536-19564.

[16] Zestafe to De la Guerra, August 12, 1812 (DLG 1045 L2); Price and Duran 1958, 115.

[17] DLG 586 L1 and DLG 1045 L2.

[18] July 16, 1812 (DLG 586 L1): "The effect which [the *Flora*'s return] produced on the starving merchants excited greed in everyone."

[19] DLG 1045 L3.

[20] DLG 586 L1.

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María Narváez) sailed to Manila in 1813, and on the return to San Blas in 1814 stopped in Santa Bárbara to give De la Guerra "a lacquered Chinese trunk containing the goods of the attached invoice" (Pubols 2009, 43). In 1818 and 1821, the *San Ruperto* under Captain Varela plied the Manila-San Blas Route.[21] Since at least 1723, the Varela family had been active in Manila commerce (Yuste 2007, 457; Valdés 1987, 234).

In 1812, Antonio Linares wrote to De la Guerra that he was dissatisfied with his pay as surgeon of the Naval Department of San Blas, and planned to relocate to Manila, where he knew Manuel Varela.[22] In 1814, Linares indeed sailed to Manila on the *San Carlos* (Captain Pedro Toro), a ship which had stopped in California on the voyage from Manila.[23] By 1820, Varela would relocate to Tepic.[24] In 1823, De la Guerra sent his son Juan (age 10) to live with Varela so that he could receive an education (Pubols 2009, 300). By 1830, there was a Juan de la Guerra y Noriega integrated into Tepic's commercial world (Mayo 2006, 165).

The year 1820 witnessed the last of the private merchant ships from Manila sailing for an 1821 arrival in New Spain (Cheong 1971, 142). One of these was the *Santa Eulalia* which sailed in 1814 to California under José Díaz and Victorino Legaspi, where they exchanged $16,000 of goods for *habilitación* checks (Bancroft 1885, 204; Trejo 2006a, 377; Pubols 2009, 78). Some have argued that the Philippines-New Spain line was displaced by direct ships to the Americas out of India and Canton (Cheong 1971, 142, 150). Others point to the *Santa Rita* incident as the ruin of Manila commerce (Legarda 2002, 128). The *Santa Rita* left Manila in 1818 (García 2019, 3), picking up tallow in California in 1819 (Bancroft 1885, 438). Upon arrival in New

[21] Pedro de Leiva from Guaymas to Fr. Tomás de Ahumada at Mulegé, August 29, 1821 (DLG 582 L1). Sola from Monterey to De la Guerra, Feb. 18, 1818 (DLG 923 L30); Bancroft 1885, 291-292.

[22] Antonio Linares from San Blas to De la Guerra, Dec. 12, 1812 (DLG 586 L1 and L2); Fuster 1998, 600.

[23] Sola from Monterey to De la Guerra, Nov. 17, 1817 (DLG 923 L25, DLG 586 L2).

[24] Varela from Tepic to De la Guerra, April 19, 1820 (DLG 1001 L1).

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Spain, the *Santa Rita* sold the bulk of its Asian cargo in Mexico City, but then the royalist general Agustín Iturbide seized the 525,000 pesos to pay his troops, ruining the Pérez de Tagle family (García 2019, 3).

By the 1790s, thoughtful people in Spain could see the polity heading for crisis, and some advocated unleashing market forces as a way to advance able citizens. "Remove the obstacles that oppose themselves to the free play of the interest of agents," wrote Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos in 1795 (2008, 705). When he advocated removing restrictions, he implicitly assumed that everything else would remain constant. Yet structural change of such magnitude occurs only when there is systemic crisis. The opening of California's markets between 1810 and 1821 coincided with global war and insurrection. Bourbon rules were suddenly irrelevant. Men such as De la Guerra were unhindered from trading with Lima, Panamá, San Blas, Manila and Canton—but stability was elusive.

Hispanic merchants act to protect the California market

De la Guerra was between 1813 and 1816 solidifying his ties to US merchants even as he sought to remain in the good graces of Hispanic traders. Why? No ships came up from Lima in 1815 or 1816, so California was in need. Secondly, the prices that the Americans out of Canton offered would have been lower than those out of San Blas after 1815, when General Cruz levied 21.5% duties. Thirdly, because the Americans out of Canton were operating outside the law, they ingratiated themselves with the local authorities. However, Hispanic merchants did not sit idly by, but instead acted to protect their California market.

In 1813, Noé captured the *Mercury* under George Washington Eayrs at *Refugio*. *Refugio* was a smuggler's cove (Bancroft 1885, 213, 268, 274) which had been connected to *Presidio* Santa Bárbara command since 1798 (Bancroft 1884, 671 and 1885, 112, 172, 663). Eayrs had been

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ferrying on behalf of the Russians in Alaska otter hides to China, and investing the proceeds in cargos of Chinese goods to sell in California. Noé hoped to confiscate the $16,000 on board, but De la Guerra instead wrote a check on the *habilitación* account for Noé and kept the $16,000 cash in California (Miller 2001; Bancroft 1885, 208, 269; Trejo 2006c, 30-31). Noé took to San Blas the *Mercury* and her crew, with Eayrs sailing there as prisoner aboard the *Tagle* under José Cavenecia.[25]

In 1814, Cavenecia of the *Tagle* seized John Jacob Astor's *Pedler* at San Luis Obispo. Captain Samuel Northrop stated he had been trading with the Russians, and had stopped at San Luis Obispo only to obtain fresh water and provisions (Bancroft 1885, 271). When the *Tagle* seized the *Pedler*, it fell to José Darío Argüello as interim governor of California to declare the seizure licit or not. Mission San Luis Obispo was a notorious location for contraband trade. Even so, Argüello wrote that there was no evidence that the *Pedler* had traded, and should be freed (Bancroft 1885, 271). With this controversial decision, Argüello created the institutional space for Californios to trade with foreigners. He himself had long been implicated in contraband (Ogden 1941, 39-40). His son Luis Antonio succeeded José Darío Argüello as commander of *Presidio* San Francisco in 1806. The Russians were using Bodega Bay from which to send Alutiiq kayaks into San Francisco Bay. Commander Argüello demonstrated particular zeal in keeping Russians out of San Francisco Bay between 1809 and 1811, going so far as to order his men to shoot to kill Alutiiq hunting parties (Ogden 1941, 54-55). Commander Argüello may not have been willing to let Russians hunt otter in his jurisdiction, yet by 1812 when the Russians settled Fort Ross north of San Francisco, rumors abounded that cash-strapped Argüello traded flour from his jurisdiction's missions to the Russians (Duggan 2016, 69).

[25] Seizure of Mercury, AGI, Estado 31, No 28, foja 78.

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When appointed interim governor of Baja California, José Darío Argüello did not leave his post at Santa Bárbara. As Commander there since 1807, he was the highest-ranking officer in Alta California and expected to be made governor of Alta California. Perhaps his 1814 ruling against Hispanic mercantile interests (which quietly favored Californio trade with foreigners), stimulated the Viceroy to send instead the Basque merchant Pablo Vicente de Sola to govern California in 1815. Bitterly disappointed, Argüello relocated to Loreto, far from his children. By 1816, California presidios had elected his son Gervasio to represent them as *habilitado general* in Guadalajara.[26] In 1821, the elder Argüello retired to Guadalajara as well (Bancroft 1885, 358-359).

Incoming Alta California Governor Sola had entered the documentary record in 1787 as a merchant supplying Baja California with 100 mules, blankets, reins, and soap.[27] He also offered his services to larger merchants such as José Mariano de Fagoaga in Mexico City (Del Valle 2016, 132, 199). The Confraternity of Aránzazu grouped Basques in the city, so it was to this community that Sola turned to borrow (Del Valle 2012, 53, 58). Sola's brother Faustino served as a missionary at San Francisco between 1787 and 1790 (Geiger 1969, 247). From 1805 to 1807, Sola worked from Mexico City as *habilitado general*. The tax collector of the port of San Blas, Agustín Rivas, advanced Sola a portion of his salary prior to his departure for California in 1815.[28] This resume suggests Sola was a man loyal to the *Consulado de México* with ties to the Hispanic mercantile community of San Blas.

Yet if Sola expected De la Guerra to be his ally in the battle against foreign traders in California, the *habilitado*'s loyalties were shifting. When Sola arrived to govern in 1815, De la Guerra was

[26] Luis Antonio Martínez from San Luis Obispo to De la Guerra, Dec. 15, 1816. DLG 645 L2.
[27] BL CA-4. Provincial State Papers Tomo XVII, 1787 Nota (page 98).
[28] Sola to De la Guerra, Sept. 25, 1819 (DLG 923 L49).

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promoted to Commander of *Presidio* Santa Bárbara. As commander of the Channel, De la Guerra had more control over whether or not to prosecute contraband traders.

De la Guerra's new authority coupled with the lessons he had learned from the Eayrs fiasco may be what caused him to orchestrate the seizure of a second, and much larger, US ship out of Canton in 1816. The war of 1812 had reduced US merchants' ability to bring silver from South America to Canton, so they compensated by increasing their smuggling of opium into China as purchasing power over Chinese exports (Downs 2014, 125). The Philadelphia merchant Benjamin Chew Wilcox lived in Canton from 1805 to 1827 precisely to manage that trade.

De la Guerra learned of Wilcox when his brother James Smith Wilcox of the *Albatross* arrived together with Henry Gyzelaar of the *Lydia* in Refugio cove in 1816 (Bancroft 1885, 213, Ogden 1941, 73-75). To develop steady profits from opium involved a two-pronged process: first, traders in Canton brought opium in from Turkey or Bengal and sold it to the Chinese at a high price. The second half of the business was to use the profits to purchase tea, spices, Chinaware, and textiles for export. The trick then to a sustainable business model was to find a market for the Asian goods, which is precisely what California offered. Gyzelaar had picked up opium in Turkey in 1815, and traded it at Whampoa for a cargo of Asian goods (Downs 2014, 124).

After trading with the Russians at Sitka, Gyzelaar and Wilcox came to California with $90,000 worth of Asian goods. When they called at Refugio in 1816, three men already known for contraband trade seized the *Lydia*—De la Guerra, his brother-in-law Carlos Carrillo, and his assistant, Santiago Argüello (Bancroft 1885, 275-276). Once Gyzelaar and Wilcox were in custody, De la Guerra could negotiate with them. Given future events, it seems likely that De

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la Guerra not only purchased goods but also offered to be agent for the Wilcox concern in California. The challenge was to figure out how to persuade Governor Sola to release Gyzelaar.

For this, De la Guerra turned to his fellow Asturian, Fr. Luis Martínez at Mission San Luis Obispo. Martínez came up with the plan that Gyzelaar be permitted to sail his vessel on his own recognizance from Santa Bárbara to Monterey, where the governor could fully investigate the matter. Gyzelaar had motive and opportunity to trade en route with Martínez, at San Luis Obispo. That Martínez was involved in contraband with Gyzelaar comes through in his correspondence with De la Guerra, "Tell Henry [Gyzelaar] that he owes his liberty to my efficiency, that I need him to pay me with *palos de tinta* [dyes] from the ones he carries, and two other *pipas* [of wine]."[29] Martínez offered Gyzelaar a path to conducting trade in California despite its illegality, and Gyzelaar offered Martínez the opportunity to purchase goods out of Asia without paying customs duties.

Governor Sola wanted to expel Gyzelaar from California in order to keep the market for the traders in Mexico. Yet he was under pressure from De la Guerra, the Carrillos and the Argüellos—who controlled the ports of San Diego, Santa Bárbara and San Francisco. He finally agreed to the exchange, using as his precedent the decision by Governor Argüello to free the *Pedler* in 1814, a decision approved by the Viceroy.[30] The case illustrates how important it was to have a local contraband trader in government. After deciding not to stand in the way, Sola called in a favor from Martínez: to transport wood for him from Monterey to Santa Bárbara. If the Captain of the *Lydia* could not do it, then Martínez should come up with 100 yoke of oxen.[31] Sola was revealing in an unspoken way that he understood contraband trade had taken place,

[29] Somos 19, no date (DLG 649 L1).
[30] Sola from Monterey to De la Guerra, March 9, 1816 (DLG 923 L3).
[31] Ibid.

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because otherwise De la Guerra and Martínez would have owed him nothing. The wood did not fit on the *Lydia*, so in 1817, James Smith Wilcox returned from Canton to California on the larger ship, *Traveler*. He picked up the wood in Monterey and ferried it to Santa Bárbara for Sola.[32]

Later that year, Wilcox sailed to *Presidio* Loreto, intending to drop Concepcíón Argüello there to visit her father. En route, this brother of the American consul in Canton proposed marriage to this sister of the Commander of *Presidio* San Francisco and daughter of Baja California's governor, but she demurred (Bancroft 1885, 287). Lima trader Francisco Ramírez seized the *Traveler* outside Loreto, thereby eliminating a competitor.[33] The seizure of *Eayrs*' Mercury in 1813 as well as Wilcox' *Traveler* in 1817 must have been setbacks for supplying California out of Canton.

Luckily for Sola, traders from South America sailed to California in 1817 to obtain tallow. Their traditional sources of supply in Chile had fallen to insurgents. Captain José Cavenecia and his supercargo Juan José Mayo were bringing British goods to California by way of Panamá on the *San Antonio* (Pubols 2009, 45; Trejo 2006a, 368, 376; Bancroft 1885, 282). Sola calculated that California missions could produce 100,000 *arrobas* of tallow, and ordered them to give him 16%, a tax that would provide Sola an alternate source of military payroll.[34]

Cavenecia paid 18% duties to Sola, and as a result, raised his prices. Missionaries were incensed that on top of the 16% share of tallow they had already given Sola, they now had to pay prices 18% higher than expected.[35] A second South American trader was on the coast, Ignacio

[32] Sola to De la Guerra, June 6, 1819 (DLG 923 L41).
[33] Sola to De la Guerra, Dec. 22, 1817 (DLG 923 L28).
[34] To De la Guerra, August 23 and September 29, 1817 (DLG 923 L14 and L18).
[35] Martínez to De la Guerra, DLG 649, somos 19, no date.

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Mancisidor. He evaded customs duties by stopping at coves such as Refugio. Mancisidor's *Cazadora* was financed by the Scott from India, Diego Goldie (Trejo 2006a, 376; Bancroft 1885, 291). Goldie had operated in India in 1815-1816.[36] In 1817, merchants out of India began to bypass Manila to trade directly with South America (Cheong 1971, 150). Goldie was the supercargo of a ship which arrived from Buenos Aires to Chile in 1818. By 1820, he was living in Lima, where he advised British merchants to export copper and silver to India (Besseghini 2020, 5). Martínez asked De la Guerra to conduct trade with Mancisidor on his behalf-- a hint that De la Guerra was personally involved in evading customs duties.[37]

By 1818, *habilitación* finances were dangerously unclear. Between 1810 and 1813, the problem for California had been that San Blas naval supply ships had been diverted to assisting royalists in the siege of Acapulco. The funds in the *habilitación* account in Mexico City had remained valid, so that De la Guerra used such checks to supplement in-kind payments in tallow when he purchased goods from Hispanic traders. But by 1816, Sola's letters to the *habilitado general*—José Ignacio de Ormaechea—requesting clarity on where the accounts stood, went unanswered.[38] Perhaps this is why California Presidios elected one of their own, Gervasio Argüello, as new *habilitado general* in 1816 (Bancroft 1885, 341, 701). He went to Guadalajara, not Mexico City, because it was up to General José de la Cruz there whether or not to fund California out of the 21.5% customs duties that he had imposed on goods coming into San Blas in 1815 (Trejo 2006a, 363).

In 1817, ships from Lima and San Blas doing business in California were accepting checks written by De la Guerra on the *habilitación* account. Manila was an alternate source in the

[36] *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly for British India and Its Dependencies*, August 1816; *The Register of Shipping for 1818*. London: Society of Merchants, Shipowners and Underwriters.

[37] DLG 649 L1.

[38] September 23, 1819 to De la Guerra, DLG 923 L47.*"*

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Hispanic world. In 1816, Pedro Negrete brought the only Hispanic ship to California, his *La Paz*. As late as 1818, Sola was able to pay the *San Ruperto* (out of Manila) with a check written on the *habilitación* account (Bancroft 1885, 251, 291-292). In 1818, Fermín de Genoa y Aguirre out of Lima was in California with the *Hermosa Mexicana* (Pubols 2009, 44, 46), but his prices were high.[39] By 1819, the Manila ship *Santa Rita* insisted on tallow, of which California could only come up with $6,000 although the province had hoped to purchase $14,000 in goods. California later made a second payment of $3,000 in tallow by shipping it to San Blas on Zestafe's ship the *San Javier* (Bancroft 1885, 438; Pérez 2015, 6). De la Guerra's credit as *habilitado* was no longer solid because Spain's funding for California's military was dwindling.

Spain fails to protect California

A French-born privateer acting under Buenos Aires' flag, Hypolyte Bouchard, attacked California's coastal settlements in 1818, sacking Monterey and burning Rancho Refugio to the ground. Gyzelaar had given De la Guerra advance notice of the impending attack, so Californians were able to minimize casualties. Nonetheless, the incident opened the military command's eyes to the colony's vulnerability. To create the illusion of a larger force during the attack, De la Guerra had his men march around a hill in a circle over and over again (Pubols 2009, 53).

In 1819, the San Blas navy hired the ship *Reina de Los Ángeles* (Captain Juan Bandini) to transport 200 additional troops to California. In 1817, Guadalajara merchant Pedro Olazagarre had with his Lima-based Genoese son-in-law, José Rodulfo, financed the ship's voyage all the way from Cádiz to California. Before 1810, Olazagarre and Rodulfo had been contraband traders in British goods out of Panamá. Between 1811 and 1815, a brisk trade in such goods

[39] November 15, 1817 Sola to De la Guerra from Monterey (DLG 923 L23, see also L28).

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emerged between Panamá and San Blas, which was the context for Olazagarre's relocation to Guadalajara. The *Reina* purchased cacao in Guayaquil, a prized commodity in Spain. When the *Reina* returned from California to San Blas, political winds must have changed because the ship was confiscated for transporting troops. The ambitious voyage from Cádiz to California was a financial disaster for Olazagarre and Rodulfo (Lévano 2019, 88; Bancroft 1885, 253).

In California, the cost of sustaining the military jumped from $86,000 to $150,000, yet the new men arrived with only $10,000 (Bancroft 1885, 186, 253, 255). In a panic, Governor Sola sent De la Guerra to Guadalajara with instructions to continue on to the Viceroy in Mexico City where a face to face meeting might elicit funds. There was a more private story to Sola's desperation. Before sailing for California in 1815, Sola had borrowed $1,000 from Olazagarre.[40] Sola had intended to repay the debt out of his $4,000 annual salary as governor. By 1818, Sola was owed back pay for 3 years. Sola's letters to the *habilitado general* in Mexico City were eliciting no response. De la Guerra made the journey, but the Vicerroy refused to meet with him, sending word to Guadalajara that only $30,000 was available—20% of California's needs (Bancroft 1885, 261). By 1819, De la Guerra knew that Spain would neither finance nor protect California.

Turn to the British

By 1820, the British were financing Hispanic ships plying the coastal-trade—such as De la Guerra's old friend Zestafe on the *San Francisco Xavier*, and Juan Malarín on the *Señoriano* (Bancroft 1885, 293). Mexico only provided $36,000 to California's military in 1821—about 20% of the need (Bancroft 1885, 435). Before leaving California in 1822, Sola took advantage of the Mexican decree of December 15, 1821 opening ports to develop a stream of customs

[40] Sola to De la Guerra, September 25, 1819 (DLG 923 L48).

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duties for cash-strapped California (Bancroft 1885, 473). He signed a three-year contract to sell hides, tallow, soap and cured beef from missions to McCulloch and Hartnell, associates of John Begg in Lima, whose ultimate financier was James Brotherston in Liverpool. The terms were 1 *peso* per hide and 2 *pesos* per *arroba* of tallow (Ogden 1927, 255). The rate for tallow was an increase over the typical 12 *reales* per *arroba*, but the price Californians received for hides was low, perhaps because McCulloch and Hartnell were paying export duties so Sola might fund payroll. By 1825, De la Guerra would cement his relationship with Brotherston when he sent his son to be educated in Liverpool (Pubols 2009, 128), and married his daughter to Begg's man in California, William Edward Hartnell (Pubols 2009, 119-122). Mancisidor was the second British-financed operation in California, and by evading customs duties, he was able to offer twice the price of the Hartnell contract for hides (Pubols 2009, 117; Ogden 1927, 258). Despite his family tie to Hartnell, De la Guerra conducted business with both mercantile houses. The British presence in the trade of newly independent Latin American republics opened a path back to stability for Hispanic merchants in the Pacific.

Part III. Markets and politics

Eighteenth century ideology held that pursuit of self-interest in open markets would unleash economic growth. And yet this story of an actual merchant illustrates that his commercial family's success was intimately tied into the Bourbon structure of California. Before 1810, the post of *habilitado* meant De la Guerra had access to a payroll account that opened up credit and free transport. The Spanish flag inspired enough respect to protect California's modest ports from attack. Though the Bourbon Reformer Gálvez who designed California's institutions was no friend to Mexico City mercantile interests, the Spanish Crown's support for a set of institutions gave the merchants of Mexico City a structure which they had coopted by the 1790s.

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In 1821 as in 1801, an outside observer would have seen presidios at the three Pacific ports of San Francisco, Monterey, and San Diego—with a fourth within the Channel of Santa Bárbara. Yet the incentives and constraints that channeled the behavior of the commanders at these institutions had changed. By 1821, not only had the government commanding the institutions switched from Spanish to Mexican, but furthermore after 1819 neither Spain nor Mexico was willing to provide more than 25% of military payroll. This enforced independence compelled the province of California to develop a source of revenue in the form of customs duties on international trade. Commanders could no longer rely upon promotion to higher position within a government bureaucracy or even within Mexico City's mercantile community. Instead, they used their control of ports to solidify personal relationships with merchants in commercial networks that extended from Mexico to Peru to the Philippines and Canton. Indeed, while *Presidio* commanders had probably long shipped commercial products on naval ships, it was not until 1811 that the first private ship under José Arze sailed from San Blas to California. Between 1811 and 1821 commerce rather than defense became the primary activity of California's ports, in a transition similar to that experienced by the port of San Blas to which they were attached.

Trade between California and Lima, San Blas, Manila, and Canton moved from the shadows into the light. And yet this opening coincided with the collapse of institutions which had given trade predictability and minimized risk. The Crown could not protect De la Guerra and his family from insurgents at San Blas in 1810. In 1818, Spain's flag offered the California colony little protection from an insurgent privateer. In 1819, Olazagarre lost his *Reina de Los Ángeles*. In 1821, Iturbide seized the profits of the Manila merchants backing the *Santa Rita*. The Crown sent extra soldiers to California but not the means to pay them, which made for an unsettling social situation. De la Guerra found that to provide his family and his troops with a more stable

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future, he should tie his community to Guadalajara and to British commerce. He successfully negotiated his children's transition into prominent positions in the new English-dominated world. Yet it seems likely that he looked back on 1810 as a moment of great loss.

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