Islanders and Empire examines the role smuggling played in the cultural, economic, and sociopolitical transformation of Hispaniola from the late sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. With a rare focus on local peoples and communities, the book analyzes how residents of Hispaniola actively negotiated and transformed the meaning and reach of imperial bureaucracies and institutions for their own benefit. By co-opting the governing and judicial powers of local and imperial institutions on the island, residents could take advantage of, and even dominate, the contraband trade that reached the island’s shores. In doing so, they altered the course of the European interimperial struggles in the Caribbean by limiting, redirecting, or suppressing the Spanish crown’s policies, thus taking control of their destinies and that of their neighbors in Hispaniola, other Spanish Caribbean territories, and the Spanish empire in the region.

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Islanders and Empire

Smuggling and Political Defiance in Hispaniola, 1580–1690

JUAN JOSÉ PONCE VÁZQUEZ

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
Para Julie, Santiago y Alejandro.
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Acknowledgments

Thanking people in the front matter of academic books is a genre in itself, one that could be considered invariably and unavoidably performative. At the same time, it can also be a powerful act in which you gather your own band of friends and dear ones who have supported you along the way, so this is what I plan to do here.¹ I do not see myself capable of avoiding all (or most of) the clichés, so please allow me at least to embrace those that are dearest to me and try to make them mine as I assemble my super team.

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¹
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