

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SPAIN UNDER CHARLES V, SPAIN'S NEW
CHARLEMAGNE

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Charles I, King of Spain, or Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, was the most powerful ruler in Europe since Charlemagne. With a Germanic background, and speaking French, Charles became King of Spain in 1516. Yet secondary sources and available sixteenth century Spanish sources such as Spanish Royal Council records, local records of Castro Urdiales in Castile, and Charles's correspondence show that he continued the policies of his predecessors in Spain, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. He strove to strengthen his power and unify Spain and his empire using Castilian strength, a Castilian model of government, Roman law, religion, his strong personality, and a loyal and talented bureaucracy. Charles desired to be another Charlemagne, but with his base of power in Spain.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

Introduction

Of all lands which stretch from the West to India, you are the most beautiful, O Spain, sacred and ever-blessed mother of leaders and of nations. By right you are now queen of all the provinces, from whom not only the West but also the East obtains its light. You are the glory and ornament of the world, the most illustrious part of the earth, in which the glorious fecundity of the Getic people rejoices much and abundantly flourishes.¹

That was how Isidore of Seville saw Spain in the seventh century, an outlook similar to that of sixteenth century Spaniards under the rule of Charles I. At La Coruña, where Charles made known his imperial program, Pedro Ruiz Mota, Bishop of Badajoz and one of the Spaniards who came from Burgundy with Charles, said to the *cortes* (parliament): “Now is returned the ancient glory of Spain...By God’s grace our Spanish King is made King of the Romans and Emperor of the World.”² This Spanish king, Charles I, also Duke of Burgundy, head of the Hapsburg dynasty, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and controller of the lands in the New World that the Spanish conquistadors were taking, was a powerful ruler hampered mainly by the extent of his domains. Ramón Menéndez Pidal said about him: “Charles V is the first and the last Emperor of the old world and the new.”³ This is doubly true, for he was the last great Holy Roman Emperor

¹ Isidore of Seville, *History of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi*, translated from the Latin by Guido Donini, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 1.

² John Lynch, *Spain Under the Hapsburgs*, (New York: New York University Press, 1981), vol. 1, 41.

³ Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Charles V: elected emperor and hereditary ruler*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 188.

over much of a dramatically changing Europe, and was the first to gain a large empire spanning from Europe to the Americas. This empire found its basis in the newly unified Spanish nation under the rule of King Charles I from 1516 to 1556.

Holy Roman Emperor Charles V is remembered for many things: his lack of toleration for the German Lutherans, his devout Roman Catholicism, the expansion of Spanish interests into the New World, the precious metals brought into Spain from the Americas during his reign, his desire to gain back parts of Burgundy taken generations before by France, and his desire for a unified Catholic Europe to check the Turkish invasions and create a world-wide Christian empire. The events during his reign are well known, but his intentions and ideas on politics and administration in the case of Spain are in need of further clarification. This thesis centers interest on Charles's government administration as King of Spain. This first chapter introduces the topic, explains my reason for writing this thesis, talks about the numerous literary sources and records pertaining to Charles's political ideas and administration for Spain, presents the historiography of Charles, and discusses the historiography of sixteenth century Spain.

Charles I, King of Spain, was not born in Spain. Charles entered Spain with the political theory he learned as a child and the experience he gained from Burgundian government. When Charles came from Burgundy he had different ideas on how to rule Castile and Aragon, the two principal kingdoms of Spain. The Comunero Revolt in Castile in 1520 and his stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529 made him realize that he must give Spain precedence and rule it in a Spanish way, not a Burgundian one. He was accustomed to a parliamentary system in Burgundy and to limitations placed upon him as

a ruler. Once he gave up Burgundian ideas, he found the system of government in Castile was more effective in ruling Spain. Charles continued the majority of the social, religious, economic, military, and governmental policies of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. He technically continued their policy of autonomous regions in Spain, but had more opportunity to bring gradual centralization to Spain under the domination of Castile. In Castile he found a model of government he appreciated and tried to use in other places he ruled. With its strong office of monarch, royal control of permanent councils, and support for the monarchy from the towns, Charles found that Castile was much easier to rule than his other lands.

Charles desired the final word on almost everything, but the idea that Charles was an absolute monarch in complete control of the government and without need of counsel, is incorrect. Charles's government in Spain consisted of permanent councils under his direct control, but with more power than councils in an absolutist state. The system was inherently flawed, but because of Charles's strong personality, great attention to governmental affairs, and the skills of his loyal governmental officials, the system was effective during his reign. While Charles was not an absolute monarch, he became closer to being so as he got older, gaining great power over the parliamentary system of Spain. Charles's strong personality, created and fueled by his desire to be a great ruler like Charlemagne, controlled Spanish government in such a way that it was not structured to run under a weak or dictatorial monarch. This change in Spain's system of government was not beneficial to Spain, causing absolutist government and economic decline in the generations that followed. Charles controlled a large amount of land in Europe, as well as

the newly acquired lands of the Americas to which Spain claimed much and began to possess more of throughout his reign. But Charles placed more importance upon Spain than his other lands. The “Golden Age” Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella became his own as Charles made it his base of power and his home throughout his long reign.

I have written this thesis as a preliminary study of Spain during the reign of Charles. The subject is too vast to be studied thoroughly in a thesis, and the vast majority of sources concerning Spain under Charles are too general to lay the groundwork for a more specific study at this point. Historians of Spain have traditionally been dependent upon narrative sixteenth century Spanish chronicles when studying Spain under Charles, rather than Spanish government records or the correspondence of Charles with government officials. Chronicles about Charles, attractive and articulate eulogies of Charles’s personal rule of Spain and the rest of his personal empire, are helpful in determining Charles’s personality and style of rule, but not in determining the specifics of his system of rule in Spain. I attempt to glean useful information about Charles’s government from these narrative sources because they provide some helpful material about his rule in Spain. But they cannot be substituted for administrative documents. By not placing emphasis on necessary, bedrock sources, such as Spanish government records and Charles’s correspondence, Spanish historians have merely scratched the surface of the history of Spain under Charles. I have broken new ground by looking at a small number of administrative documents and testing old theories, bringing together sixteenth century Spanish narrative chronicles, Spanish records, Charles’s correspondence, and

secondary sources concerning Charles and Spain to provide a beginning for further study of Spain's administration during Charles's reign.

There is no definitive work concerning Spain during the rule of Charles, especially concerning Charles's administration in Spain. There are two reasons for this. First, histories of Charles have typically stressed his role as Holy Roman Emperor, giving little emphasis to his rule as Spanish king. Historians have seen Charles's empire as one large entity, and they lump the histories of the Empire and Spain together, basing Charles's personal rule upon the legacy and prestige of the Holy Roman Empire. In my thesis I show that Charles showed more finesse, tailoring his rule in each place according to what would work, and that the history of Spain cannot be lumped together with that of the Empire. And since Charles treated Spain as his home and the base of his personal empire, it should receive equal treatment in any history written about him. Second, stressing continuity in Spanish history, Spanish historians have traditionally written large, very general histories of Spain, and Spain during the rule of Charles has been made a small, un-researched section of their works. While some compartmentalization of Spain's history has been done (such as the large amount of research done concerning the reigns of the Catholic Monarchs), Spain under Charles has received little attention. The histories that come closest to specifically studying the history of Spain under Charles encompass the years before, during, and after his reign. Some of the most helpful of these sources are *The Golden Century of Spain: 1501-1621* by Trevor Davies, *Imperial Spain, 1479-1716* and *Spain and its World: 1500-1700* by J.H. Elliott, *Spain: 1479-1688* by Martin Hume, *Golden Age Spain* by Henry Kamen, *Spain Under the Habsburgs* by John Lynch, and

Imperial Spain by Edward Salmon. But these histories do not specifically deal with Charles's rule of Spain, or emphasize his administration in Spain. I bring these and other secondary sources concerning Charles and Spain together, glean relevant material, and present a useful view of Spain during the rule of Charles with an emphasis on his government administration.

In addition to the works of the aforementioned historians, I have tried to use the works of those historians who make at least some use of sixteenth century Spanish government records and Charles's correspondence with government officials in addition to the usual Spanish narrative chronicles used by most historians of Spain. Jaime Vicens Vives and a few other Spanish historians began a movement in the twentieth century emphasizing more objective research of sixteenth century Spain. Some historians have continued this trend, seeking to study Spain of the sixteenth century more thoroughly using available records. I use the works of these historians: Roger Merriman, Manuel Fernández Alvarez, J.H. Elliott, Henry Kamen, John Lynch, and Trevor Davies. These historians make some use of available sixteenth century Spanish records, but acknowledge that further research is necessary for a thorough study of Spain under Charles. By bringing the works of these historians together with the works of some of the best historians of Charles (Karl Brandt, Edward Armstrong, William Robertson, Wim Blockmans, Royall Tyler, and W.L. McElwee), and by using key sixteenth century sources concerning Charles and Spain, I introduce the topic of Spain under Charles with the intent of setting up more specific study in the future that emphasizes further study of available sixteenth century Spanish primary sources.

The sixteenth century Spanish sources used for this thesis are narrative chronicles concerning Spain under Charles, Spanish government records, and Charles's correspondence with government officials. The chronicles were not difficult to obtain, although translations were not always available. Those studied for this thesis were Charles's memoirs; *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V* by Pedro Girón; *Annals of the Emperor Charles the Fifth* by Francisco Lopez de Gómara; *Historia del Emperador Carlos V* by Pedro Mexía; *The Life and Deeds of Emperor Charles V, The Civil Wars of Spain at the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the 5th*, and *The History of Charles the Vth, Emperor and King of Spain, the Great Hero of the House of Austria* by Prudencio de Sandoval; *Crónica del emperador Carlos V* by Alonso de Santa Cruz; and *Cronica Burlesca del Emperador Carlos V* by Francesillo de Zuñiga. While there are many more sixteenth century Spanish government records in the archives in Salamanca and Simancas, Spain, I mainly used the following bedrock primary sources because they were available to me: *El Consejo Real de Carlos V*, edited by Pedro Gan Gimenez, and *Libro del Consejo (1494-1522) y documentos medievales del Archivo Municipal de Castro Urdiales*, edited by Emma Blance Campos, Elisa Alvarez Llopis, Jose Angel Garcia de Cortazar, and Ruiz de Aguirre. *El Consejo Real de Carlos V* is a collection of Royal Council records from before and during the reign of Charles. *Libro del Consejo (1494-1522) y documentos medievales del Archivo Municipal de Castro Urdiales* is a collection of local government records from Castro Urdiales in Castile. To review Charles's correspondence with his government officials I used the following sources: *Corpus Documental de Carlos V* (volumes 1-5), edited by Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *La*

Historia de España en sus Documentos: El siglo XVI, edited by Fernando Diaz-Plaja, and *Correspondence of the Emperor Charles V*, edited by William Bradford.

In studying two collections of Spanish government records my thesis checks conventional wisdom concerning sixteenth century Spanish history and gives some indication of what Charles's governance was like. It looks at Charles himself, and centers emphasis on Charles's administration, putting together the narrative material about his government and testing it with administrative sources. Because of the work of the previously mentioned historians, the study of Spain under Charles is in the midst of a beginning movement that emphasizes more specific study of Spain's history and makes increasing use of available sixteenth century Spanish sources. But, as I mentioned earlier, a definitive work concerning Spain under Charles has yet to be written. This is unfortunate and should be remedied. The outcome of further study of Spain under Charles is of extreme importance to the history of Spain. Defining the rule of Charles in Spain is essential to determining when, and whether, there was a "Golden Age" during his reign. And a history of Charles's government administration in Spain is especially helpful in determining the reasons for decline in Spanish power in the centuries following Charles's death.

Historiographical Review

In giving a historiographical background for this paper it is appropriate to provide two sections. Since many events of Charles's reign as emperor took place outside of Spain, two overlapping but different topics result. His imperial title is usually seen as more prestigious than his Spanish kingship. Therefore, the historiography of Charles is

often tied to other areas of Europe, leaving Spain a small section of his history. The history of Spain is often seen as one long history, and only a small amount of specific study of Spain during the rule of Charles has been done. The first section of this historiographical review is chronological, reviewing the primary sources of the history of Charles from the sixteenth century, the chronicles and histories, and then the subsequent opinions of historians of Charles's reign in Spain from the seventeenth century to the present. The second section discusses in a chronological manner historical sources concerning Spain from the sixteenth century to the present, deals with the past emphasis on continuity and unity in Spanish history from the fifteenth century onward, reviews schools of thought in Spanish history, and discusses the eventual decline of Spanish power in the centuries after Charles's rule.

In this first section of the historiographical review, I show the evolution of historians' views concerning Charles as a ruler. I discuss the sources available concerning the history of Charles, presenting some of the many sources that I used to gain an understanding of Charles's rule. I use Charles's memoirs, chronicles about Charles, sixteenth century Spanish pro-Charles works, and secondary sources about Charles from the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. I use most of these sources throughout the thesis to discuss Charles's rule, especially concerning his government administration in Spain. I seek to test narrative histories of Charles by using primary sources such as his memoirs, chronicles written about Charles by historians living during his reign, and pro-Charles propaganda; and secondary sources about Charles, to see which sources match up with my findings from Spanish administrative

documents. By using Spain as a particular case I am able to gain a new view of the entire picture concerning Charles.

The amount of historical commentary on Charles, especially in relation to his rule in Spain, was affected by Charles's attitudes. Charles mistrusted historians and even hated them on occasion, calling some, like Johann Sleidan, flattering liars who concealed the truth of history.⁴ Yet he was an avid fan of history and was extremely well read in the works of many historians of ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and medieval Europe. But he wanted his history to contain truth as he saw it. No historian ever met up to Charles's standards in writing a history for him. After asking six historians to write a history of his reign and not being satisfied, he eventually wrote his own.⁵

Charles's memoirs, the beginning of which he dictated to William van Male, were suppressed from publication by his son Philip II.⁶ In fact, the memoirs were not found and published until the nineteenth century, and even then few knew of them, leading William Bradford in 1850 and William Stirling-Maxwell in 1890, to be ignorant of their existence.⁷ One of the reasons for this late publication is that Charles felt some guilt for his preoccupation with his own life. He kept his history locked away until he sent it to Philip in 1552.⁸ He had further opportunity to publish his memoirs after 1552, especially after his abdication in 1556, but chose not to. After Charles's death in 1558, Philip could have published the history but did not; perhaps not knowing when his father wanted to

⁴ William Bradford, *Correspondence of the Emperor Charles V*, (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty, 1850), 360.

⁵ Pedro Navascués Palacio, *Carolus V Imperator*, (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1999), 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷ William Stirling-Maxwell, *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*, (London: John C. Nimmo, 1890), 328; Bradford, 359.

⁸ Karl Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V*, (London: Jonathon Cape Thirty Bedford Square, 1963), 589.

make it public. The originals disappeared and the only copy, found much later, was a Portuguese version made before Charles's death.⁹

Charles wrote his memoirs in 1550, and in them he gives a detailed account of his reign, writing in the third person. Throughout the work can be seen his religiously devout character. In his personality can be seen a mixture between a medieval desire for glory and a Renaissance-like desire to write an objective and detailed history of his life. In the preface that he writes to his son Philip can be seen the uncertainty in Charles's mind concerning the writing of his memoirs.

This history is that which I composed in French, when we were traveling on the Rhine, and which I finished at Augsburg. It is not such as I could wish it, but God knows that I did not do it out of vanity, and, if he has been offended at it, my offence must be attributed rather to ignorance than to malice. Similar things have often provoked his anger: I should not like this to rouse his ire against me! In these circumstances, as in others, reasons will not be wanting to him. May he moderate his anger, and deliver me from the dilemma in which I see myself! I was on the point of throwing the whole into the fire; but as I hope, if God gives me life to arrange this history in such guise that he shall not find himself ill served therein, and that it may not run the risk of being lost here, I send it to you that you may have it kept down there, and that it may not be opened until...I the King.¹⁰

The memoirs show Charles's Renaissance side, and Karl Brandi proposes that through them can be seen the change of Charles from a Burgundian youth desiring fame in battle to a Renaissance emperor who instead desired immortality through history.¹¹ Charles's manner in writing is close to that of humanist historians of the time, and his approach to war and fame similar to that of many Renaissance thinkers. But Brandi says that because of Charles's fear of publishing his history he cannot be seen as becoming a

⁹ Ibid., 589.

¹⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *World's Greatest Literature: Royal Memoirs: Annals; Autobiographical Leaves by Charles V, Emperor of Germany*, (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1901), 3.

¹¹ Brandi, 589.

true Renaissance man in his lifetime. Overall, the memoirs give Charles's perspective on many of the details concerning his rule as Holy Roman Emperor, as well as King of Spain. They are an important source for the study of Charles's history and recent historians have used them to gain a perspective on his personality.

Charles's reaction to histories written about him was to refuse to consider them, saying: "No, I will not read or hear what is written of me; others may when I have left this life."¹² Charles's attitude toward certain historians during his reign caused some to become reluctant to write about him. Also, in the centuries following Charles's death, Spanish kings, German emperors, and the troubles of sixteenth century Spain were not great topics of interest to historians in a world of quickly growing English predominance.

Charles's desire for accuracy in history, however, did not diminish his appreciation for the value of propaganda. He used several people from the "Intelligentsia" of Spain to write for and about him for propaganda purposes, and their works had a great impact upon how Charles was viewed by Spanish historians. Men such as Garcilaso de la Vega, Alfonso de Valdés, Fray Antonio de Guevara, Juan de Valdés, Juan Luis Vives, Cristóbal de Villalón, Pedro Mexía, and Hernán Pérez de Oliva were writers who brought forth a favorable view of Charles that Spaniards accepted. This group of intellectuals led the Counter-Reformation in Spain during the rule of Charles, as well as the Europeanization of Spain and the unification of Catholic Europe that Charles pushed for.¹³ They were a group of orthodox Catholics, sympathetic Erasmian humanists,

¹² Bradford, 361.

¹³ Francisco Eguiagaray Bohigas, *Los Intelectuales Españoles de Carlos V*, (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1965), 11-12.

and reformers, who provided an outlet for Charles's propaganda in Spain that tried to unify that country with the rest of Charles's empire. They were extremely important to Spain's literature of the time, the stability of Spain throughout Charles's reign, and the way in which Spaniards saw their king.¹⁴ Such statements as "Cesar, con cello pio y con valiente animo..." (Caesar, with pious zeal and with valiant courage...) coined by Vega gave Spaniards a glorious image of Charles that made him a popular king and emperor.¹⁵

These writers were important in Charles's attempts to gain greater control over Spain and to bring his empire into further unity. Alfonso de Valdés was one of Charles's imperial secretaries, and Guevara was one of his official historians. Both were ingenious humanists who wrote for Charles's imperial propaganda machine in Spain.¹⁶ Alfonso, a close friend of Erasmus, wrote humanist works that glorified Charles and made him look "Christian and Spanish."¹⁷ Alfonso was important in shaping the way Spain, and the rest of Europe, saw Charles after the sack of Rome by Charles's imperial forces in 1527, in his apologetic work *Dialogo de las Cosas Ocurridas in Roma*.¹⁸ Alfonso's brother, Juan de Valdés, was more militant when it came to orthodox Catholicism, and his Erasmianism had more to do with religion than politics, desiring reform in the Church. Juan de Valdés fought for Castilian dominance in Spain and a universal culture under the rule of Emperor Charles.¹⁹ Juan Luis Vives provided Spanish intellectuals with humanist moral and philosophical instruction in his work *Instruccion de la Mujer Cristiana*

¹⁴ Ibid., 111.

¹⁵ Ibid., 27, my translation.

¹⁶ Ibid., 46, 57.

¹⁷ Alfonso de Valdes, *Dialogo de las Cosas Ocurridas en Roma*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpa, S.A., 1969), xviii, xxviii, xiv-xv.

¹⁸ Ibid., lvii, 3.

¹⁹ Eguiagaray Bohigas, 69, 79, 82.

(Instruction of a Christian Bride), bringing humanism into a more solidly constructed philosophy in Spain and attempting to bring Spain into unity with Charles's other lands, especially Italy.²⁰

In addition to Charles's propaganda machine, several historians wrote chronicles about Charles and Spain during the sixteenth century. Spain's golden age of the sixteenth century, wherein so much happened, was not a place devoid of able historians and chroniclers, and there are a number of sources concerning Charles. This includes a thorough record of the comings and goings of the emperor by his private secretary Vandenesse.²¹ And such men as Fernando del Pulgar, Francisco López de Gómara, Alonso de Zurita, Juan de Mariana, Prudencio de Sandoval, and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza created "an era of diligent, conscientious historical scholarship combined with elegance and grace of expression."²² Others such as Juan Ginés Sepúlveda, Francesillo de Zúñiga, Pedro Mexía, Pedro Girón, and Alfonso de Santa Cruz also wrote about Charles. For this paper the chronicles of Gómara, Sandoval, Mexía, Girón, and Zúñiga are evaluated. I used these chronicles because they are either the most important or are central in their usefulness. Other important chronicles, like those of Guevara, Santa Cruz, Sepúlveda, and Zurita were not used as much because they are of less importance or are fairly similar to the chronicles evaluated here. Spanish chronicles of Charles were chosen

²⁰ Ibid., 92-93.

²¹ Vandenesse, "The Itinerary of the Emperor Charles V," in Francisco López de Gómara, *Annals of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*, Francisco López de Gómara, edited by Roger Bigelow Merriman, 483 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).

²² Edward James Schuster, "Pedro de Mexía and Spanish Golden Age Historiography," *Renaissance News* 13, no. 1 (1960): 3.

rather than non-Spanish chronicles such as Johann Sleidan's, because it is Charles's rule in Spain that is being studied.

Lopez de Gómara's *Annals of Emperor Charles V* is one of the most important sixteenth century chronicles written about Charles. It provides a succinct, overall history of Charles's reign that begins before he became king in Spain and goes through his last abdication in 1556. Gómara used several sources of his time, such as Mexía, Lorenzo Galindez de Carvajal, Zurita, and Guevara. Many historians have used this source to gain a general picture of the events of Charles's reign. In the *Annals* we find important information about the Comunero Revolt which began in 1520 in Castile. Gomara says, "The Communes of Castile begin their revolt, but after a good start had a bad ending, and exalted beyond what it had previously been, the power of the King whom they desired to abase."²³ From his perspective the outcome of the revolt was advantageous for Spanish royal power and Charles. He goes on to give the reasons for the revolt. "They rose in revolt because the King was leaving the realm, because of the *servicio* (tax), because of the foreign Regent, because of the large amounts of money which were being taken out of the realm, and because the chief office of the treasury had been given to Chievres, the archbishopric of Toledo to Guillaume de Croy, and knighthoods of the Military Orders to foreigners."²⁴ Other important events of Charles's reign in Spain and the Holy Roman Empire are recorded with some commentary, and mention is made of other chroniclers and their works. There is reference to political actions such as *cortes* meetings or orders

²³ Francisco López de Gómara, *Annals of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*, edited by Roger Bigelow Merriman, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 58-59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

from Charles to tax Castile, but these are mere references with very little commentary.

Some of these have to do with the Empire, but most with Spain.

The work is somewhat objective for its time, but still has an official Spanish slant to it, sometimes getting off track on stories of questionable truth to boost the outlook of Spain and the emperor. Charles is shown to be a capable and effective ruler of Spain and his other lands, as well as a defender of Roman Catholicism against the Turks and the Lutherans. He is also shown as a man of great character and strong personality. Under the year 1547, while discussing the death of King Francis I of France, Gómara says of Charles, “for it is a matter of common knowledge that Charles has the advantage over Francis in his manner of life, in his administration of justice, and in his respect for religion, which are virtues which pertain to the character; as well as in riches and realms, which are matters of fortune.”²⁵ He goes on to say, “For Charles never broke his word after having sworn to observe it, as did the King, nor provoked war, as may be inferred from the fact itself.”²⁵ The many wars and travels of Charles are recorded here, and the sections concerning the end of Charles’s reign show the transfer of powers from Charles to his son Philip. The chronicle shows that even after his abdication, Charles seemed extremely concerned with and active in the governments of his lands.

Prudencio de Sandoval used much of Gómara’s work in his own. A few of Sandoval’s works are *The History of the Life and Deeds of the Emperor Charles V*, *The History of Charles V Emperor and King of Spain*, and *The Civil Wars of Spain at the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the 5th*. Each of these looks at the events of Charles’s

²⁵ Ibid., 131.

reign, and gives more commentary than Gómara's work. Each tries to show what Charles's personality was like, and historians have used these works to create a portrait of Charles's character. The chronicle discusses events during Charles's reign, and evaluates his policies on international relations, but the specifics of Charles's political goals and governmental ideas for Spain are hard to find.

Historians have used Sandoval's *The History of the Life and Deeds of the Emperor Charles V* as a good review of the events of Charles's reign in Spain. It discusses the civil unrest in Spain at the beginning of Charles's reign caused by the influx of Flemings into positions of power in Spain and the departure of Charles to accept his imperial crown. It seems that at the beginning of Charles's reign Spain was not his first priority, and the Comunero Revolt was a rude awakening. But after the revolt, and Charles's stay in Spain during the 1520s, Charles's policy toward Spain changed, and he himself became a Spaniard. This was something that many Spaniards, including Sandoval, noticed, and which helped bring stability and peace to Spain. This work, more than his other works, provides a useful view of Charles's reign and the workings of his government. It also contains important letters of Charles to and from members of his government, letters of instruction to his son Philip and other regents, treaties, articles, oaths, and dealings of the *consejos* (government councils). But, like other works of the time, it is biased, the author desiring to present Charles as a great ruler, well loved by the people of Spain.²⁶

²⁶ Prudencio de Sandoval, *The Life and Deeds of Emperor Charles V*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1956), 445.

In *The History of Charles V Emperor and King of Spain* Sandoval stresses Charles's personality. In this work Sandoval gives a great deal of information about Charles's early life before and at the beginning of his rule in Burgundy. Sandoval says that Charles's tutor, Adrian of Utrecht, had trouble teaching Charles because he desired to fight and participate in outdoor sports instead.²⁷ The work also goes into great detail about the important events of Charles's reign, much as Gómara had, often using his words but not giving him credit, probably because Gómara's work had been censored by then.²⁸ Within this source historians have found several useful things, such as the terms of several of the treaties Charles made with Francis, evidence that the *cortes* of Castile did refuse Charles money on occasion, and a detailed account of the several wars throughout Charles's reign.

In Sandoval's *The Civil Wars of Spain at the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the 5th* can be found in much more detail an account of the Comunero Revolt in Castile, as well as the Germania Revolt in Valencia, and some discussion of Charles's governmental policies in Spain. A great deal of commentary concerning Charles's policies on international relations is provided. Historians have used this source to show the power Charles's advisor Guillaume de Croy, Lord of Chievres, had over him at the beginning of Charles's rule and until Chievres's death in 1521. The chronicle gives an account of Spain as Charles first arrived, as well as an account of the death of his regent Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros. The Articles that Charles was given by the *cortes* when he

²⁷ Prudencio de Sandoval, *The History of Charles the Vth, Emperor and King of Spain, the Great Hero of the House of Austria*, translated by John Stevens, (London: R. Smith, 1703), 4-5.

²⁸ Gómara, xliii.

came into the country are provided. Of the seventy-four, the most important are that Charles learn Spanish, his brother Ferdinand not be sent out of the country, and Charles marry immediately.²⁹ The rest of the work deals with the events of the revolts, the reasons for them, and how Charles dealt with the Comunero Revolt. Sandoval gives the Articles that the rebels wrote in order to make their desires known to Charles.³⁰ The reason given for Charles's victory over the rebels is that his supporters successfully split the nobles from the rebellion, and after the turning point of the rebellion at the Battle of Villalar, began hanging rebels as traitors.³¹ But Sandoval says that Charles's mercy was shown by the general pardon after the revolt had died out, and that this showed the people his clemency as a ruler and helped make him popular among the people as their king.³²

Historians look to Pedro Mexía's *Historia del Emperador Carlos V* for an objective contemporary history of Charles. Mexía was named Charles's official historian after the death of Guevara in 1545. Unfortunately, Mexía's death in 1551 kept him from finishing the biographical chronicle of his sovereign, but his work gives historians a masterful account of the critical years of 1500 to 1530 in Spain. In this work, as well as his masterpiece, *Historia imperial y cesárea (History of the Emperors from Julius Caesar to Maximilian)*, can be seen the changing style of historical writing in Spain during this period. His work is much more concise and research-oriented than the uncritical Spanish chronicles of the past, notably the several *Crónicas generales* that began with Alfonso the

²⁹ Prudencio de Sandoval, *The Civil Wars of Spain at the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the 5th*, translated by James Wadsworth, (London: William Du-Gard, 1652), 14.

³⁰ Ibid., 210-243.

³¹ Ibid., 272.

³² Ibid., 282.

Wise in 1284.³³ Mexía was more objective in his account, not as diverted from his purpose by sentiments of fervor or pride, fanaticism or self-interest as Hernan Cortés, Hernando del Castillo, Gómara, and Bartolome de las Casas. He says in *Historia imperial y cesárea*, “Since I cannot clothe my history with beauty I shall surely labor—and so I promise—to write truthfully, being content with what Catullus said of Cicero, that it is not necessary to be an orator in order to write history—it is enough if one is not a liar.”³⁴

Mexía wrote works both of fiction and history and was well-known during his time. Unlike those who wrote histories of Spain before him, Mexía wanted to make his work no mere “chronicle” about an emperor or a king, but a history of Spain under its ruler. Also, unlike chroniclers of previous kings, he was not close to the monarchy, nor was he in the government or the military.³⁵ Some feel that this aided him in writing a more objective account.³⁶ In his works can be seen his Erasmian humanism, as well as his orthodox Catholicism and anti-Lutheranism.³⁷ His work ably records several important events of the rule of Charles in Spain and the Empire, using a number of popular sources of the time, yet showing a more scholarly approach than average.³⁸ This work is complimentary to Charles, and stresses the imperial nature of Charles’s Spain.³⁹ His good

³³ Schuster, 5.

³⁴ Pedro Mexía, *Historia imperial y cesarean (History of the Emperors from Julius Caesar to Maximilian)*, (Seuilla: Jua de Leo, 1545), as quoted in Schuster, 6.

³⁵ Pedro Mexía, *Historia del Emperador Carlos V*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1945), xi.

³⁶ Ibid., lxiv.

³⁷ Ibid., xxxix.

³⁸ Ibid., lxxvi.

³⁹ Eguiagaray Bohigas, 136.

outlook on Charles himself had a strong effect on later historians and helped make Charles a well-liked ruler for many years afterward.⁴⁰

Pedro Girón wrote his *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V* in 1543. This Andalusian grandee (greater noble) worked in several parts of the government of Spain under Charles and endeavored to keep records of its laws and actions. His work is seen by historians as an insider's look at Charles's Spanish government. Girón was well connected, his family being very powerful, and several of its members rose to great power under Charles. His sons were made *caballeros* (knights) and members of the Order of Santiago by Charles himself. And his cousin Garcia de Loaysa was Charles's confessor. It was probably Girón's connections and noble status that saved him after his strong involvement in the Comunero Revolt. At the beginning of the revolt he was one of its most powerful leaders, at one point having total control. But after royalist forces took the seat of the Junta (assembly) in 1520, Girón broke from the rebellion. His chronicle begins in 1507, skips to 1516 and the beginning of Charles's rule, and quickly jumps to 1529 and the end of the war with France. He does not discuss the Comunero Revolt.

The rest of Girón's chronicle, devoted to the years 1529-1541, is much more informed by documentation and records than many of the other chronicles. This is because Girón was often used by Charles in parts of the government and had originals or copies of laws passed and documents used. Like Santa Cruz's chronicle about Charles, Girón included as much governmental documentation as he could. He worked in the Royal Council (Council of Justice), as well as the Council of Finance, and helped with

⁴⁰ Mexía, xii.

the regency of Castile after the death of the Empress in 1539.⁴¹ The strength of this chronicle is its emphasis on Spanish government, especially in regards to the *cortes* and the *consejos*. Because of Girón's use of government records, historians have gained information about how the government of Spain worked at this time.

Crónica Burlesca del Emperador Carlos V by Francesillo de Zúñiga is useful for studying Charles's Spanish court. Zúñiga was Charles's court jester. He was a *converso* (converted Jew). But his background does not seem to have engendered any anti-governmental sentiment. He wrote it to make money in order to eat, as he says at the beginning of the chronicle, but it is apparent that the work is more important to him than that.⁴² The chronicle gives a view of Charles's court, and provides a somewhat different view of events in Spain during this time. The chronicle covers Charles's reign until 1529 and could be entitled an "official history of Spanish court gossip."⁴³ Concerning the Comunero Revolt, he was strongly against it but does not go into great detail. He calls the members of the rebellion men who "make noise and are friends of novelties."⁴⁴ The chronicle is pro-government. He believed strongly in the idea of a universal Christian empire and its mission, which Charles's government pushed.⁴⁵ Throughout the cynicism and humor of his chronicle concerning court life there is great optimism for the future of Spain under Charles and of Catholic Europe as a whole.

⁴¹ Pedro Girón, *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964), xvii-xx.

⁴² Francesillo de Zúñiga, *Crónica Burlesca del Emperador Carlos V*, (Barcelona: Editorial Critica, 1981), 49.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 16, my translation.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

Sixteenth century Spanish historians wrote about Charles to glorify his military and governmental achievements. They wrote in an atmosphere that rewarded pro-government histories and punished anti-government histories. Most of the histories of Charles during this time showed him as a great ruler and praised him for his desire to unite Christendom and stop the enemies of the Church.⁴⁶ He was seen as a great Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain who was a just ruler, a devout and orthodox Catholic, and an effective military leader. He held the Empire together until his abdication, in a period seen by many Spaniards to be *the* “Golden Age.” The positive view sixteenth century Spanish historians had of Charles had a great effect on historians for centuries.

Here is one example of the pro-Charles writings of the time from the *Comentario de la Guerra de Alemaña* by one of his historiographers and friends don Luis de Avila concerning the successes of his war in Germany prior to 1549:

When Caesar had subdued Gaul, after a ten years’ war, he made the whole world ring with his story; and only to have crossed the Rhine and passed eighteen days in Germany seemed enough to vindicate the power and dignity of the nation which ruled the world. In less than a year our Emperor conquered this province, whose matchless valour has been confessed both by ancient and modern times. In thirty years Charlemagne subjugated Saxony; our Emperor was master of it all in less than three months. The greatness of this war demands a nobler pen than mine, which tells nothing but the naked truth, and what I have seen with my own eyes of the exploits of him who ought as far to excel in fame the great captains of past ages as he excels them all in valour and in virtue.⁴⁷

In centuries following his death, Charles continued to be a topic of interest among European and eventually American historians. Compared to other centuries, the seventeenth century seems to have had fewer historians who explored the topic of

⁴⁶ Bradford, 360-361.

⁴⁷ Stirling-Maxwell, *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*, 234.

Charles V. The religious wars of the seventeenth century and the decline of Spain consumed many historians of that time instead. Those who wrote about Charles still remembered him as a good king, and Spain of the sixteenth century as being at the peak of its power. Like sixteenth century historians, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spanish historians saw the Spain of Charles as a continuation of the prosperous policies of Ferdinand and Isabella. Such historians as the Count-Duke Olivares, the Conde de la Roca, and Don Francisco de Quevedo believed that Charles and those after him had continued the prosperous policies of Ferdinand and Isabella, as well as a “Gothic model” of Spanish history that advocated an “eternal Spain” as the official history.⁴⁸ This “official” view of Spanish history, and the positive outlook on sixteenth century Spain under the rule of Charles, continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the late eighteenth century an important non-Spanish historian, Sir William Robertson, made it his task to tell the history of Charles V in *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*.⁴⁹ Robertson went into much more detail and commentary concerning Charles’s governments, motives, and political ideas. This created new ways of looking at Spain under Charles which led to more objective histories of Charles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Robertson’s work became the quintessential history of Charles during its time. It covered Charles’s reign as emperor in lucid detail, and sought to examine all aspects of his rule. But while the book was more critical of Charles than

⁴⁸ J.N. Hillgarth, “Spanish Historiography and Iberian Reality,” *History and Theory* 24, no. 1, (1985): 29-30.

⁴⁹ William Robertson, *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830), 1.

earlier historical works, it continued a trend that emphasized Charles's character and strength of personality as an emperor and king.

In the nineteenth century Edward Armstrong continued the work of Robertson, writing an even more critical history of Charles V called *The Emperor Charles V*.⁵⁰ Charles's personal empire was studied in more detail, and many historians believe that this book replaced Robertson's as the best source about Charles. Also in the nineteenth century, another Englishman, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, wrote a useful history of Charles entitled *The Chief Victories of the Emperor Charles V*, as well as a book about the last few years of Charles's life called *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*.⁵¹ Stirling-Maxwell's first book showed the effect of Charles's victories, his rule, and how he was effective not only at diplomacy and warfare but at using his victories to benefit his empire, Europe, and Catholicism. It gave information about Charles's advisors and the important people in his administration and military. Stirling-Maxwell showed how Charles's chancellor Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara had great influence upon Charles during the 1520s and pushed for war in Italy because he believed that control of Italy would allow for control of Europe.⁵² The second book described the end of Charles's reign and gave a good view of Charles right before his death, discussing Charles's life after his abdication and retirement to a monastery in Yuste, Spain. The book included some correspondence and writings of those years, 1556-1558. It showed how from the time of his wife's death in 1539, Charles was thinking of retiring to live a life of religious

⁵⁰ Edward Armstrong, *The Emperor Charles V*, (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1910) vol. 1, 1.

⁵¹ William Stirling-Maxwell, *The Chief Victories of the Emperor Charles V*, (London: Edinburgh, private print for the editor, 1870), 18; William Stirling-Maxwell, *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*, 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 18.

seclusion.⁵³ It contained letters showing the gradual abdication of Charles's powers to Philip from 1539 to 1556, and then centered on the last two years of his life after he abdicated his imperial throne. Most of the book was concerned with these two years, and includes letters that Charles wrote, and that were written to him, mostly dealing with the governing of his former lands. It ended with Charles's death and contemporary writings concerning this and is a useful tool for looking at the latter half of Charles's reign.

Until the nineteenth century Charles was predominantly seen as a great emperor and king, like Charlemagne, and Spain during this time was remembered as the most powerful nation in the world. But with Spain's decline in the centuries after Charles's death, historians began to question why this decline came about, and more specific studies were done. The writing of history itself changed, no longer for the purpose of glorifying rulers and gaining money for the historian, but for the seeking of truth concerning events and reasons for those events. The Empire and Spain, under the rule of Charles, were now studied in more detail, and questions began to be raised concerning Spain's decline in succeeding years. Nineteenth-century historians began to see problems in sixteenth century Spain that would lead to later decline in that nation. They still saw the Spain of Charles as a continuation of the prosperity under Ferdinand and Isabella, but with inherent flaws that would in later years cause the country's downfall. Most Spanish historians still saw Charles as a great ruler who had the best interests of Spain at heart, but whose abilities to run an efficient economy for Spain were lacking, and whose strong

⁵³ William Stirling-Maxwell, *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*, 1-2.

personality controlled Spanish governmental administration and caused inherent flaws in structure leading to later decline in Spanish power.

Some of the major historians of Charles in the twentieth century are Karl Brandi, Manuel Fernández Alvarez, Royall Tyler, Lyndham Lewis, Roger B. Merriman, W.L. McElwee, and Otto von Hapsburg. These sources, and the other twentieth-century sources concerning the history of Charles that are used for this paper, are both Spanish and non-Spanish. Using both Spanish and non-Spanish secondary sources about Charles gives an overall view of his entire empire, and allows a comparison to be made between Spain and Charles's other lands. I found these sources to be the best for learning about Charles and his rule of Spain. Typically, twentieth-century historians emphasize Charles's dealings in the Empire because of his role as Holy Roman Emperor and the time and energy he spent fighting the Lutherans. Few of their books are mainly devoted to his ruling of Spain. But because they attempt to deal with at least some of the available primary sources concerning Charles's Spain, what is discussed is useful and worthy of note. It is the general consensus that during Charles's reign in Spain the Spanish lands became more unified and was in a "golden age" as precious metals poured in from the Americas, and that Spain basked in European political hegemony. This led to great power for Spain during Charles's rule that continued through Philip II's reign. But inherent within the social, religious, economic, military, and governmental systems of Spain during this time were the causes for later decline. By the early and mid-twentieth century, historians no longer saw the Spain of Charles as just another Renaissance nation-state going through a "golden age." Beginning in the early twentieth century and especially in

the last several decades, more specific questions have surfaced concerning the nature of Charles's reign. More historians, looking at the terrible debt Charles left Spain's government with, and the weakness in structure of his Spanish government due to the strength of his personality leading to later decline and absolutism, have come to believe that the causes for decline in Spanish power were present in sixteenth century Spain and were not dealt with by Charles or his Spanish government.

The most important recent historian of Charles V is Karl Brandi. His biography of Charles entitled *The Emperor Charles V* summarizes many of the earlier histories of Charles and gives some new insight into various aspects of his rule. It includes an exceptional section that asks the question of whether Charles used a Spanish or universal policy. With the deaths of his advisors Jean le Sauvage and Chievres, Charles was able to gain the trust of Spaniards after the Comunero Revolt. But even after this, Charles sometimes allowed his chancellor Gattinara to push for an imperial policy which upset many Spaniards. As a young man Charles held such a fascination with being Emperor that he told his former tutor Adrian of Utrecht: "It is so great and sublime an honour as to outshine all other worldly titles."⁵⁴ Brandi shows how Charles eventually created his own policy to bring balance and compromise between the rest of his empire and Spain. Brandi's book focuses upon the topic of Spain's primary role in Charles's empire.

Much has been written about Charles V over the years. Today more research is being done on sixteenth century Spain under Charles's rule. But the common theme at the end of current historians' works is the need for more research into available records of

⁵⁴ Brandi, 94.

sixteenth century Spain, mainly those in the archives of Salamanca and Simancas, specifically records of Spanish central government councils, records of Spanish towns and local regions, and Charles's correspondence with government officials.

The history of Spain has often been seen as unscientific. In the pursuit of the truth about Spain's history, the works of major Spanish historians lead to much argument and hair-splitting. Sixteenth century Spain was a complex group of regions, with a tendency for autonomy among its parts, as well as a place of great energy, wealth, and as far as anyone could tell, a bright future. Under Charles, Spain was more closely united under a Christian monarch. With the Muslims driven out of Granada during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, the dream of some of the members of the Spanish Christian kingdoms had finally been realized. Like Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles continued to make Spain a more unified Christian kingdom. The Spain of Charles was full of change, and was an essential part of the last great Holy Roman Empire. Yet sixteenth century Spain has received little attention by historians when compared to the attention lavished upon other parts of Charles's domains, namely the Empire. Within the last fifty years much has been done to end this trend and bring forth a concise and scientific history of Spain under the rule of Charles. In the last several decades the debate over the nature of history as it pertains to Spain has increased among Spanish historians, creating two major schools of historians: traditionalists stressing continuity in Spanish history, and liberals opposing this view. For centuries Spanish historians have tried to explain the decline of Spanish power after the sixteenth century, introducing more thorough research of Spain under the rule of Charles.

This second section of the historiographical review discusses in a chronological manner historical sources concerning Spain from the sixteenth century to the present, deal with the past emphasis on continuity and unity in Spanish history from the fifteenth century onward, review schools of thought in Spanish history, and discuss the eventual decline of Spanish power in the centuries after Charles's rule. I use several important works of major Spanish historians to trace through the various schools of thought concerning Spanish history. Discussion of the theme of continuity in Spanish history is important because it has been such a divisive issue among Spanish historians and has played a large part in many Spanish histories. Also, the push by pro-royal historians for a specific and narrow pro-royal history of Spain through Charles's reign helped to shape the administrations of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles, creating continuity from the reign of the Catholic Monarchs to the reign of Charles. It has also had an impact on the histories of Spain to the present.

Traditionalist historians of Spain see the quest for unity on the Iberian Peninsula leading to the formation and unification of Spain under Charles as having deep roots, and have followed a long line of official Spanish historians in stressing the continuity and unity in Spanish history from Rome to the present. This desire seems surprising when it is noticed that there is great disunity and plurality in the peninsula leading up to Charles's reign. J.N. Hillgarth sees this "quest for unity" as "a modern, secularized, somewhat metaphysical version of a much older idea, the idea that Spanish history is the history of a crusade, that in it one can see the struggle of one favored religion against its rivals, and

its ultimate triumph over them” and consequent unity of the peninsula.⁵⁵ In the historical writings of Isidore of Seville can be seen the “‘vision of history’ in which the particular tribe that happened to conquer Spain, the Goths, were selected by God as the people chosen to succeed Rome.”⁵⁶ This view was to influence many series of chronicles written after the Islamic invasion of 711.

While the acceptance of this Isidorian view of history was not immediate or universal in Spain, this “Gothic thesis,” the belief that the history of Spain was one and eternal, traced through the Roman and Visigothic eras to the present, was revived in Castile in the fifteenth century. This was the work of a group of converts from Judaism, the poet Juan de Mena and members of the Santa María family, descendents of the former chief Rabbi of Burgos, Solomon Halevi. These men created a new Messianic view of history that maintained that the Castilian royal house descended from the Goths, and that “all the kings of Spain descend from the House of Castile.” Thus Castilian supremacy, first inside Spain and then throughout the rest of the world, was seen as “part of the divine scheme of things.”

This revived neo-Isidorianism is important because it inspired the actions of Ferdinand and Isabella, the first monarchs to be given the title “Catholic.”⁵⁷ The “Gothic model”—available in not only historians inspired by Isidore but also through the Visigothic law code *Fuero Juzgo* (judicial law code) and the texts of the Councils of Toledo from 1255 and 1480 which brought centralization under the monarchs of

⁵⁵ Hillgarth, 26-27.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 29.

Castile—had great influence on the aims of the Catholic Monarchs.⁵⁸ It was this ideological model that the Catholic Monarchs adopted which remained dominant throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain, apparent in both its advocates and opponents. I agree with Hillgarth that the official history of Spain that stressed continuity and unity beginning in the fifteenth century was biased and therefore in need of revision. But I believe that there are strong Roman and Visigothic precedents in the governments of the Catholic Monarchs and Charles. It is true that Spain's history was used as a tool to bring about centralization under Castilian dominance, but traditionalist Spanish historians have essentially been correct in pointing out the strong effect of Roman and Visigothic precedents upon Spain after 711. While the official history of Spain was quite inaccurate and biased, the government that pushed it looked to Roman and Visigothic Spain for models of government. It is this use of Roman and Visigothic precedents in the Spain of the Catholic Monarchs and Charles that I find useful to research. This is because, unlike the official history's use as a unifying tool in Spain, the Roman and Visigothic precedents of government that were used from this history were effective and accurate.

The last statesman of Hapsburg Spain, the Count-Duke of Olivares, told the Council of State in 1634 that “there are many things which we neglect, not least the writing of history,” meaning “accurate” history, which would be officially acceptable.⁵⁹ The kind of history Olivares wanted can be seen in his statement in 1625, “God is

⁵⁸ Rhea Marsh Smith, *Spain: A Modern History*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 16, 124.

⁵⁹ Hillgarth, 29.

Spanish and fights for our nation.”⁶⁰ This history saw the enemies of Spain as God’s enemies, and even up to the twentieth century Spaniards believed in God as a form of believing in Spain, or at least Castile. A seventeenth-century Spanish author writing about the Antichrist says that “while Castilians will never be found in Antichrist’s armies, one cannot be so sure of Catalans.”⁶¹ The Conde de la Roca in 1628 gave the Council of State a list of historians he felt contemporary historians should follow, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada being on the list, as well as others who created “correct” history as Olivares and Roca did.⁶² Also, Don Francisco de Quevedo, another supporter of the “Gothic model” of Spanish history, saw no break between Pelayo and the Hapsburg monarchy of his day. In this myth of an “eternal Spain” the Goths played the same important role as they did for Isidore of Seville and the *converso* historians of the fifteenth century. Quevedo traced the Spanish empire back to “a Goth who guarded a cave in a mountain,” and he saw Columbus as “transporting the Goths to the unknown edge of the globe.”⁶³ So Quevedo hoped that a king would restore a pure Spain, the Spain of the past, which had defeated Caesar, expelled the Moors, and carried the Reconquest to the Indies.

Unfortunately, the use of an official history in Spain, while ensuring power for a strong Castilian Hapsburg monarchy, was not able to keep Spain from declining in world power. Spain’s decline has been seen as taking place during the reign of Philip II and his successors. Especially from the eighteenth century onward this decline was seen to be

⁶⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁶¹ Ibid., 29; Jonathon Brown and J.H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV*, (New Haven, 1980), 162, 190.

⁶² Ibid., 29.

⁶³ Ibid., 30-31; R Selden Rose, “The *España defendida* by Don Francisco de Quevedo,” *Boletin de la Real Academia de la Historia* 68 (1916), 515-543, 629-639; 69 (1916), 140-182.

caused by absolutism.⁶⁴ After World War II, eighteenth-century Spain was rejected as anti-Spanish because of the mainly French influences and ideas that dominated the nation during that time, and it was seen as a breaking up of “spiritual unity,” which traditionalist historians had long seen as existing before 1700.

During the nineteenth century other institutions and events of Spain’s history were exalted as mythical models, such as the *cortes* of the Middle Ages, or the revolt of the Comuneros in the 1520s by the “liberals” who saw the oligarchical assemblies created during the revolt, and the revolt itself, as embodying the principles of liberty and popular sovereignty. These “liberals” saw a warning in the Inquisition that they viewed as the key to the ruin of Spanish history and the explanation for every Spanish disaster. The response of the traditionalists was to exalt the period in which the Spanish Inquisition was created, the reign of the Catholic Monarchs. While much work has been done concerning Spain under the rule of the Catholic Monarchs, much less has been done concerning Charles’s Spain.

In more recent years, and headed by such historians as Américo Castro, Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, and Jaime Vicens Vives, greater attention has been placed upon the Spain of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries leading to the highpoint of Spanish power, as well as Spain’s subsequent decline in the following centuries. Since the 1930s, and the civil war in Spain during that decade, more work has been done by Spanish historians, both internal and foreign, to explain the history of Spain, and to answer the question of

⁶⁴ Ibid., 24; Benito de Peñalosa y Mondragón, *Libro de las cinco excelencias del español que despueblan a España para su mayor potencia y dilatacion*, (Pamplona, 1629).

why Spain has come to be as it is today, a result of chains of events beginning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the post-World War II era particularly, Vicens Vives and other historians studied Spain's social, religious, economic, military, and governmental aspects, centering study upon the years immediately preceding Charles's reign, and the years of Hapsburg rule. Their goal was to open up a period of Spain's history that was clouded and confused. Vicens Vives, leader of the traditionalist Catalan school, began an improved and more precise way of studying Spain's history than existed before the 1950s.⁶⁵ Vicens Vives and those after him caused an "explosion in research" that created increased study of fifteenth- and sixteenth century Spanish records and the writing of more credible histories of Spain in the past fifty years.⁶⁶ These historians wanted to rid Spanish history of its mythic and unscientific qualities that furthered the confusion of Spain's history and made it difficult to create a clear and understandable history of Spain. "Spanish history is somewhat in love with myths," said Spanish historian Jose M. Ramos Loscertales several decades ago.⁶⁷ Zurita noticed this tendency, remarking that "historians use legends as geographers do fabulous animals—to symbolize unknown countries in their maps."⁶⁸ This is one reason Spain is not seen as "European" as other nations of Europe, because its history, according to many historians, is not as concise as the histories of countries like Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. During the Renaissance, Spain was

⁶⁵ Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.

⁶⁶ Jaime Vicens Vives, *Approaches to the History of Spain*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), xi.

⁶⁷ José M. Ramos Loscertales, "Los Jueces de Castilla," *Cuadernos de historia de España* 10 (1948), 75, as quoted in Hillgarth, 23-24.

⁶⁸ Hillgarth, 24.

similar to these countries in respect to the recording of history. But in the centuries afterward, as the “unknown country” quality of other nations was fully explored and recorded scientifically, Spain continued its “propensity to sustain the myth.”⁶⁹

In the attempt to bring better clarity to Spanish history Vicens Vives lists three main movements in the historiography of Spain: “a revitalization of the philological-institutional school, an abrupt burgeoning of the socio-economic methods advocated by the *Annales* in Paris, and the elimination of the ‘ideologism’ of the post-war period (1930s).”⁷⁰ To these movements he adds the major contributions of foreign historians and the two exiled Spanish historians Castro and Sánchez-Albornoz.⁷¹ Vicens Vives feels that many of the ways in which historians approach history: institutionally, politically, militarily, philologically, culturally, artistically, intellectually, and spiritually, are not good enough and that the best tool for a historian is statistics.⁷² Even so, he does believe that the different angles from which Castro and Sánchez-Albornoz approach Spain’s history provide works that are necessary in the study of Spanish history, such as Sánchez-Albornoz’s *La realidad historica de España* and Castro’s *España: Un enigma histórico*.⁷³

Defining Spanish history itself has brought contention between traditionalists and liberals. Most historians of Spain, the traditionalists, see the history of Spain as going back as far as possible, to the beginning of time. Sánchez-Albornoz has been the forerunner of this school of thought. Castro leveled a challenge at one of the central

⁶⁹ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁰ Vicens Vives, xi.

⁷¹ Ibid., xi.

⁷² Ibid., xx.

⁷³ Ibid., xxii.

myths of traditional Spanish historiography, that of “one, eternal Spain.”⁷⁴ He has led the “liberals” against the traditional, very *Castilian*, view of Spanish history. Castro feels that Spain’s history should be more compartmentalized. To him and his followers it was the Moorish invasion beginning in 711 C.E. and the subsequent Reconquest that caused a crucial break in Spanish history and made Spain what it is today.⁷⁵ Before this time, there was no Spain. He says that an actual feeling of “Spain” was not seen until the thirteenth century when the word “español” was brought to Spanish lands from Provence.⁷⁶ Vicens Vives adds that it was Castilians who began to use this word in unifying the Iberian Peninsula under their dominance and under the name “España” during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries based upon the Roman idea of “Hispania.”⁷⁷ Castro has a point; it was the Reconquest that made Spain what it is today, yet Spain’s roots go farther back than that. I essentially agree with the traditionalists in that the governments of the Christian kingdoms of Spain’s Reconquest period still contained Roman and Visigothic characteristics that can be seen in the governments of the Catholic Monarchs and Charles. Sánchez-Albornoz brings out this point, and maintains an essential unity and continuity in Spanish history, “an ‘Iberian man’ engaged in a ‘long adventure, the Reconquest and Repopulation of the national land, from Pelayo’s [victory at] Covadonga (in 722) to the conquest of Granada (in 1492).’”⁷⁸ Sánchez-Albornoz, and the Castilianist school in general (which includes many non-Spaniards), feels that the people of the Iberian

⁷⁴ Hillgarth, 25.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁶ Americo Castro, *The Spaniards: An introduction to their history*, translated by Willard F. King and Selma Margaretten, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 32.

⁷⁷ Vicens Vives, 79-80.

⁷⁸ Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz, *España, un enigma histórico, I*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1962), 15, as quoted in Hillgarth, 26.

peninsula are “heirs to a common tradition, and at any given period of medieval history shared a common historical experience.”⁷⁹ There is a continual attempt to unify the peninsula, Castile being the driving force behind this.

Sánchez-Albornoz and his allies continue a tradition in Spain of the “Gothic thesis” in their stress on continuity and a divine direction in Spanish history. Like their ninth-, thirteenth-, and seventeenth- century predecessors, these twentieth- and twenty-first-century historians seek to legitimize their present by linking it to a glorious past.⁸⁰ It is this official history that continues from the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella into that of Charles I. Hillgarth states, “the epic conquests and Christianization of the New World, that ‘projection of the Spanish Middle Ages in space and time,’ the religious plays of [Pedro] Calderon, the gallant though crippling struggle to champion Catholicism in Northern Europe against hopeless odds, all these sprang from the idea that Castile was Spain and that Spain incarnated an endless crusade.”⁸¹ The Gothic myth, coming from Isidore of Seville and propagated by the Catholic Monarchs and their successors, had the effect of relegating peoples not of “Gothic” or “Old Christian” descent—Muslims and Jews—to a subordinate and gradually irrelevant role. Spain’s “quest for unity” made it necessary to first conceal the existence of non-Christians by forced conversions, and then expunge them by forced expulsions.

The implementation by the Catholic Monarchs of the myth that Spain is essentially and only Christian has often been seen as the cause for the disastrous

⁷⁹ Hillgarth, 26; Sanchez-Albornoz, *España, un enigma histórico*, I, 15.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 31.

⁸¹ Ibid., 32; Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz, *España, un enigma histórico*, II, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1962), 501.

impoverishment of Spanish life. Another major consequence of the myth's full-blown form was the narrowing of Spain to not only Christian but Castilian. By this narrowing of "Iberian" or "Spanish" man to Castilian, non-Castilian Spaniards, as well as the Portuguese, were placed in an inferior position with Jews and Muslims.⁸² Thus the Castilianist school views the century from 1369 to 1479 as "the struggle for peninsular union," while Catalan, Aragonese, Valencian, and Portuguese historians see it as a struggle by Castile to impose its hegemony on the rest of the Iberian peninsula.

It is difficult for Spaniards to discard the idea that the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella and their three immediate successors were a "happy golden age, remembered nostalgically as incomparably by one and all," as Ramón Menéndez Pidal said echoing the sixteenth century historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo who said Spain during this time was in "a golden time indeed and a time of justice."⁸³ The clinging of Spaniards to this particular time period was responsible for the promulgation of the myth as official truth. This tendency is behind the attempts by modern historians to defend the Catholic Monarchs' most questionable measures such as the creation of the Spanish Inquisition and the forced conversion or expulsion of Muslims and Jews.

According to Castro, Spaniards were "the consequence of the intermingling of three castes of believers," Christians, Muslims, and Jews.⁸⁴ Castro, a literary historian and not an economic or institutional one, nor himself an Arabist or Hebraist, had his limitations and sometimes went further than the evidence allowed. Like Sánchez-

⁸² Ibid., 36.

⁸³ Ramon Menendez Pidal, *Spain in the Fifteenth Century*, edited by J.R.L. Highfield, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1935), 402, as quoted in Hillgarth, 32.

⁸⁴ Castro, 48, as quoted in Hillgarth, 33.

Albornoz, he was inspired by a myth, not one that could be traced back along a line of historical synthesizers and royal propagandists but one that was derived from the study of literary traditions of the later Middle Ages in Spain. He believed that through *convivencia* (living together) the members of the three religions in Spain became fused as one, as Spain. Hillgarth believes that this view is truer to the facts than the idea that the Islamic conquest of 711 was no more than “a step backwards—unparalleled in the West—in the progress of an historical community—towards its national unity,” or than the concept that the centuries between 711 and 1492 were simply a long crusade to return to a world of pure orthodoxy and uncontaminated Hispanism under a new dynasty of “Gothic” rulers, as Sánchez-Albornoz and his allies have believed.⁸⁵ While it is true that the governments of the Reconquest kings from 711 to 1492 were not exactly the same as Visigothic kings due to the Muslim invasion, I believe there was important continuity in the governments of Christian Spanish kingdoms from Roman and Visigothic Spain.

The debate over the nature of history, as well as the reasons behind the downfall of the Spanish empire, have consumed Spanish historians for centuries. Debates continue concerning “White Legends” and “Black Legends,” and whether it was fate that caused Spain’s decline. Each nation has its Black and White Legends concerning its weaknesses and strengths respectively. Spain’s “Black Legend” controversy, although it began quite some time before this date, started in 1914 with Julián Juderías’s eponymous book.⁸⁶ The basic definition of “Black Legend” in regard to Spain is that Spain is an exception to the

⁸⁵ Sanchez-Albornoz, *España: un enigma histórico, II* (Buenos Aires, 1962), 366, as quoted in Hillgarth, 33.

⁸⁶ Julián Marías, *Understanding Spain*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 2.

rest of Europe because of several things: “its exaggerated past, its being behind in tolerance, culture and political progress, its being ignorant, inquisitional and fanatical, its incapability to progress or innovate, and its violent and uncivilized nature.”⁸⁷ Juderías says that these traits can be traced back to their beginnings in the sixteenth century, under Charles’s rule. Many Spanish historians agree with Juderías concerning these dangerous weaknesses in the writing of Spain’s history since the sixteenth century. One such historian is Julián Marías who agrees that Spain since the sixteenth century has been in decline on average, but that the “Black Legend” is one based on negative facts and does not take into account positive aspects of Spain’s character.

Spain, over the last several centuries, has seemed to suffer from a case of pessimistic fatalism. As Spain’s glory, prestige, and riches declined, and those of other European and American nations rose, Spain looked within itself for an answer as to why. The disillusionment in their national history led many Spanish historians over the years to ask questions and create heated debates over the answers in an attempt to fix their country. Some felt that it was the fault of the Spanish people and their system of government during their glory days. Others felt it was fate, or the cause of a few select people in power at decisive times who failed to make the right choices. The study of sixteenth century Spain under Charles I can help answer questions concerning “Golden Age” Spain and the decline experienced afterward.

⁸⁷ Julián Juderías, *La leyenda negra: estudios acerca del concepto de España en el extranjero*, Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1974, as quoted in Marías, 2.

Thesis Statement and Chapter Contents

Charles V held great power over his government, controlling the viceroys, councils, and local governments of his personal empire. After the Comunero Revolt and the 1520s he used the same system of government throughout his reign, mainly dependent upon his strong personality, with small changes made for the sake of efficiency and centralization. He continued in Spain the governmental, economic, social, religious and military policies of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. He gained great power over Spain, and sought to centralize Spain as the base of his personal empire. Charles used Castilian dominance and a Castilian model of government, Roman law, Catholic religion, and Erasmian humanism to bring further centralization to his lands. The draining of Castile's resources in the defense of it and Charles's other territories was done with the plan of keeping Spain at peace and safe from Turks, French and German heretics, and was meant to ensure Spain's continued political hegemony in the world.

Chapter 2 centers on Charles's personality, his history, and his ideas about government. The chapter gives a general view of Europe before and during Charles's rule. It also studies the precedents Charles looked to from the Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire. General secondary sources concerning Charles, and some primary sources, are used. Chapter 3 addresses Spain before the rule of Charles, showing the precedents Charles looked to as Spanish king; general secondary sources concerning Spain's history, and some primary sources are used. Chapter 4 brings the sources concerning Charles and those concerning Spain together to discuss Spain under the rule of Charles and study Charles's Spanish government, attempting to show how Charles

continued the policies of Ferdinand and Isabella but brought outside influences to Spain; the records of royal councils, local records of Castile, and Charles's correspondence with government officials are used to show how he governed in Spain. The conclusion summarizes the findings and explain what work still needs to be done.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOVERNING IDEAS AND ACTIONS OF CHARLES AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS RULE IN THE NETHERLANDS, THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE, AND SPAIN

Introduction

Plus Ultra (Always Further) was Charles's self-made motto.¹ He inherited so many lands that he had trouble keeping them all together, let alone expanding them and living by his slogan. Even so, he desired to create a *monarchía universal*, or a world empire.² He felt himself put in his position by God to do some great deed for Catholic Christianity and his God's world. He felt himself "God's standard bearer," and Erasmus called him the champion of the gospels.³ With the hope of creating a universal Christian empire under the Hapsburg dynasty, Charles V ruled the Netherlands, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire for forty years.

This chapter examines Charles's childhood, the education he received, the people who influenced him as he grew up, and the contemporary political theory that he studied. It also discusses Charles's lands in the Netherlands and the Empire, and shows what political traditions Charles inherited from them as he became King of Spain. I give a general overview of Charles's rule as emperor, and toward the end of the chapter, I introduce the system of government Charles eventually used in Spain, setting up chapter 3 to examine Spanish influences upon Charles's governing ideas and methods, and

¹ H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Hapsburgs and Europe, 1516-1660*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1971), xii.

² *Ibid.*, xii.

³ *Ibid.*, 1.

chapter 4 to further evaluate his system of government. Secondary sources about Charles, and some primary sources, are used to discuss the growth of Charles's personality as the new Charlemagne, the effect of contemporary political theory upon Charles, the influence of the Netherlands upon his government, and the influence of the Empire upon his governing ideas and methods. Then I move from the general government of the Empire to the specific government of Spain. The discussion of Spain specifically arises from Spanish sources. I show that Charles tailored his government to each place and to the needs of each place. I also show the laws Charles arrived at concerning general rulership of the Empire, and how these were similar to and different from the set of rules he arrived at in Spain.

Charles was born on February 24, 1500, in Ghent, Flanders.⁴ He was the last native-born member of the house of Burgundy.⁵ One set of grandparents was the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian of Austria and Mary of Burgundy. The other set was King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile. Charles's parents were Philip "the Handsome," the son of Maximilian and Mary, and Juana "the Mad," the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Mary died in 1482, and Philip and Juana ruled Burgundy (the Netherlands) where Charles was raised. In 1504 Isabella died, and Philip took Juana to Castile to press his right to rule, winning out over his father Maximilian and his father-in-law Ferdinand with the help of the Castilian nobles who did not wish to see the continued

⁴ William Robertson, *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830), 371.

⁵ Karl Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V*, (London: Jonathon Cape Thirty Bedford Square, 1963), 42.

growth of Ferdinand's power.⁶ But Philip died in 1506, and Burgundy was left to Charles, while Ferdinand became regent over Castile.

Juana was seen as unable to rule Castile due to a mental disorder, hence her title, "the Mad." This was the case even before the death of her husband, some saying that her insanity came from the jealous rages for which she was known, brought on by Philip's many infidelities.⁷ There is no doubt in Karl Brandi's mind that Juana was insane. To Brandi, neither the failed efforts of the Castilian Comuneros to set her up in later years as legitimate Queen in place of her son, nor explanations by other historians trying to prove that her insanity was a creation of the propaganda machines of first her husband Philip, then her father Ferdinand, and finally her son Charles so they could rule unfettered, are convincing enough to prove her sanity.⁸ Isabella noticed her daughter Juana's mental instability before her death in 1504, which caused her to leave the regency of Castile to her husband Ferdinand until Charles should turn twenty years of age.⁹ Later, the full extent of Juana's mental problems was realized. The death of her husband Philip in 1506 provided the shock that did away with any remaining sanity.¹⁰ Having heard a story from a priest about a king who rose from the dead fourteen years after his death, Juana had Philip's body brought to her room.¹¹ She kept the body in her room for a number of years

⁶ Robertson, 383.

⁷ Otto von Hapsburg, *Charles V*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), 26.

⁸ Brandi, 44.

⁹ Robertson, 374, 376.

¹⁰ Brandi, 44.

¹¹ E.R. Chamberlin, *The Sack of Rome*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1979), 18-19.

in the hopes that Philip would revive.¹² Charles technically co-ruled in Castile, but because of Juana's inability to rule, Charles held all monarchical authority.

In 1519 Maximilian died and a new Holy Roman Emperor was needed. The three major contenders were Francis I of France from the Valois family, Charles I of Spain from the Hapsburg family, and Henry VIII of England from the Tudor family, all young men in their twenties. Maximilian had worked hard to secure the imperial office for his grandson Charles, but it was still not certain that Charles would become emperor. Both Charles and Francis bribed electors, desiring the title to add to their prestige and honor. The German electors had a tradition of picking someone weak to be emperor so they could keep their autonomy.¹³ They picked one from their own group, the Duke of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, the eventual protector of Martin Luther. Pope Leo X also supported the nomination of Frederick as emperor. But Frederick, not desiring the title or the power, rejected the offer and made the following speech in support of Charles that swayed the electors to choose the king of Spain.

Nothing could be more impolitic, than an obstinate adherence to a maxim which, though sound and just in many cases, was not applicable to all. In times of tranquility we wish for an emperor who has not power to invade our liberties; times of danger demand one who is able to secure our safety. The Turkish armies, led by a gallant and victorious monarch, are now assembling. They are ready to pour in upon Germany with a violence unknown in former ages. New conjunctures call for new expedients. The Imperial scepter must be committed to some hand more powerful than mine, or that of any other German prince. We possess neither dominions, nor revenues, nor authority, which enables us to encounter such a formidable enemy. Recourse must be had, in this exigency, to one of the rival monarchs. Each of them can bring into the field forces sufficient for our defence. But as the king of Spain is of German extraction; as he is a member and prince of the empire by the territories which descend to him from his

¹² Robertson, 376.

¹³ Ibid., 433.

grandfather; as his dominions stretch along the frontier which lies most exposed to the enemy; his claim is preferable, in my opinion to that of a stranger to our language, to our blood, and to our country; and therefore I give my vote to confer on him the Imperial crown.¹⁴

Charles, already ruler of the Netherlands, the Austrian Hapsburg lands, and Spain, became Holy Roman Emperor by unanimous vote. With the Empire added to his already many lands, Charles was in need of an effective system of government. The many forms of government that he inherited in the different areas of his personal empire created disunity. Charles's far-flung lands, held together through personal relationship with him, forced a meeting between different traditions. His reign would have to be filled with compromise and creativity in governing, and he would need strength of personality and character, if he was going to hold his empire together and rule with power and success.

Charles's Childhood and General Political Theory of Europe

"Be good and loyal subjects and I shall be a good prince to you," said Charles in the Parliament Hall of the Ducal Palace in Brussels, his first capital.¹⁵ The year was 1515, and Charles had just become ruler of the Netherlands. Charles was born and raised in the Netherlands, and that is where he gained his political education and first experience in ruling. Throughout his life, Charles believed and practiced a chivalric code he gained from his childhood in the Netherlands. He also gained strong piety and devotion to the Catholic religion. This blended well with the strongly Roman Catholic spirit in Spain. Charles was a man of great self-restraint, a characteristic that many in Spain felt was

¹⁴ Ibid., 434.

¹⁵ Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V: elected emperor and hereditary ruler*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 17.

important for a good Spaniard and ruler. Charles brought these personal characteristics, and his ideas of a universal Greco-Roman empire as Holy Roman Emperor, into Spain.¹⁶

His ideas of empire were based upon dynastic theory and unity of religious faith, specifically Roman Catholicism. Charles gave dynastic theory new application. It is from his childhood that he formed ideas and hopes for governing a universal empire that would be based in Spain, inspired by the legacy of Charlemagne. But like his homeland in the Netherlands, Charles's personal empire would not be easily governed uniformly. A look at Charles's childhood education and influences, as well as the political environment he grew up in, is helpful in determining the characteristics of his government in Spain.

During Charles's childhood he received a humanistic education and was influenced by several important people. Charles's education was closely watched over by his grandfather Maximilian, several scholars from various backgrounds were employed to teach Charles, men from the Netherlands, the Empire, Spain, and Italy.¹⁷ This education was based on a sensible balance between an academic curriculum and the usual physical training expected of a knight and warrior. His childhood was dominated by his tutor Adrian of Utrecht, at the time deacon of Saint Peter's at Louvain and representative of the rector of the University of Louvain.¹⁸ Adrian, until his death in 1523, was important to Charles as an advisor. The piety that Charles showed all of his life came from the influence Adrian had on him as a child. Some of the other tutors were Robert of Ghent, Adrian Wiele, Juan de Anchiata, and the Spaniard Luis Vaca. Vaca tutored Charles in

¹⁶ Brandi, 13.

¹⁷ Hapsburg, 30.

¹⁸ Ibid., 47.

Spanish from a young age.¹⁹ But it seems Charles did not pay much attention, for in his first visit to Spain many Spaniards noticed his limited ability with their language and demanded he learn it better.²⁰ Although Charles was considered a good student, he was drawn to physical activities such as horse riding, hunting, jousting, fighting and shooting. His introduction to court life and higher politics came from a member of the old Burgundian nobility, Guillaume de Croy, Lord of Chievres, his governor after 1506 and his Grand Chamberlain. Two other Spaniards entered Charles's household during his childhood who would be important to him later: Alonso Manrique, Bishop of Badajoz, and Pedro Ruiz Mota.²¹

Along with several tutors, Charles had several past and contemporary rulers to look up to during his childhood, and to learn from by example. Charles desired to be a great emperor like Charlemagne, and a great ruler like his Burgundian ancestor Charles the Bold. He also looked up to, and learned from, his father Philip the Handsome, his grandfathers Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and Spanish King Ferdinand of Aragon, his grandmother Queen Isabella of Castile, and his aunt Margaret of Austria, Duchess of Savoy, who was regent over him until he turned fifteen and became Duke of Burgundy. Charles's father Philip left him a Netherlands flourishing economically, and Charles tried to continue his father's economic policies in the Netherlands. Charles particularly felt it important to live up to the glorious example he saw in the lives of his grandfathers

¹⁹ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 17.

²⁰ W.L. McElwee, *The Reign of Charles V, 1516-1558*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1936), 30.

²¹ Brandi, 47-49.

Maximilian and Ferdinand. The examples of rulers in power in Europe directly before Charles's reign were important in shaping Charles's ideas on how to govern.

Charles also looked to contemporary rulers and political theory for ideas and methods on governing. The typical European ruler of the early sixteenth century was a new kind of ruler. Monarchs like Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France, and Charles I of Spain ruled in a time of many changes in how nations were ruled. Important political commentators like Niccolò Machiavelli, Desiderus Erasmus, and Thomas More wrote about new methods of ruling, as well as renewing interest in old methods. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historians believed that it was in the sixteenth century that monarchs began the absolutist forms of government that continued through the next several centuries. The power of the monarchy was greatly strengthened by the prevalent idea that kings gained their power from God. Having a standing army and a large bureaucracy was important to the changes that governments were undergoing. As these changes came about, monarchs began to override the traditional privileges of other institutions of authority, such as the nobility, representative assemblies, town councils, trade guilds, and the Church.²² This was a time of centralizing, in which the modern nation-state was born amidst the eventual death of the great medieval families.

During the twentieth century more research was done and a new viewpoint concerning sixteenth century political theory was brought forth, such as that of Glenn Richardson in his book, *Renaissance Monarchy*.²³ He says that medieval monarchs simply allied with the nobility and municipal elites, while Renaissance monarchs gained

²² Glenn Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

power from them as they did so. These new monarchs wished to reduce the power of the nobles, who had caused so much civil unrest during the fifteenth century, especially in the case of Spain. More efficient bureaucracies took care of the economic, legal, and administrative aspects of each kingdom. The royal court served as a meeting place for the monarch and the nobles. The revisionist history of the last thirty years, aided by more thorough research of Sixteenth century European monarchies, shows that while the monarchs' power grew they still needed the nobles' support to enforce their rule.²⁴

According to Richardson, Charles, like other monarchs of his time, studied the new political commentary, including Machiavelli's works, and understood them well. The prevalent idea of a good ruler included three characteristics: he had to be a strong Christian, generous yet discerning, and successful at war. These beliefs came from a number of sources. First, the idea that it was a sacred duty for the state to protect the Church as well as uphold justice came from medieval tradition. Second, the idea that chivalry, coming out of the Hundred Years' War and the Italian wars of the fifteenth century, was a medieval idea glorifying military action. Third, the idea that the Italian Renaissance brought forth the "studia humanitatis," or study of the Classics of Greece and Rome, and their ideas on government.²⁵

Sixteenth century political commentators created the idea of princely *virtus* from the Classical idea of virtue.²⁶ Classical ideas were fused with early Christian and medieval ideas on government. Cicero and Seneca, as well as Aristotle and Plato, were

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

heavily employed. Plato's concept of the "philosopher-king" was especially important. Having princely *virtus* meant having several qualities. The ability to do justice was at the top of the list. Wisdom, or prudence, was next in importance. Temperance, or the ability to keep balance and restraint in personal as well as political matters, was needed. Fortitude, such as active bravery, moral strength, and patience, was desired. And clemency was seen as necessary, and as a semi-divine forgiveness, which had a great unexpected quality. To Sixteenth century political commentators, such as Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, an ideal prince was one who was, by birth and education, possessed of the classical virtues integrated within a firm Christian faith.

Charles's education, following along the lines of typical Sixteenth century humanist education for aristocratic sons, taught *virtus* (virtue), *civilitas* (manners), focused on Greek and Roman literature, and used contemporary works, such as those of Erasmus of Rotterdam, to give the best possible education for a Christian prince.²⁷ N. Scott Amos says that three things were seen as important in making a good prince: good birth and upbringing for the Christian prince (hence the importance of good education for Charles), the avoidance of flatterers, and being good at the art of peace. There were four themes to this kind of education: the careful selection of a private tutor for the future prince (in Charles's case Adrian of Utrecht), the education of the prince as a philosopher-king, the teaching of the danger of tyranny and the idea that this was the failure of education, and teaching the art of making peace.

²⁷ N. Scott Amos, *The Education of a Christian Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands*, (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), 43-44, 48-49.

A number of *speculum principis*, or ‘mirror for princes’ books, were written, such as the one Erasmus wrote for Charles, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, first published in 1516.²⁸ Erasmus’s ideal government was Christian sacerdotal kingship with neo-Platonic virtues. To him a good ruler was a philosopher-king who understood events and people clearly and who acted according to Christian truth and wisdom in every situation. He said that “being a philosopher is in practice the same thing as being a Christian; only the terminology is different.”²⁹ Erasmus believed that a good king was guided by reason, had a humanist education, and remembered the oaths he made when he became king. A king must uphold the law, preserve peace, and place the well-being of his people ahead of his personal ambitions. It is his duty to appoint worthy men to positions of power in the government and to identify and shun flatterers. Taxes were to be kept to a minimum, a good reason to avoid war, and personal extravagance was to be avoided. These were the essentials of Erasmus’s ideas on kingship, and Charles’s actions show that he tried to follow Erasmus’s advice.

Erasmus’s “king’s mirror” for Charles was written at the suggestion of chancellor Jean le Sauvage.³⁰ This work, and the other works Erasmus wrote to Charles, shows his desire and concern with teaching Charles to rule well. Erasmus said that the monarchy was the best form of government because “if a sovereign is in God’s image then all things are equally under one head.”³¹ He also thought that, even though the monarch had great

²⁸ Richardson, 25; Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: The Renaissance*, (Cambridge, 1978), vol. 1, 118-128.

²⁹ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, translated by N.M. Chesire and M.J. Heath, edited by L. Jardine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), as quoted in Richardson, 25-26.

³⁰ Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V: 1500-1558*, (London: Arnold, 2002), 19.

³¹ Erasmus, as quoted in Blockmans, 19.

power and was put in his position by God, he was still in an office of service to the people, as is apparent in the following passage.

Even if there were not a monarch there would always be a State. But a monarch cannot exist without a State. In short, the monarch presupposes the State, but not vice versa. If there were a monarch who possessed every virtue, then a pure, unrestricted monarchy would be desirable; if that will ever happen I do not know. Judging by the state of all human affairs it would be good and desirable if a ruler possessed average qualities. In such a case the monarchy can best be complemented, moderated and restrained by aristocracy and democracy so that it will not degenerate into tyranny but will keep the various elements in balance. If the monarch is well-intentioned towards the State he will see that this does not diminish his power but actually increases it; otherwise, it is good that there is something that will curb and break the power of the potentate. The law over people is not the same as that over cattle. A large part of authority depends on the consent of the people, where the origins of kingship can be found.³²

While Charles seems to have listened to Erasmus's writings a great deal, his strong personality and the control he had over his governments show that he was not the ruler possessing "average qualities" that Erasmus was looking for. Perhaps he was instead fighting to be the "monarch who possessed every virtue" in order to gain an "unrestricted monarchy" which "would be desirable." It does seem that Charles sought to be "well-intentioned toward the State," and desired to keep the "various elements of balance" within his governments. Erasmus envisioned a government where the citizens understood their institutions and laws, and where government officials acted wisely and honorably. Like Thomas More in his *Utopia*, Erasmus desired that governments care for the elderly, and provide state education. He wanted to see an end to useless expenditures by monarchs and governments, the avoidance of greedy officials storing up wealth to the

³² Ibid., as quoted in Blockmans, 19-20.

detriment of the kingdom, and the avoidance of wars.³³ Charles sought to end corruption in his governments. He also wished for peace, but was forced into defensive wars.

Sixteenth century monarchs had a great deal of power, but they still needed to work within a constitutional framework; they could not be arbitrary.³⁴ They always needed to take into account the wishes of the nobles, gentry, Church, and merchant elite. The wise ruler who ran his kingdom well, taking into account these people and bringing prosperity to his land, was seen to have *virtus*. As mentioned earlier, it was important for the ruler to have three very important virtues: justice, wisdom, and expansive generosity. These things brought honor to the ruler as well as the kingdom and its people. Richardson says that, in opposition to the idea that a king had to be Christian, Machiavelli felt that a connection between *virtus* and Christian morality was not necessary to make a good ruler.³⁵ He believed that as long as the king had the important virtues listed above, and had *virtus*, he would rule well. But Charles, like other contemporary kings, desired to have both *virtus* and Christian virtue. Rulers answered not only to God, but to the people, in the constitutional systems that had been created over the centuries.

Many political writers of the time agreed with Machiavelli when he said “a prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline.”³⁶ The idea of chivalry lent a great deal of motivation to Sixteenth century monarchs in their war-filled foreign policies.³⁷ French ideas of chivalry helped to create the long-lasting wars between Charles and Francis. In addition to fighting over

³³ Blockmans, 20.

³⁴ Ibid., 24.

³⁵ Ibid., 25.

³⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by George Bull, (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 14.

³⁷ Ibid., 1961), 9; Richardson, 27.

territory, they desired fame, international greatness, and glory. But the most prestigious of warfare was for Catholic orthodoxy and dynastic claims.³⁸ Hence Charles's desire for a crusade into the Holy Land, his attack on the "heretic" German Lutherans, and his religious and dynastic justifications for defensive wars against Francis.

In addition to Erasmus, other writers of this time wanted to see aristocratic sons gain a humanist education. One example is Sir Thomas Elyot in England, who wrote concerning the benefits of a humanist education for aristocratic sons that would enable them to best serve the interests of the prince and the realm by making them well-informed, objective, and able to give wise counsel. He desired aristocratic sons to grow up giving objective advice to their king, and kings wanting to receive such advice, and as Machiavelli taught, to watch out for flatterers. Machiavelli said "a prince who is not himself wise cannot be well advised."³⁹ This education was supposed to teach the heir to always be thinking about whose advice can be trusted, and in which situation. This desire for counsel turned into the parliament of England, the estates general of France, the reichstags of Germany, and the *cortes* of Spain.⁴⁰ Before, it had merely been the king's gathering of the estates (nobles, clergy, merchants/tradesmen) to gain their ideas of what to do. Eventually it became a governmental institution with political power of its own.

In England, Sir John Fortescue said at the end of the fifteenth century that these systems of government rising throughout Europe had one commonality; they were "mixed monarchies," where the estates and the king worked together in *dominium*

³⁸ Richardson, 28.

³⁹ Machiavelli, 125-127, as quoted in Richardson, 29.

⁴⁰ Richardson, 30.

politicum et regale. This was common throughout Europe by Charles's time. But while there were great similarities between the governments of Sixteenth century European kingdoms, there were quite a few differences, such as the taxing systems and the amount of representation within the governments. Concerning Europe's late-medieval governments H.G. Koenigsberger has said that these were "partnerships between kings and parliaments throughout Europe," but that "the kings were by far the stronger, although hardly ever the completely dominant partner."⁴¹

Guillaume Budé in 1518 in France, speaking of Francis I, said that the king should have no restraints placed upon him except by himself and his own educated awareness of, and respect for, the ancient laws of his land.⁴² Like Claude de Seyssel, Budé had an absolutist view of monarchy, but also had the idea that a monarch would rule with discretion and wisdom, being equitable and respectful of ancient laws. Like others of his time Budé expected that kings would maintain justice. But unlike Seyssel he did not allow for royal councilors to have an active supervisory role in the governing process of the land. Charles was the kind of king Budé wrote about, somewhat absolutist, ruling with discretion and wisdom, equitable, and generally respectful of ancient laws. Charles allowed councilors a large role in the government of his lands, but always under his strong supervision.

The ideas of "absolute monarchy" and "the divine right of kings" were used greatly in the sixteenth century and continued by their successors in the seventeenth and

⁴¹ Ibid., 30; H.G. Koenigsberger, "*Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regales*, Monarchies and Parliaments in early-modern Europe," in *Politicians and Virtuosi: Essays in early-modern History*, (London, 1986), 2-4.

⁴² Ibid., 31; Guillaume Budé, *De L'institution du prince*, (Paris, 1547; reprinted Farnborough, 1966).

eighteenth centuries.⁴³ “Absolutist monarchy” has often been seen as autocracy or despotism. But what has been seen as absolute monarchy in the sixteenth century was actually the realization that a strong royal authority was needed, complete with a relationship of balance between the king and his subjects’ expectations of just rule. The monarch was not expected or allowed to make law merely by “divine right” edicts, but through negotiation between the crown and the powerful interest groups of his kingdom, such as the Church, the greater nobles, the lesser nobles, the wealthy merchants, and the town councils, and even lawyers and the crown’s own administrative and judicial officers. Divine right ideology was often used by kings to challenge papal authority and gain power for the monarchy.

Concerning the power of kings, Richardson says “the basis of negotiation between them and their most powerful subjects was not whether a proposed action was popular, but whether or not it came within an agreed set of powers, rights and jurisdictions belonging to the crown whereby its freedom of executive action was established.” The “prince’s prerogative,” as it was called, allowed rulers to decide whom they would marry; against whom they would go to war; with whom they would make peace; upon which subjects they would ennoble and confer other dignities; what royal administrations they would create or change; how they would regulate commerce and coinage; whether they would grant charters to towns, universities, and other corporate associations; what religion their subjects would be; and whether they wanted to enforce the death penalty for serious crimes. Monarchs were the final judges in civil matters, had control over the

⁴³ Ibid., 93-94.

kingdom's armed forces, and were the only ones able to raise troops legally in their kingdoms. The ruler was absolute in these things, but this did not necessarily warrant the term "absolutist" in describing the rule of these monarchs. Nineteenth-century historians created the term "absolutism," often used to describe the governments of seventeenth- and eighteenth- century Europe, and attributed its creation to Sixteenth century monarchs. But this is a misapplication that continues to exist according to Richardson.⁴⁴

Francis, Henry, and Charles were successful in extending the royal writ further than any of their predecessors.⁴⁵ They were successful in making and enforcing laws, and they maintained good levels of public order. Francis and Charles effectively developed the institution of the royal council that they had inherited from their predecessors, desiring to make it a more effective instrument, not just of consultation but of royal authority. They concentrated real power in smaller government bodies answerable to them directly. Each of them made their councils, along with the royal household, important to a continued good relationship between the monarchy and the nobles. All three of them tried and succeeded in extending their authority to the geographical margins of their kingdoms and consolidating the primacy of their authority as kings, quite often in the face of local resistance or indifference. They made structural changes to the judicial and administrative systems that they inherited, attempting to increase the effectiveness of their royal officials.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 109-110.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 114.

With the dynastic conflicts and tensions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was necessary that monarchs were personally fit for the office, that their resources were adequate, and that they were supported by a majority of the nobility. Charles, Francis, and Henry were fortunate that their immediate predecessors had been reasonably strong monarchs who had rebuilt or sustained the wealth of the monarchy by making sure they had the cooperation of the great magnates and lesser nobility. Instead of destroying the greater nobles without whom they could not govern, they had harnessed their legitimate aspirations to govern and ensured that the crown had decisive influence in the government of the localities.⁴⁷

The predecessors of Charles, Francis, and Henry employed two broad models of strong leadership to achieve their positions. Richardson says that “the first was cool, dignified and business-like monarchy in which the king impressed his nobles with the regality of his person and office, keeping a close eye on them through legal separation.” Henry VII, Ferdinand and Isabella, and Louis XII have been seen as using this style, as well as Charles V.⁴⁸ The second was in contrast to this one, a “model of ebullient, participatory kingship most clearly associated with the early sixteenth century.” In this model the monarch completely identified himself with the aspirations of the aristocracy. There was no separation kept between him and the nobles, and excitement was created by the spectacular court activities that he initiated. Henry VIII and Francis I could be included within this style of ruling.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., 146.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 146-147.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 147; M.J. Heath, “Erasmus the Courtier,” *The Court Historian*, 5, no. 2 (2000): 93-104.

These three Sixteenth century monarchs continued their predecessors' work, accumulating territories and building composite nation-states. This was difficult for Charles in his situation, but he did it nonetheless. Even though "dynasticism" was on the way out, it was still the means by which these kings held and gained power and territory during their reigns.⁵⁰ The pace of acquisition of lands may not have been as quick as that of their predecessors, but it was still expansion that saw the growth of stronger nations.

The growth of the ambassador system in Europe, and the sending of resident ambassadors by monarchs of one kingdom to another in the late fifteenth century and into the sixteenth century, was important as a way to make and continue peace. War was an important part of being a king during the Middle Ages, and as it came to an end, Charles and other monarchs of his time were experiencing a change in this trend. Ambassadors allowed kings to create alliances for wars, or make treaties to end wars. As Charles grew in power he, like Francis and Henry, began to establish and maintain an increasing number of alliances through the appointments of resident ambassadors.⁵¹ War itself changed. While it still contained medieval tendencies in that it was the business of kings, the political stage, military campaigns, and diplomatic intrigues were of a much different nature, and on a much larger scale than before.⁵²

Ceremony was extremely important in the working of Sixteenth century European courts. Everything was done by means of ceremony and household organization to

⁵⁰ Wayne te Brake, *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 179.

⁵¹ Richardson, 59.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 63.

preserve the sacred character of the kingship through the maintenance of distance.⁵³

Burgundy's court and culture was based upon that of the French, and Charles continued this trend in his court in Spain. Within this court three principal functionaries were responsible for attending to the king's material wants: the Lord High Steward, in charge of the feeding and housing of the king; the Grand Chamberlain, in charge of organizing the king's personal service; and the Master of the Horse, in charge of the king's stables and transportation.⁵⁴

J.H. Elliott sees the court life of Charles in Spain and the Netherlands, and the court life of his brother Ferdinand in Austria and the German lands, as a Hapsburg-Burgundian style created and adopted by both brothers from their time in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ Charles had used this style from the beginning of his rule in the Netherlands and brought it with him to Spain, melding it to the ceremonial court style Ferdinand and Isabella had already begun. The main characteristic of this Hapsburg-Burgundian style of court was its ceremonial nature. Charles modified it according to personal taste, but it was still very similar to Burgundy's court.⁵⁶ In 1527 Ferdinand introduced this style in Vienna. And in 1548 Charles ordered Philip to adopt it in his household as heir to the throne of Castile.⁵⁷ Charles, wanting his son to eventually become Holy Roman Emperor, thought that it would be easier for him to adapt to the imperial court if his own court practiced a Hapsburg-Burgundian style of ceremony. This style remained in the Spanish court, mainly Castilian court, for generations afterward.

⁵³ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.

Charles, Philip II, and the Count-Duke Olivares, had strong enough personalities to control this court style and bend it to their will.⁵⁸ But Spanish kings after Charles and Philip were not able to control the court style, and it eventually became an outdated mode of court life. While it helped to create some commonality among the Hapsburg lands, it did not necessarily create a unity between their government structures.

Traditionally those ruling were from the nobility. This continued throughout the sixteenth century. People in positions of power in the governments of the growing nation-states of Europe were either born into the nobility or bought their way into it. This “noble” status was a social distinction that separated the lower ranks of society from those ruling. When looking for people to fill government position it was preferable to find nobles; but those with the most talent were looked for as well. Therefore, the ranks of the nobility grew as monarchs looked for loyal and talented government officials among the working class and lower nobility to counter the power of the strongest nobles. As more men rose into the nobility, there was a need to define levels within the nobility. The term “gentleman” was taken to define someone who was born noble and was not a created nobleman.⁵⁹ It was still common in the sixteenth century to see society in a medieval way, as three groups: those who pray, those who fight (including nobles), and those who work.

As men who were not from noble families made their fortunes and moved up the social ladder confusion grew concerning the proper order of society. All European societies of the sixteenth century tried to reorder their nobles. In 1525 Charles divided the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁹ Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 70.

nobles in Castile into two groups: “an elite core of (twenty) grandees, and a large group of titled nobles (*títulos*).”⁶⁰ These two groups, along with the thousands of *caballeros* and *hidalgos* (lesser nobility), made up the core of the Spanish nobility. Social attitudes were created around the ideas of *reputation* and *honor*. There were three attributes of a nobleman. First, the purity of past lineage had to be preserved through good marriages and the guarding of the purity of the blood by the present family. Second, personal achievement had to be shown. This was almost always done in some form of military exploit, as well as in hunting and dueling. And third, the correct social role had to be played to gain the public respect of vassals and the community.

Before this time, the strong nation-state governments were secure as long as the nobles did not come together against them. Because their power was local, nobles on the continent were seldom able to interfere with the affairs of state. But within their regions, nobles were similar to kings in power. Typically, since the Middle Ages, the nobility controlled agriculture and a large number of workers. As feudalism began to decay, other forms of social ties were created and a network of “clientage” and “patronage” systems was spread throughout Europe, reaching to the national level.⁶¹ This was true of Spain, where feudalism had begun decaying before most other states in Europe, the aristocracy being urban and living in cities even though they owned large landed estates. Feudalism was decaying throughout the fifteenth century, and the growth of the monarch paralleled the growth of the nation.⁶² The clientage system helped the nobility preserve their power,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 71-72.

⁶¹ Ibid., 73.

⁶² Ibid., 237.

and was also used in the administration of the nation. In this system the client received income and protection in return for his loyalty. Such a nation-wide system of patronage helped the solidarity of the nation.⁶³ The power of the nobles was altered, not necessarily diminished. They continued to own the majority of national wealth, and as the gentry class grew the monarch's power grew with it as an arbiter between interest groups. Effective political control remained in both the hands of old and new elites as power was gained by the crown.⁶⁴

The middle class moved into the ranks of the lesser nobles as they were financially able. These were usually successful farmers or merchants. But even with their money they could not necessarily move up the social ladder without filling some public position. Many filled local positions of authority to join the lesser nobility.⁶⁵ The monarchy used this new element in the lesser nobility to fill positions in the growing bureaucracy of the government.

With the growth of the nation-state and the monarch's power, permanent governmental bodies were created. Throughout Europe the powerful kingdoms began to use these councils to rule their lands, peopled by greater and lesser nobles. In France, after Louis XI, royal power was stronger as more land came into the king's hands and the number of local princes decreased.⁶⁶ Political stability and the strengthening of provincial authority under the Valois kings brought a time of peace and expanding government. In Castile there was also much success at nation building, and the central government grew

⁶³ Ibid., 73-74.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 243.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 105, 108.

⁶⁶ Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States: 1494-1660*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 82-83.

during the fifteenth century under Isabella and Ferdinand. The permanent governmental institution of the *cortes* allowed the Catholic Monarchs to get funding from taxes. It was representative to a degree, but the overall government, like others of Europe, was not strongly representative. Aragon, on the other hand, was not as centralized, and did not allow for the effective use of governmental bodies, like the *cortes*, by Ferdinand.⁶⁷ Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I also tried to govern using institutions similar to those in other kingdoms of Europe, such as Leagues created to keep peace, and representative Imperial diets (*reichstags*), created to pass laws and vote taxes.⁶⁸ As Charles became ruler of several different European states he inherited different styles of governments with systems of permanent governmental councils, created to rule the state more effectively.

Royal councils aided the king in policy-making, and were often made up of relatives, favorites, and the most powerful magnates of the kingdom, although this began to change in Spain during the rule of the Catholic Monarchs with the allowance of more lesser nobles in government.⁶⁹ Subsidiary councils were created to deal with discrete aspects of the king's authority or certain regions of the realm. This was definitely true in the case of Charles and his large empire. In the Netherlands the councils established for Margaret and Mary as regents were filled with lesser nobles as administrators, but still gave Flemish and Dutch greater nobles a means of sharing in the government. In Spain the councils were staffed by lesser nobles and *letrados* (lawyers), who depended directly upon the king, rather than greater nobles. The large number of councils shows the reality

⁶⁷ Ibid., 89-90.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 96.

⁶⁹ Richardson, 29.

of Charles's widespread domains, but was discomforting to the Emperor. He was never able to bring his non-Spanish lands under the same degree of personal supervision as he was able to do in Spain from the 1520s onward, no matter how much effort he expended in trying. His desire to make all the decisions personally created difficulties for local governors and viceroys, and even though Charles had the personal loyalty of his subjects it was at the cost of lost opportunities and administrative and financial inefficiency.⁷⁰

Charles, Francis, and Henry ruled in Europe for half a century.⁷¹ They employed to the best of their abilities the concepts of governing that were either being renewed from Classical examples or newly created by political writers of the time. The writings of men like Machiavelli, Erasmus, More, Fortescue, Elyot, Seyssel, Budé, and Vitoria made their way into the popular European ideas on governmental administration. Through their good grasp of the political theory of their day, Sixteenth century monarchs controlled the machinery of their governments and thereby controlled their lands better than their predecessors had, to whom they owed a debt of gratitude for supplying them with strong and growing nation-states. It was difficult for Charles to fully employ new methods of governing because of the more diverse regions he ruled. But like the other monarchs of his time he used the new political changes to his advantage as a ruler in transition, from Middle Ages to Renaissance, and as one who controlled many lands governed differently.

Burgundy before Charles's Reign

Charles's Burgundian homeland had a strong influence upon him as a ruler. Charles gained his education and first experience in ruling from these lands. A study of

⁷⁰ Richardson, 114.

⁷¹ Ibid., 195.

the background of Charles's homeland is helpful in determining what influences his Burgundian homeland had upon him, and the precedents for ruling that he had in mind as he became King of Spain. This section discusses the precedents of government in Burgundy Charles looked to when he became duke.

The house of Burgundy, a lesser branch of the Valois family, grew powerful from 1384 to 1477, in the reigns of the dukes Philip the Bold, John the Fearless, Philip the Good, and Charles the Bold. The dukes of Burgundy before Charles worked to centralize the Burgundian lands by creating several councils and courts. The earliest step toward this was the creation of Councils of Justice to hear appeals from municipal courts.⁷² Philip the Bold, who was given the Duchy of Burgundy in the mid-1300s by his older brother, the King of France, created three Courts of Accounts in the French style in an attempt to deal with financial matters, each Court over several provinces.

In 1446 Philip the Good began the Great Council. An important job of this council was to decide whether appeals from local courts could go to the Parliament of Paris for Artois and Flanders, or the Imperial tribunals for the rest of the provinces. The following year saw the formation of the Council of Finances, which dealt with the finances of the provinces in a more centralized fashion. The members of the Great Council were not elected but appointed by the Duke, but they still had the right to discuss measures he proposed, and approve or disapprove. Philip the Good brought constitutional lawyers from France to aid in centralizing the government, but avoided tampering with the provincial councils, the particularism of the Burgundian provinces, or appearing to

⁷² Royall Tyler, *The Emperor Charles the Fifth*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House, 1956), 157.

give preference to one province over another.⁷³ The Estates General, which he created in 1465, had no legal basis, but became a permanent institution of representatives chosen by the provincial councils to vote subsidies. These subsidies were still voted on one province at a time, but it was more efficient than having to travel to each province.

Charles the Bold, the son of Philip the Good, continued the centralization of Burgundy, making the three Courts of Accounts into one Court.⁷⁴ As Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold was the most powerful ruler in Europe, even dwarfing the French king, and the Duke's revenues rivaled those of Venice.⁷⁵ But he still technically owed homage to the French king for the Duchy of Burgundy, Flanders, and Artois. He owed homage to the Holy Roman Emperor for the rest of his lands. He almost succeeded in persuading the Emperor to allow him the title of King of Brabant or Friesland, but to become king of all his lands, including Burgundy, would have required a successful war with France. His dream was to create a kingdom by force, but his making of enemies, and his untimely death, brought the hopes of a kingdom of Burgundy to an end.⁷⁶ The process of centralization in the Netherlands during these generations was similar to other nations forming in Europe at this time.⁷⁷

In the 1460s and 1470s Charles the Bold dreamed of making the Duchy of Burgundy, and the several other lands he personally controlled, into a unified kingdom. But this was not to be, and upon his death, King Louis XI of France took the Duchy of

⁷³ Ibid., 158-159.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 159.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 159.

⁷⁷ McElwee, 230.

Burgundy from Charles's daughter Mary, and her husband Maximilian of Austria.⁷⁸ With her father's death, a popular uprising in Ghent brought a French invasion, resulting in the *Grand Privilege* of 1477—leaving the Duchy of Burgundy to the King of France.⁷⁹ But with the help of Maximilian, who later became Holy Roman Emperor, what was left was kept safe from France. These are the lands that Charles V eventually ruled as part of the Empire, and then part of Spain. They became known as the Netherlands during his reign. Thus, when speaking of the lands Charles controlled in the Low Countries, the name “the Netherlands” is used instead of Burgundy.

In the Netherlands that Mary inherited centralization fell apart. The Grand Council, with its sections, and the Malines Parliament that Philip the Good had created, were done away with. The Estates General was allowed to remain because of the need for subsidies. After Mary's death in 1482, her husband Maximilian became regent and continued the policies of Charles the Bold with little success. He was often at odds with the provinces, and when his son Philip the Handsome came of age in 1494, the Burgundian nobility was finally able to redress their grievances. Philip the Handsome continued the policies of Philip the Good, peacefully bringing centralization to the provinces of the Netherlands. After Philip's death, Maximilian became regent a second time, this time appearing to have learned some lessons from his son, for he continued the peaceful policies of Philip with success. Some governing bodies were restored that had

⁷⁸ Robertson, 52.

⁷⁹ Tyler, 160.

been lost in 1477, such as the ducal council (Privy Council), with its financial subsidiaries, and the Parliament of Malines.⁸⁰

The regency of Margaret, Charles's aunt, began in 1509. It brought further centralization and growth of the Burgundian government.⁸¹ Margaret devoted herself to strengthening the central government of the Netherlands, and getting Charles ready to rule. To further centralize the Empire, Maximilian created Ten Circles to govern the regions of the Empire. The Burgundian Circle was created in 1512, and most of the Netherlands was a part of the Burgundian Circle.⁸² Regardless of the bad relationship between Margaret and Chievres, Chievres's policies were used, and the policies of Philip the Handsome were maintained, bringing peace between the Netherlands and France. The government growth in the Netherlands allowed Charles to rule more effectively when he became duke. The councils that were developed, and the reforms Charles would make in the government using a Spanish/Castilian model, would help him rule the different regions of the Netherlands more efficiently than his ancestors had.⁸³

By 1515 the land of Charles's birth was experiencing the end of an age, the end of ancient Burgundy. As Charles went forth to meet a new and changing world in Spain he took pieces of the old Burgundy with him. He already had a taste of how one government worked, albeit divided and small, and he would have this in mind as he entered Spain. He also took with him an idea of the new political theory becoming popular throughout Europe which he gained from his humanist education. It would be up to him to ascertain

⁸⁰ Ibid., 160-161.

⁸¹ Ibid., 161.

⁸² Blockmans, 56.

⁸³ Tyler, 161.

whether Burgundian and Spanish governments were similar enough to create a unified system of government over them both and how that would be done, or whether he would have to live with two styles of government in these lands. Also, from this land that would soon be merely a fragment of his empire, he took important principles of governing, courtly bearing, and great princely ambitions. As Brandi states, “The idea of knightly honour and of fighting for the Christian faith, as embodied in the code of the Golden Fleece, were engraved deep on his mind.”⁸⁴ But Brandi adds that these forms Charles had grown up around were part of a dying age, and that upon leaving the Netherlands he would be in a world where many of these ideals belonged in the past.

The Netherlands during Charles’s Reign

The Netherlands remained important to Charles throughout his reign. It is necessary to study Charles’s rule in the Netherlands to determine what effect these lands had upon his ideas and methods of ruling as King of Spain. In this section I show how Charles chose to use a Spanish model of government for Spain and his empire, and even tried to change the government of the Netherlands to match that of Spain.

Before Charles was fifteen, while his aunt Margaret was regent, Charles’s governor and chamberlain Chievres tried to appease France with the goal of retrieving the Duchy of Burgundy and restoring things as they had been under Charles the Bold. Charles also strove to regain the Duchy of Burgundy, but did not share the same optimism as Chievres that appeasement would work.⁸⁵ Charles tried force, diplomacy, and marriage alliance to get the Duchy back, but in the end nothing worked. After the

⁸⁴ Brandi, 61.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 54.

regency of Archduchess Margaret, Charles began to rule with the help of Chievres. With the help of Chancellor Sauvage and Adrian of Utrecht, Charles created an inner council, while the outer council was formed of knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece and higher dignitaries of the Court.⁸⁶ Several of these men were educators and councilors of Charles during his childhood and would continue to have an influence on him and his governing ideas and methods as he became King of Spain.

In the Netherlands Charles inherited a number of regions. These were Luxembourg, Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Hainault, Artois, Franche-Comte, and a claim to the Duchy of Burgundy, the homeland of his Burgundian ancestors, which had reverted back to the crown of France after the death of Charles the Bold in 1477.⁸⁷ Like his ancestors, his lands were still technically part of the Empire or France. In France he held Artois and Flanders, and was still recognized with an empty title as “Duke of Burgundy.”⁸⁸ The rest of the Netherlands were part of the Holy Roman Empire.

As duke over all of these inherited lands, Charles sought to centralize them as his ancestors had. By 1515, there were several councils to aid the ruler of the Netherlands in governing. But these did not have the permanence, strength, or specialization of Spanish/Castilian councils. The highest of these councils was the Court Council, or the Privy Council, which gave the duke personal advice.⁸⁹ Other administrative bodies included the Council Chamber and the Chamber of Accounts for finance, and the Great Council for justice. The government was on a smaller scale than that of other nations

⁸⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁸⁷ John Lynch, *Spain Under the Hapsburgs*, (New York: New York University Press, 1981), vol. 1, 38.

⁸⁸ Brandi, 57.

⁸⁹ Blockmans, 129.

such as France, Spain, England, or the Holy Roman Empire, and the regions of the Netherlands were still quite autonomous in government.

The government of the Netherlands was based upon the idea of an executive head who took counsel from a small number of weak and undefined royal councils made up of court-counselor chamberlains.⁹⁰ As in the time of Charles's father, the greater nobles held strong control over the government, and the clergy had very little part in governing.⁹¹ In Spain this was quite different, the clergy and lesser nobility often working for the government. Throughout Charles's reign more government offices in the Netherlands were filled by lesser nobility and lawyers.

Charles left the Netherlands with a political system in mind, one that was based upon the unconditional devotion of the members of his dynasty, as well as the loyalty of the greater nobles and the professional bureaucracy. Charles strove to create a practical government for his many lands using loyal and devoted government officials in strong permanent councils under his direct control.⁹² Charles worked tirelessly in government matters, using his personal relationship with government officials, and depending on his strong personality to ensure government efficiency. When Charles began ruling the Netherlands his entire personnel of Court and Bedchamber were reorganized. The most important members of these groups were: the Grand Chamberlain Guillaume de Croy, Chancellor Jean le Sauvage, tutor and counselor Adrian of Utrecht, and Charles de Lannoy (who would be an important councilor).⁹³

⁹⁰ Ibid., 127.

⁹¹ Ibid., 25.

⁹² Ibid., 136.

⁹³ Ibid., 55-56.

When Charles first came to Spain, he and his advisors tried to shape Spanish government on a Burgundian model, especially in the case of financial affairs. Charles tried to improve Spain's economy, basing it on the model of the prosperous Netherlands, and he created the Consejo de la Hacienda (Council of Finance). This added to the list of complaints Castilians brought forth in the Comunero Revolt.⁹⁴ But the revolt, and the seven years Charles spent in Spain from 1522 to 1529, made him decide to run Spain's government based on a Spanish model, and to even attempt using this model in the Netherlands.⁹⁵ By Spanish is actually meant *Castilian*, for this was the form of government used to dominate the Iberian Peninsula before Charles's rule in Spain. This model allowed for a strong monarchy that controlled permanent councils and the creation of a more efficient central government with strong power over local areas using support from the towns. In the reforms of the Netherlands' government in 1531 can be seen Charles's desire to use a Spanish/Castilian model of government. For instance, he changed the name of the "Great Council" to match Castile's "Council of State."

As in Spain, Charles raised taxes in the Netherlands, especially during wars. The estimate of the subsidies, called *aides* or *beden*, voted to the emperor by the Estates-General in the 1540s was an annual 345,000 guilders. Charles also placed an indirect tax on goods and services in the towns. Most of his income from the Netherlands was in the form of public loans, called *renten*, in which people invested and which paid annuities. The provincial states and the Estates General stood surety for the loans, and their deputies and town magistrates, drawn not from the landed nobility but from the urban patriciate,

⁹⁴ McElwee, 236.

⁹⁵ Tyler, 162.

invested in this public debt at good interest rates. Charles passed on a large debt to his son Philip because of the loans he took out in the Netherlands and the interest that was owed. As the material and political fortunes of the most important and richest people in the societies of the Netherlands and Holland became more linked to the Hapsburgs, social and economic stability was easier to maintain. Because Charles was often in need of money, it is not surprising that he would use any means available. Concerning the Netherlands Richardson paraphrases the words of Jonathon Israel: “with its prosperous towns and cities and acquiescent assemblies, the Netherlands was ‘a formidable adjunct to Hapsburg primacy in Europe and the world more generally.’”⁹⁶

During Charles’s rule as Emperor, the regions of the Netherlands continued to be autonomous in nature. Charles tried to change this, attempting to centralize his lands and rule the Netherlands more directly. But some autonomy was allowed (always under the strengthening power of the regent and her councils) because of the inefficiency in his personal empire’s governmental structure, and the need for quick action in reaction to French aggression. Margaret’s powers were prescribed in a series of public and private documents created under the emperor’s instruction. By public ordinance she gained extensive power to act as Charles’s representative in the Netherlands.⁹⁷ “Instructions” were sent to her, and “restrictions” were placed upon her, in the form of personal correspondence from Charles detailing procedures she was supposed to follow. The main message of these private documents was that Margaret was not to behave in situations as

⁹⁶ Richardson, 127.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 105.

she herself normally would, but as she thought Charles would. In addition to Charles's instructions Margaret had her own personal council of advisors.

Charles did not want to cause revolt in the Netherlands by forcing Spanish forms of government on the Burgundians; therefore, he was cautious in his attempts to further centralize its government and the overall government of his empire.⁹⁸ He continued the cautious policy of Philip the Good and his father Philip the Handsome. He chose not to tamper with the provincial councils too much, but made sure that able and loyal men were appointed to provincial governments. To the Flemings he remained the Count of Flanders, to the Brabançons Duke of Brabant, and so on, rather than imposing upon them the idea of his being "Duke of Burgundy" over a strongly centralized Netherlands, giving the semblance of allowing regional autonomy while striving to centralize.

The regions of the Netherlands, like those of Spain, were desirous of regional autonomy. While the monarch of Spain, and especially Castile, might have better control over the regions of that country, the representative institutions of the Netherlands made it difficult for its ruler to gain much control over its seventeen provinces.⁹⁹ Charles had to deal with each province individually, but the Estates General provided a more efficient means for the representatives of all the provincial estates to meet, as it had for his predecessors. As in earlier years, the system for voting taxes in this assembly was complex, done one region at a time. It was difficult to change this system since it took a

⁹⁸ Tyler, 162.

⁹⁹ Richardson, 126.

majority vote not only from the representatives of the Estates General but from the governing council of each province.¹⁰⁰

After Margaret's death in 1530, Charles appointed his sister Mary of Hungary regent. She had been Queen of Hungary, but was widowed in 1526 when her husband Louis II was killed after the battle of Mohács against the Turks. Margaret and Mary were both effective and useful for Charles's attempts at centralization in the Netherlands.¹⁰¹ After reform, the similarity of the Netherlands' government to that of Castile is remarkable, yet regional power continued to be the main vehicle of governing.¹⁰² To aid Charles with ready money it was encouraged to grow in economic wealth, strength of industry, and commercial power.¹⁰³ Charles diverted his attention to the Netherlands for a while after failing in Germany.¹⁰⁴ First, he made sure that the court of Mary was clean of Lutheran tendencies. While not being a Lutheran herself, Mary was somewhat sympathetic to their cause, and Charles wanted to make sure that the governor of the Netherlands was above reproach. Second, he reorganized the government, starting by setting up of a council of state and a council of finances in 1531. Charles wanted to strengthen conciliar government in the Netherlands, giving them more permanence, specialized tasks, and the strength to fulfill those tasks as tools of government directly under Mary's, and his, control. Mary was to make decisions in accordance with the wishes of these councils in most cases.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 126-127.

¹⁰¹ McElwee, 229-230.

¹⁰² Blockmans, 132.

¹⁰³ McElwee, 228.

¹⁰⁴ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 93.

Thus Mary had three “Collateral Councils” based in Brussels to advise her.¹⁰⁵ The first of these councils was the Council of State, an executive board with twelve nobles as members, mainly Flemish. The second was the Council of Finance, which was similar to the Spanish Council of Finance. The third was the Privy, or Secret, Council staffed by prominent administrators and dealing with the routine judicial and administrative matters of the Netherlands. Like Margaret before her, Mary was advised by Charles to listen to the most important nobles of the Netherlands concerning government policy. The Council of State was a way to allow the high nobility to advise Mary on all matters of policy. Even so, Mary was as authoritarian as Margaret, if not more so, relying on lawyers, administrators, individual noblemen, and working more to secure the cooperation of the *stadholders*, or provincial governors, rather than meekly submitting to the Council of State. These officials, as well as officials in the provinces, worked to gain support and loyalty for Charles and his regent in return for freedom of action. Although some conflict occurred between Mary and the *stadholders* over the appointment of regional officials and prevention of *stadholders* gaining dynastic holds on their offices, she still had a good relationship with most regional officials and governments. In addition, she had good relations with the high nobles, to whom she showed respect by listening to their counsel concerning government policy.¹⁰⁶

In 1543, Charles added Guelders to his domains in the Netherlands, making it the seventeenth province.¹⁰⁷ In 1512, when the provinces of the Netherlands were placed in

¹⁰⁵ Richardson, 105-106.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 165.

¹⁰⁷ Blockmans, 56.

the “Burgundian Circle” by Maximilian, they were not subject to the jurisdiction of the *Reichskammergericht*, and in practice, after 1532, they were entirely exempt from the Circles’ military and fiscal obligations to the Empire. When Philip was recognized as Charles’s heir in the Netherlands in 1549, Charles asked the Estates General to agree to a uniform rule covering the succession of the ruler in all of the Seventeen Provinces. Charles then issued a Pragmatic Sanction (a solemn imperial decree) intended to guarantee that the Seventeen Provinces would remain united after his rule.¹⁰⁸ As Charles attempted to further centralize his lands, he brought the Netherlands more in line with his ideal form of government for the region, and tried to make his homeland part of his Spanish domains as a way of passing it on to his son Philip. This is not surprising since Charles could see that the Empire would go to his brother Ferdinand and his family for generations afterward, and he did not want the Netherlands to be taken away from his own branch of the Hapsburg dynasty. Upon his abdication of rule in the Netherlands in 1555, his son Philip continued as ruler of a supposedly unified land which found itself treated as a colony of Spain. This caused troubled relations between Spain and the Netherlands and would lead to revolt.

The Holy Roman Empire before Charles’s Reign

As Holy Roman Emperor, Charles believed that his position demanded a great emperor equal to the tasks of ruling the secular half of the Empire and protecting the religious half, the Church. God had placed him in this position, and Charles demanded the best from himself, striving to live up to the example he saw in the Empire’s founder,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 56.

Charlemagne. He wanted to leave behind an equally great legacy. A study of the government of the Holy Roman Empire that Charles inherited as he became emperor is important to determine the effect the Empire had upon Charles's ideas and methods of ruling. This section discusses the precedents in government that Charles looked to as emperor.

The Holy Roman Empire was a leftover Roman idea started by Charlemagne in 800 C.E.¹⁰⁹ Eventually the Hapsburg family, of which Charles was the head during his reign, came to be in control of the Empire for centuries. Throughout the Middle Ages, Europe saw large and powerful family dynasties in control of great amounts of land. The Hapsburgs were the most powerful of these families in the sixteenth century. A Hapsburg was almost always at the head of the Empire from the thirteenth century onward, and this continued after the sixteenth century. The Holy Roman Empire was an ideal, an attempt at a world-wide Christian empire, and it was ruled by a spiritual and temporal head, the pope and the emperor respectively. But these two rarely worked together for the good of Christianity or the Holy Roman Empire.

The Empire's system of government had several inherent weaknesses, and the history of the Holy Roman Empire is full of emperors and popes fighting each other for dominance. They fought over who had the right to make and enforce laws in the Empire, as well as who chose the men to fill ecclesiastical benefices. In the thirteenth century Pope Innocent III declared that the Holy See claimed only the lands of feudal tenure of

¹⁰⁹ D.B. Wyndham Lewis, *Emperor of the West*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932), 30.

the Holy See and that the pope was over moral law, not the Empire's law. But as pope he still claimed the right to choose what moral law was.¹¹⁰

In the fourteenth century the pope played a vital role in choosing the Holy Roman Emperor by creating the system to elect the emperor. Pope Innocent IV, in his Golden Bull of 1356, set up a system of seven German Electors to vote on who would be emperor. These were the Archbishops of Trier, Mainz and Cologne, the King of Bohemia, the Duke of Savoy, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, and the Margrave of Brandenburg.¹¹¹ At Frankfurt on the Rhine the new emperor would take his title of King of the Romans, and then Emperor Elect. He was to be crowned at Charlemagne's Aix-la-Chapelle, and then was supposed to go on to Rome and be crowned by the pope, thus becoming the Holy Roman Emperor. But several emperors, like Charles's grandfather Maximilian, never received the third part of this triple coronation because of bad relationship with the pope or popes in office during their reign.¹¹²

In the fourteenth century the pope was in a more powerful position than the emperor, and this continued to be the case into the sixteenth century. Popes held spiritual power over an entire continent of Catholics, as well as secular power in much of Italy. The emperors had been losing temporal power for some time, and all that was left of the Empire by the time of Maximilian was the German speaking parts of Germany, the French speaking lands west of the Rhine, a loose hold on Switzerland, and Milan in Italy.¹¹³ Lands that were once dominated by the emperor had come to be dominated by

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 31.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 36.

¹¹² Blockmans, 31.

¹¹³ Lewis, 36.

other powerful people and their families in France, Spain, Portugal, England, the cities of Italy, and other parts of Europe.

The power of the religious head of the empire, while still greatly intact, was about to change in the sixteenth century with the Lutheran movement. The pope was secure in his position as universal spiritual head over Catholic Christianity in Europe and had temporal power in much of Italy going into the sixteenth century. But the Church lost power simultaneously with the Empire, because the two were strongly linked.¹¹⁴ The Holy Roman Emperor could not claim actual power over all people in Europe as could the pope in his religious office; so the Empire became a weaker temporal entity. Because of the pope's desire to keep the emperor in a weak position and the German princes' desire to keep their autonomy and rights, the Electors chose emperors from major families striving for the added power and prestige of having the Empire under their control for a time rather than picking the strongest European ruler. Thus, leading up to the sixteenth century, emperors were usually unable to ensure that the pope continued to hold religious power over all Europeans, and even the powerful Charles V would not be able to stop the Reformation which greatly hurt the power of the pope.

The Empire directly before Charles's rule was dynamic and expanding. When Maximilian became emperor in 1493, his dream was to make the Empire as powerful as Charlemagne's had been.¹¹⁵ Charles would also have this desire. Maximilian's government, similar to others in Europe of the Middle Ages, was based upon the idea that the ruler should be in the kingdom, and therefore he traveled his lands constantly. While

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 36-37.

spiritual heads could be absent, the ruler was supposed to be in his or her kingdom to give the law. But with more land being controlled by one ruler, and states growing larger, Maximilian, and later Charles, had to find a way to control lands of diverse backgrounds and governmental administrations. To travel more efficiently, Maximilian kept a small group of advisors and a small governmental administration with him that he could trust.

Maximilian created a well-structured government for the Empire, but it was not powerful enough to control the princes of the German lands. The *Reichskammergericht* (Imperial Chamber) was created by Maximilian, as well as the Aulic Council, a court closely under his control. The most important government body, the Imperial Diet, consisted of three Chambers: the Electors (excluding the King of Bohemia), the Princes (both political and spiritual), and the Imperial Cities.¹¹⁶ While the Diet made the laws, the Imperial Chamber enforced them. Beginning in 1495, the Diet functioned as the highest authority in the Empire in legislation and political decision making.¹¹⁷ To further unify the Empire with his own lands of Austria Maximilian put them into a set of ten circles: Austria, Bavaria, Swabia, Franconia, Upper Rhine, Lower Rhine, Burgundy, Westphalia, Lower Saxony, and Upper Saxony.¹¹⁸

By the time of his death in 1519, Maximilian was sure that a member of his Hapsburg family would take up the imperial scepter after him.¹¹⁹ He was bribing five of the seven Electors and was sure they would vote for Charles.¹²⁰ Charles would eventually become emperor, but not without some deliberation, because upon Maximilian's death

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 38.

¹¹⁷ Blockmans, 32.

¹¹⁸ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 12.

¹¹⁹ Robertson, 111.

¹²⁰ Lewis, 40.

the support of the five Electors was tenuous. From his Hapsburg inheritance Charles gained the estates of Austria, Tyrol, and parts of southern Germany.¹²¹ His successful imperial election awarded him the lands of the Holy Roman Empire, expanded and more powerful because of Maximilian's work.

The Holy Roman Empire during Charles's Reign

When Charles became Holy Roman Emperor he gained great prestige and honor. Throughout his reign the Empire was of extreme importance to him, and he spent much of his energy trying to rule it more effectively. An examination of Charles's rule of the Empire helps determine whether Charles used similar ideas and methods of ruling in Spain. In this section I show how Charles tried to use Spanish methods of government to more effectively govern the Empire and truly live up to the legacy of Charlemagne.

Charles continued many of Maximilian's imperial policies and practices in government. But whereas Maximilian's actions came more from personal ambition, it seems that Charles was sincere in his intent of helping Europe and Catholic Christianity. Charles, while still as dynastic as his grandfather, desired peace for the good of Catholic Europe as a whole, although he was not granted it by his enemies. He wanted to stop the Turkish invasion, yet had to fight France and others in Europe throughout his reign. He wanted to keep the Empire unified and strong, but continuously lost ground to the Lutheran Movement. With the help of his brother Ferdinand, Charles tried to develop policies and agencies that centralized the Empire, but was not entirely successful.

¹²¹ Lynch, 38.

Like his grandfather Maximilian, Charles desired to be a great Holy Roman Emperor like Charlemagne, gaining power for the Empire and protecting Catholicism. Charles looked to Maximilian for examples on how to rule both the Holy Roman Empire and his personal empire. Like his grandfather he continued the growth of military power in all of his lands, especially the Empire. The military of the Empire was made effective under Maximilian during the many wars he fought. One of the most successful things Maximilian did for the Empire was to reform the Imperial army on the Swiss model and create a good infantry.¹²² But his funding was not good, and his control over the German princes was not complete, making it difficult for him to create more military strength in the Empire and govern effectively.

Guillaume de Croy of Chievres, Charles's Grand Chamberlain and most important advisor, dominated Charles's imperial policy until his death in 1521.¹²³ Mercurino di Gattinara, made Grand Chancellor in 1518 after the death of Jean le Sauvage in 1517, took Chievres's place as Charles's most important advisor, influencing Charles's imperial policy greatly.¹²⁴ With Charles came a reawakening of the imperial idea, and many in his governments desired to bring the composite states of Christian Europe into unity and make Charles into a great emperor like Charlemagne.¹²⁵ Charles also desired this, and after Gattinara's death Charles strove to make his own policy.¹²⁶ From 1525 onward Charles began to take stock of his position and figure out what his

¹²² Lewis, 39.

¹²³ John M. Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor: A study of the imperial chancellery under Gattinara*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 26.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹²⁵ J.H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present*, 0, no. 137 (1992): 50.

¹²⁶ Brandi, 219.

future should be. The following memorandum, written right before the capture of King Francis at the Battle of Pavia, is given in its entirety and shows Charles's state of mind and desire to make his own policy.

When I sat down to think out my position, I saw that the first thing at which I must aim and the best that God could send me, was peace. Peace is beautiful to talk of but difficult to have, for as everyone knows it cannot be had without the enemy's consent. I must therefore make great efforts—and that, too, is easier said than done. However much I scrape and save it is often difficult for me to find the necessary means.

A successful war may help me. But I cannot support my army let alone increase it, if that should be necessary. Naples did not provide the money I hoped for; that kingdom will have to manage for itself if it is attacked. All sources of revenue here in Spain are daily tapped without result; at this present moment it looks as if nothing whatever could be raised. The King of England does not help me as a true friend should; he does not even help me to the extent of his obligations. My friends have forsaken me in my evil hour; all are equally determined to prevent me from growing more powerful and to keep me in my present distressed state. Furthermore, the armies are now very close to one another. A battle in which I shall be either victorious or wholly defeated cannot be postponed for much longer. Perhaps it would be best if I were to send the Viceroy [of Naples] with all speed, for a large sum of money in bills of exchange or some other form, to support and pay my army as otherwise it may melt away. If I can only keep my army on foot, it will surely force the King of France to fight to its own great advantage. Or else it must force him to withdraw from Italy, which would be a great disgrace to him. In either case, when the King and his army have retired to France without doing any harm and the duchy of Milan has been reconquered, it will be best to lower the taxes, to treat the soldiers whom I retain as well as possible and to treat those whom I intend to pay off even better, so that I can recall them if necessary. But I must not put too much faith in all these projects. But when I consider this present situation, and realize, as I have said, that peace is not to be had without the enemy's consent, I see that it may be all up both with peace and with war because my prospects are bad now and will be worse if it starts again—all because I have not the wherewithal. Therefore I cannot but see and feel that time is passing, and I with it, and yet I would not like to go without performing some great action to serve as a monument to my name. What is lost to-day will not be found to-morrow and I have done nothing so far to cover myself with glory and cannot but blame myself for this long delay. For all these reasons therefore, and many more, I can see no cause why I should not now do something great. Nor yet do I see cause to put it off any longer, nor to doubt but that with God's grace I shall succeed in it. Perhaps it will please him to strengthen me so that I shall possess in peace and quietness all the lands that he has

graciously bestowed on me. Taking all these things into account and considering well of them, I can think of no better way in which to improve my condition than by going myself to Italy.

Doubts may be raised because of the money needed, or because of the regency in Spain, or on other grounds. In order to overcome these difficulties I think the best way would be to hurry on my marriage to the Infanta of Portugal and to bring her here as soon as possible. For the money which is to be sent with her is a very large sum in actual bullion—possibly too this would be a good opportunity to settle the question of the spice trade—on the other hand there is the King of England to be satisfied, my treaties with him must remain in force and he must be prevented from marrying his daughter in France. But my marriage will be a good reason to demand a great sum of money from the Spanish kingdoms. I shall have to call and dissolve the Cortes to achieve this. The Infanta of Portugal, who by that time will be my wife, must be appointed regent of these kingdoms, to rule them well according to the good advice of those I shall leave with her.

In this way I ought to be able to set out for Italy with the greatest splendour and honour in this very autumn. I shall go first to Naples, on whose loyalty I can rely. Here I shall receive my crown and raise an army before winter falls. I shall thus be ready for an important undertaking by the following spring, and I shall ask the King of England to carry out his great plan at the same time. Yet if peace may be had on honourable terms I will accept it and I will not cease to work for it.”¹²⁷

In this entry Charles shows a desire to make a name for himself and find honor through warfare, even though he desires peace. He hoped that he could go to Italy and receive his third imperial crowning. Brandi believes that even though the influence of Gattinara can be seen in these writings, “only through such struggles as these towards self-expression was the Emperor at length to achieve that which he most passionately desired—the mastery and leadership of his own policy.”¹²⁸

Gattinara was the most important counselor to Charles from the death of Chievres in 1521 until his own death in 1530.¹²⁹ He stressed a universal policy to which Charles listened to a large degree, and thus encouraged Charles to structure his governing

¹²⁷ Ibid., 219-221.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 219.

¹²⁹ Headley, 138-139.

methods accordingly.¹³⁰ Gattinara's power was not limited to the Netherlands, from whence his position came, nor the Empire only, but extended throughout Charles's personal empire.¹³¹ Gattinara helped Charles in the running of his personal empire at the beginning of his reign and tried to teach the young emperor lessons in ruling well. He said to Charles, "If Your Majesty added to all your gifts even the wisdom of Solomon, you would still be unable to do everything yourself."¹³² He added that even Moses needed helpers, and he had the advantage of talking straight to God, as well as not having to watch over so many lands. This was meant to prompt Charles toward the beginning of his reign to not be fearful of looking for help in his governing. Charles would increase the use of permanent governmental councils in his empire to rule his lands more effectively. But he would make sure he had a large part in the affairs of these councils. Gattinara was also keen on teaching Charles, as did his earlier tutors and advisors, to be a good judge of people. The art of handling people was important to learn in order to watch for flatterers and disloyal officials. Gattinara once told Charles that "the love of his subjects was an impregnable fortress: they must be cherished, their complaints heeded, their friendship cultivated."¹³³ This he quoted from one of his favorite sources, Seneca. He added that Charles should leave unpopular actions to others and not overwhelm his people with new laws, echoing a maxim of Machiavelli. Too much legislation would indicate a disapproval of his predecessors.

¹³⁰ Brandi, 133.

¹³¹ Headley, 21, 29, 59.

¹³² Brandi, 212.

¹³³ Ibid., 214.

It seems that Gattinara developed a truly Machiavellian vein of statesmanship, seen in much of his advice to Charles. It was to his advice that Charles looked after the conclusion of the Battle of Pavia, and it was his idea to ask for the whole of Burgundy as outlined in 1435 in the Treaty of Arras. Thus Charles said to Francis, “Burgundy, no more, no less.”¹³⁴ After this Gattinara advised Charles to find a way to get rid of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in England because he was continually hurting Imperial interests. To take care of the costs of the war he advised Charles to make France’s allies bear the brunt. But he was to be kind to the Italian States and the pope as much as he could in order to control as much of Italy as he could for Spain. This way he could more easily strengthen the Empire and unite Christendom against the common enemy, the Turk. A general Council of the Church was needed to fix the German Lutheran problem and was called for by the Emperor as guardian of the Church. According to Gattinara, this had to be taken care of by Charles, because the Pope was only going to make excuses.

Gattinara was from northern Italy, but based his family in the Netherlands, probably for political reasons, and seems to have been strongly affected by the chivalric ethos of the Burgundian court and culture as well as Erasmian humanism.¹³⁵ His devotion to the principles of honor and fidelity probably had much to do with his strong loyalty to Charles and the Hapsburg dynasty. Gattinara’s strong influence over Charles at the beginning of his reign as Holy Roman Emperor made it possible for him to push his more aggressive policy of a *monarquía universal*, which sought to control Italy, opposed by many Spaniards, like Ramón Menéndez Pidal, who desired a more Spanish approach to

¹³⁴ Ibid., 225-226.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 5.

ruling Charles's personal empire. The concept of *universitas Christiana*, which Gattinara and Charles worked for, sought peace among all Christians and war against the infidel only.¹³⁶ In order to do this, they felt there must be a stronger, more unified Empire, and throughout his reign Charles sought to be a stronger emperor. Unfortunately other Christian rulers did not share the same ideas. According to Philippe de Commines of Burgundy, the small group of humanist advisors in Charles's imperial government, of which Gattinara was a part, argued greatly with nobles throughout Charles's lands.¹³⁷

Gattinara pushed for the use of Roman law, as well as the power of the chancellor and civil officialdom over that of the constable and the military officialdom.¹³⁸ He and his fellow lawyers used their newfound power to strengthen themselves as a class and their positions as important servants of European princes. Gattinara sought to increase Charles's power as emperor and to strengthen central authority over local areas. He proclaimed Charles the new "Charlemagne," and spoke of the revival of the imperial idea. But even though he wanted to see Charles's imperial power strengthened over all the lands of his dynasty Gattinara wanted Charles's power to work within a constitutional framework rather than an absolutist one.¹³⁹ Seeing his emperor as "following in the path of the good emperor Justinian," he would reform laws and simplify legal procedures so that the whole world would want to use them and so that "it would be possible to say that there was one emperor and one universal law."¹⁴⁰ Gattinara wanted to create from Charles's many lands a universal, imperial unity of supra-national character based upon

¹³⁶ Headley, 2.

¹³⁷ Brandi, 14.

¹³⁸ Headley, 8.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 10-12.

¹⁴⁰ Koenigsberger, 15.

the prestige of the Holy Roman Empire and the effective political power Charles had in Castile.¹⁴¹ Upon the deaths of Gattinara and Charles, it would be seen that Castile would continue this universal idea, but that all of Charles's lands would not be a part of it.

Charles was also affected by the humanism of the Renaissance, and made changes to his style of ruling. He sought to make the administration of his government more efficient. Martín de Salinas, who represented Ferdinand of Austria at Charles's imperial court, states, "the Emperor wanted to eliminate duplication of effort."¹⁴² Charles, after the deaths of Chievres and Gattinara, wanted to control the state machinery himself, and he devoted a great deal of time and effort to affairs of state. From that point onward he found himself so busy that he was forced to rely more and more upon his ministers.¹⁴³ For this reason he was afraid of losing personal touch with his governments, wanting to keep direct contact at all times. Therefore, even late in life when his fingers were tormented by gout, he would sign his correspondence in his own hand. When it came to governing, Charles was not one to be lazy. He was interested in the governments of his lands, and wished to know everything that was going on. The Venetian ambassador Contarini said that Charles "rejoices in consultations with and visits to his councils, which he attends diligently and where he spends most of his time."¹⁴⁴

Charles used an imperial government that was much smaller than the Burgundian and Spanish governments. He even cut it in half upon becoming emperor in order to

¹⁴¹ Headley, 140.

¹⁴² Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 50-51.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 50-51.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 50.

travel more efficiently.¹⁴⁵ It was mainly made up of a small group of advisors very important to Charles. Men like Gattinara, Francisco los Cobos, the Duke of Alba, Chievres, and Adrian of Utrecht were extremely important in helping Charles run the imperial government at the beginning of his reign. Later, after Chievres, Gattinara, and Adrian had died, Granvelle, Valdés, and others would be added to this important group. Charles kept the commissions of the viceroys of each region of his empire very limited, wishing to make any important decisions himself, especially in the case of appointments. He also wanted viceroys to work efficiently within a conciliar system. His desire to decide on almost every government action throughout his lands caused inefficiency.¹⁴⁶ But the men and women of importance whom he trusted in the highest places of government were talented, often university-trained officials, and therefore were able to run the government well nonetheless.¹⁴⁷ Some historians say that Charles merely picked advisors and officials who he knew would agree with him and by this had no contention within his governments, but Tyler and others would disagree. Tyler states concerning Charles: “well equipped for understanding others, he gave his own servants full licence to oppose his views to his face and criticize his policies or decisions.”¹⁴⁸ This seems closer to the truth, for Charles desired direct contact with his government and its ministers, as well as the truthful, effective, and realistic running of his state machinery.

The constitutional structure of the Empire was quite complicated. At both the levels of the Empire and the individual principalities there was a duality between the

¹⁴⁵ Blockmans, 133.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 114.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 135.

¹⁴⁸ Tyler, 13.

emperor and the representation of the estates, and unique relationships were directly dependent on the Empire.¹⁴⁹ At Diets most representatives were territorial princes. As in Maximilian's reign, Charles's imperial government's Diet had three chambers: the Electors (not including the King of Bohemia, Charles's brother Ferdinand), the Princes (bishops, counts, and lords), and the Imperial Cities (mainly in an advisory position and for contribution to approved financial expenses).¹⁵⁰ These three branches worked alongside each other, but decisions required the agreement of at least the first two estates.¹⁵¹ Charles's Diet assembled almost every year.¹⁵²

At the Diet of Worms in 1521, the *Reichsregiment* (Regency Council) was formed, made up of Ferdinand as imperial governor and twenty-two members representing the estates.¹⁵³ Ferdinand was Charles's representative in the Empire from 1522 onward because of the emperor's long absences, and was made King of the Romans in 1531.¹⁵⁴ Until 1530, the *Reichsregiment* was the most important governing body in the Empire. Princes often sent their advisors as representatives, and it became increasingly made up of lower nobility and lawyers from the bourgeoisie. Wim Blockmans feels that this led to an administrative machinery at the level of the Empire that could increasingly free itself from the estates.¹⁵⁵ Because of the complexities of the Empire's government Charles attempted from 1521 onward to form committees with a limited number of members from all six branches of the government. Among these six branches—the

¹⁴⁹ Blockmans, 28.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁵² Ibid., 32.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 32-33.

Imperial Council, the Aulic Council, the Regency Council, the Electors, the Princes, and the Imperial Cities—the Diet, consisting of the latter three branches, included six electors, seventy spiritual and secular rulers, seventy prelates, 120 counts and lords, and about sixty-five imperial towns. By creating these committees, the emperor hoped to achieve further efficiency in government by centralization of the decision making process and the strengthening of his influence on the Empire’s government. The committees that Charles created were his attempt to further unify his personal empire through the imposed conformity of imperial government to methods of ruling he found in Castile.

Charles tried to solidify the Netherlands and the Empire under his power by regulating law in those regions. In 1531 an administrative ordinance was redacted that had important economic and social measures for both the Netherlands and the Empire. After the changes were made to the administrative structure of the Netherlands, it was left in the hands of Mary of Hungary. In 1531 and 1532, the *Carolina*, a universal criminal code based on ancient traditions of German law, as well as Roman and canon law, was created and went forth in Charles’s name to codify law in the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁵⁶ The *Carolina* was somewhat like the *Constitutio Criminalis Bambergensis* which came out in 1507 and was used by the Prince-Bishop of Bamberg, except that it was more widespread and standardized criminal procedures to a large extent throughout the Empire, even though it did not gain power over the entire Empire because the liberties of its princes would not allow its complete authority.¹⁵⁷ According to Brandi, Charles had

¹⁵⁶ Brandi, 329; Gerald Strauss, *Law, Resistance, and the State: The Opposition to Roman Law in Reformation Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 123.

¹⁵⁷ Gerald Strauss, *Law, Resistance, and the State: The Opposition to Roman Law in Reformation Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 123.

nothing to do with either the administrative ordinance of the Empire or the *Carolina*, for the Empire by this time had been given up to be governed by the Estates, the administration/bureaucracy, and the King of the Romans, who was his brother Ferdinand.¹⁵⁸ Meanwhile, other historians would differ with this view, saying that Charles still had some say in the making of the *Carolina*, if not in its writing, at least in the attempted centralizing effects.

As a devout Catholic, Charles looked to God for clues as to whether he was ruling correctly. The final victory of the war with France had come to a miraculous end with Charles's victory, a sign that God was on his side. Any victory in the Empire fueled Charles's belief that he was doing God's work destroying the heretics. And his victory in Tunis in 1535 showed him at the peak of crusading for Christianity against the Muslim "infidels." But when he was stopped short in his expedition against Barbarossa in Algiers in 1541, he became convinced that it was God's punishment for something he was doing wrong.¹⁵⁹ He came to the conclusion that this was the way in which he was ruling the Americas, allowing Spaniards to mistreat the natives. Working from this conclusion he helped create the New Indian Laws of 1542-1543 to stop the terrible treatment of the natives in the Americas. Las Casas had been speaking out against these un-Christian actions of the Spanish conquistadors for some time, as had Francisco de Vitoria at the University of Salamanca—both previously quieted by Charles several years earlier with: "Let those priests be silent!"¹⁶⁰ But to appease God, Charles helped pass the

¹⁵⁸ Brandi, 329.

¹⁵⁹ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 125-126.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 126.

New Laws, which were strongly influenced by Las Casas, and attempts were made to stop the ill treatment of natives in the Americas by Spaniards. Likewise, in the Empire, Charles saw his rule as one based upon God's desire, and tried to reign accordingly as he fought for stronger central government to bring Catholic orthodoxy.

In the early 1540s, Charles decided to leave Spain yet again to go to the Netherlands, and then to the Empire to deal with the Lutheran problem. He left his son Philip in charge as regent.¹⁶¹ With him he left several of his important advisors and officials to help rule Spain. The Duke of Alba was in charge of the military. Francisco de los Cobos was in charge of financial affairs for the state. Valdés was in charge of the administration of justice. And two cardinals, Tavera and Zúñiga, were Philip's personal advisors on matters of state. Charles took with him his best expert on international affairs, the elder Granvelle, assisted by his son Antoine. These were the government officials of the Empire important to Charles in the 1540s as Charles continued to fight the Lutherans.

Throughout the many years that Charles attempted to fix the religious and political problems created by the Lutheran movement in the Empire, he was unable to fully understand its scope.¹⁶² Beginning in 1521 with the Diet of Worms and Charles's denunciation of Martin Luther, he tried to bring the Lutherans back to the Catholic Church. He attempted this through both force and compromise. Yet in the end he was unable to bring about a resolution that satisfied him, and he finished his reign with an abdication of the Empire and a sense of failure. His most often-used attempt at compromise was the idea of a general council to fix the problems the Lutherans had with

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁶² Blockmans, 81.

the Roman Catholic Church and to bring unity between these two groups, thereby hopefully making it easier for him to rule the Empire. He was the last in Europe to recognize that attempts to create a general council to fix the German religious and political problems were not possible. The failure of the several popes during Charles's reign to aid in the creation of a council undermined any trust the German Lutherans might have had in Charles's ability to fix their problems with the Church and created more political problems for Charles in the Empire.¹⁶³ Charles seems to have given up by the early 1550s, handing more of the Empire's authority to his brother Ferdinand. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 would bring a reprieve to the religious fighting in the Empire.

In order to keep the Empire together Charles traveled greatly and expended much energy. His system of traveling government, something he continued from Maximilian's example, had the potential of being inefficient, but worked for Charles because of his strength of personality and ability to choose talented government officials.¹⁶⁴ In his abdication of the Netherlands in Brussels in 1555, Charles mentioned the forty journeys he made in the roughly forty years of his reign in order to keep his subjects safe and to give them a sense of importance in the eyes of their ruler.¹⁶⁵ But in the end, as D.B. Lewis has said, Charles failed to bring about the unity of the lands in his personal empire, especially in the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁶⁶ In 1556 the Holy Roman Empire went to Ferdinand and his heir rather than to Philip. The Netherlands revolted after his reign, and

¹⁶³ Ibid., 84.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 127-128, 133.

¹⁶⁵ McElwee, 227.

¹⁶⁶ Lewis, 10.

Spain and its territories were the only lands that Charles's descendents were able to successfully control and make prosper.

The Political Theory Charles Developed

The model of government Charles took with him from the Netherlands to Spain was one with a weak executive head and strong regional governments. The few councils of the Netherlands' central government were not strong and did not have well-defined tasks. Both the Netherlands and Spain had government councils and contained regionalism. But the level of growth of government councils was not as advanced in the Netherlands, and the provinces of the Netherlands were more autonomous than the regions of the Spanish kingdoms.¹⁶⁷ Thus the Netherlands was not as centralized as Castile or Aragon, nor did it have the nationalism that the Spanish lands showed. The power of the duke was not as great as that of the King of Spain even though the Spanish kingdoms were promised a certain amount of freedom from the power of the monarch.¹⁶⁸

Charles desired to be a strong ruler, like Charlemagne. His predecessors in the Netherlands had attempted to create a stronger central government with the creation of councils, but had not been greatly successful. As King of Spain, Charles was in a position to be the strong ruler he desired to be. He worked to strengthen his ducal powers and unify the provinces of the Netherlands.¹⁶⁹ At first it seemed that Charles would make changes to Spanish government based upon a Burgundian model. While he did try to make some changes in Spain, especially in the case of the economy, in the end he used

¹⁶⁷ Blockmans, 29.

¹⁶⁸ McElwee, 29.

¹⁶⁹ Koenigsberger, 29.

Spanish methods for Spain. And he even worked to centralize the Netherlands and the Empire using the dominating power of Castile and a Castilian system of government. After the Comunero Revolt and Charles's stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529, Charles stopped appointing foreigners to positions in the government of Spain. He decided to continue the model of government used by Ferdinand and Isabella over Castile. Charles used a Castilian structure of government, with a Burgundian court style. He continued the trends of his Spanish predecessors Ferdinand and Isabella in strengthening Castile, fighting for a stronger monarchy, bringing permanent government councils under direct royal control, and gaining more power in local areas using support from the towns. Using his personal relationship to his Spanish lands and government officials, and the strength of his personality, Charles sought to become a great emperor like Charlemagne as he made Spain his base in an attempt to build a universal Christian empire using the prestige of the Holy Roman Empire and the power of Castile.

From the beginning of his rule in the Netherlands, and throughout his rule elsewhere, Charles allowed his top advisors to disagree with him and critique him on policies and decisions in order to understand all possibilities in governing.¹⁷⁰ In Spain and elsewhere, Charles usually worked with his governments rather than lording it over them in an absolutist manner. Using the example of the Catholic Monarchs, Charles worked with royal councils in the attempt to gain power for them as well as the monarchy which controlled them, a policy that helped both sides. His great control over governmental bodies in Spain, and the force of his personality, as well as his constant desire to

¹⁷⁰ Tyler, 13.

micromanage everything, created a governmental situation wherein *he* held the system together. Loyal and talented officials made the system work. But his successors would have to match his style of monarchy or the governmental system would fall apart.

Conclusions

In 1525 Emperor Charles V had seventy-two official titles (twenty-seven of them kingdoms, twenty of these in Spain alone), thirteen duchies, twenty-two counties, and nine seigniories.¹⁷¹ Later, several more lands were added in the Netherlands and elsewhere. He said himself that they were more crowns than his poor head could bear. Many of these titles were merely for show, such as “Duke of Athens” and “King of Jerusalem,” leftover accomplishments from the Crusades. And some, like “Duke of Burgundy,” were claims that had no practical power. Charles also saw himself as ruler of the lands that his brother Ferdinand governed since he was head of the Hapsburg dynasty, and they were Hapsburg lands. This was a means to gain authority over even more territory, even though Ferdinand actually governed the lands. Blockmans maintains that the many titles that Charles possessed gave him a variety of legal means in which to exercise power in many different lands and put pressure on rulers of other lands, a situation created by centuries of hereditary successions, unions, and divisions.¹⁷²

Charles gained most of his lands not by conquest but by inheritance, and found himself fighting to conserve his lands from disintegration throughout his reign.¹⁷³ His own successes in European warfare and diplomacy aided in this, as did the conquistadors

¹⁷¹ Blockmans, 25.

¹⁷² Ibid., 25.

¹⁷³ Lewis, 6.

in the New World. In fact, regardless of his usually defensive posture in international politics and warfare, Charles was adding lands until 1543.¹⁷⁴ But his situation was not favorable for the world-wide Christian empire he desired to create. Even so, those in his empire were optimistic. In the following passage Pedro Mexía tells us about Charles, his rule of so much of Europe, his reaction to his subjects working so hard in the New World to gain glory for him, and the benefits of these explorations for Charles, Spain, Catholicism, and his overall empire.

For the Emperor God reserved the honour and pre-eminence, among many others, of deeds achieved in his time and by his command which men never had been able to achieve, nor even to comprehend, since the creation of the world and which many ancient philosophers had thought impossible.¹⁷⁵

The power of Charles was therefore seen as great, and was seen as growing by many Europeans through much of his reign. This was especially true in Spain, the base of his power. Thus Charles's Grand Chancellor Gattinara said to him on July 12, 1519, after his imperial election:

Sire, God has been very merciful to you: he has raised you above all the kings and princes of Christendom to a power such as no sovereign has enjoyed since your ancestor Charles the Great. He has set you on the way towards a world monarchy, towards the uniting of all Christendom under a single shepherd.¹⁷⁶

Charles's imperial chancellor Gattinara sought to make Charles's personal empire more than a mere union of lands recognizing Charles as head; he sought functional union. He belonged to a Roman school of lawyers who helped the dukes of Burgundy to bring the Netherlands into a functional union with the establishing of councils and courts to

¹⁷⁴ Bonney, 109.

¹⁷⁵ Pedro Mexía, *Historia del Emperador Carlos V*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1945, 50; Brandi, 72.

¹⁷⁶ Fernando Diaz-Plaja, *La Historia de España en sus Documentos: El siglo XVI*, Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Politicos, 1954, 110 (Spanish); Brandi, 112.

govern the provinces in the attempt to phase out customary law. Charles's Burgundian grand chancellor Gattinara was allowed to extend his power over all of Charles's dominions.¹⁷⁷ The Imperial Council of State, the only council allowing greater nobles as members, advised the Emperor on all imperial matters. It was extended to include Spain and Charles's Italian possessions in addition to the Netherlands, with Spain as the base of power. Gattinara wanted Charles to rule over an empire as great as Charlemagne's.

At first Charles used a Burgundian approach to governing Spain at the beginning of his reign. But eventually he tried to create a commonality among his lands to govern them more effectively and become a great emperor like Charlemagne. He worked to unify his lands using a Castilian form of government and Castilian power and resources after his victory over the rebels during the Comunero Revolt and his stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529. Charles took with him from the Netherlands a humanist education, certain styles of court procedure that he introduced in Spain, examples from earlier rulers and advisors to live by, and initial experience in ruling. He used popular political theory to fuel his governing methods in Spain and elsewhere. And he looked to his predecessors in the Netherlands, the Empire, and Spain for examples on ruling methods.

As Charles established himself in Spain he was forced to "Hispanicize," and as he realized the advantages of a Castilian system of governing he tried to export it to his other lands in the Netherlands and the Empire. His predecessors Ferdinand and Isabella had built the foundations for a powerful nation-state, and Charles wanted to use this because it allowed for a strong monarchy over permanent councils and local governments.

¹⁷⁷ Koenigsberger, 14-15.

Throughout his empire Charles tried to use similar forms of government whenever possible, based upon a Castilian model. This model was made up of a viceroy over each region aided in governing by sets of councils directly under their, and more importantly Charles's, control. In everything Charles desired to have the last word. He wished to know everything that went on in his governments, especially in Spain, and to be consulted on every important matter before an action was taken. This created inefficiency, which he attempted to deal with by allowing more power to the viceroys and heads of the councils, but in the end he still chose to hold strong control over all parts of his governments. In Spain this form of governing was effectively used. In the Netherlands it was somewhat effective, while in the Empire it was not. Charles tried to set up agencies, as had his grandfather Maximilian, which would diminish the control of the independent German princes and gain power over them. He was not successful in this, and ended up giving power to his brother Ferdinand in frustration. Meanwhile, the New World was controlled by a Castilian government agency, the Council of the Indies, which was based upon a Castilian form of government.

Spain became the base of a larger empire in Charles's domains. Charles used popular methods of ruling, and attempted to restore older ideas of universal rule to bring all of his personal empire into closer unity. The ideas and examples of rule that Charles gained from his homeland in the Netherlands and from the Holy Roman Empire were important in his rule of Spain, but it was his use of Castilian methods and resources that became most important in the ruling of Spain and his personal empire. Charles's strong personality and the devotion and talent of his officials ensured the fulfillment of his

desire to be the greatest Holy Roman Emperor since Charlemagne. As Charles sought to rule his empire, he gained great control over his base, Spain, by continuing the policies of his predecessors Ferdinand and Isabella. The next two chapters discuss the government of Spain and Charles's rule of Spain in detail.

CHAPTER 3

SPAIN BEFORE THE RULE OF CHARLES

Introduction

Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles looked to precedents made during the Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest periods of Spain's history for models of strong monarchy. The Catholic Monarchs, and Charles after them, used Roman law, Visigothic law, and the law of the Reconquest kings to expand their powers both in the central government and in the local areas of Spain. Through the use of permanent councils under their direct control, they were able to gain more power over administration from the nobles and the towns, centralizing Spain under the dominance of Castile. The Catholic Monarchs had the support of the towns, and used the towns to control local areas of Spain. They used the strength of the monarchy to dominate Castile, and worked to centralize Spain under the dominance of Castile.

This chapter describes Spain before the rule of Charles, outlining the use of Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest kings' law throughout Spain's history and discussing Spain before and during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella. In this chapter I show precedents in Spanish government that Charles came in contact with as he became King of Spain, and that he eventually adopted to govern Spain and his empire. Secondary sources concerning Spain, and some primary sources such as Spanish law codes, are used

to show the growth of Spanish government through the fifteenth century, and the many characteristics of government that Charles continued from the Catholic Monarchs' reign. These characteristics were royal dominance over Castilian central and local government; dominance of Castile over the rest of Spain; the creation and continuation of central government councils as permanent government bodies under the control of the monarchy; royal control of local governments through support from the towns; the continued weakening of the *cortes*; and the use of Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest kings' law and precedent to gain power for the monarchy. In particular, Roman law in Spain had a more continuous history, giving force to strong monarchy.

Spain before the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella

Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest rulers introduced political theories and governmental structures that eventually resulted in political unity in the midst of a variety of cultures, languages, and customs. Rome's legacy, Roman law, and the strength of towns in Roman government were precedents used by the governments of Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles to centralize their lands. These monarchs also looked to Visigothic precedents in mixing written law with customary law and in controlling the Church. The law codes of the Reconquest kings, their crusading zeal, and their desire for religious unity fueled the attempts of the Catholic Monarchs and Charles to create a strong Spanish central government. This section uses secondary sources concerning Spain, and some primary sources, to describe Spain before the rule of Charles and shows the growth of Spanish central government during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs.

Rome began settling the Iberian Peninsula after the Second Punic War and both Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar created governments centered around emerging towns (*colonia*) and cities (*municipia*).¹ The Hispano-Roman society was dominated by great landowners, or *seniors* (later *señors*), who kept palaces in the major cities while building large, rural villas overseeing their vast estates.² Some Iberian cities possessed their own senates and elected their own magistrates, and those who held office became Roman citizens.³ The cities acquired limited rights of self-government through annual provincial councils. By the second century, the election of magistrates by the inhabitants, the *populus* or pueblo, had ceased, and appointments were made by the municipal authority. The only position elected by the populace was the *flamines*, representatives of the populace at the provincial council. As Roman influence grew stronger throughout the peninsula, more democratic methods of government gave way to a more hierarchical government. Rome eventually unified Spain, and made it prosperous.⁴

Charles, and many Spaniards during his reign, desired the political, religious, and social unity they saw in Roman Spain, and looked to it as a model of government. In Charles's government, like that of the Catholic Monarchs, can be seen many similarities to Roman Spain. Like Roman Spain, Charles's central government had great power over the cities, and the cities had some representation in the central government, although that representation was limited and lessened throughout Charles's reign. Unity through the

¹ Peter Pierson, *The History of Spain*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 19; Rhea Marsh Smith, *Spain: A Modern History*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 16, 9.

² *Ibid.*, 20.

³ Harold Livermore, *A History of Spain*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), 46.

⁴ Rhea Marsh Smith, *Spain: A Modern History*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 11.

coordination of cities was a characteristic of Spain under Charles. Unlike Roman Spain, the cities in Charles's Spain governed local regions rather than feudal barons.

As the Roman Empire declined, groups of Alans, Vandals, and Suevi came into the Iberian Peninsula to settle. In 409 large groups of warriors and their families invaded the peninsula.⁵ Between 419 and 431 Spanish land was distributed among the more than 200,000 Visigoths who entered Spain to fight off the Vandals, Alans, and Suevis for the Romans, and eventually came to rule over the peninsula.⁶ After 461 it was clear that Rome could not control the Iberian Peninsula. In 475 King Theodoric drew up a code of Visigothic laws, ending all pretense of subordination to the Empire. But what followed was a long period of co-existence between remaining Roman law and Visigothic law. In the 490s more Visigoths settled in Spain, forming the Visigothic kingdom.⁷

Visigothic kings wanted to be more than mere tribal chieftains and began to issue laws like Roman emperors; but they also wanted to continue Visigothic traditions and customs in their law codes. They modified Visigothic law and incorporated Roman-style law into their government. Two legal systems existed in the peninsula: the general, territorial law of the Hispano-Romans, and the customary, personal law of the Visigoths. There was a great deal of confusion in judicial practices because of this. Attempts were made to codify law in the Visigothic kingdom, leading to the first Visigothic law code under Euric, the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, leftover imperial law and classical jurisprudence coupled with Visigothic customary law.⁸ This was an attempt to bring

⁵ Pierson, 22.

⁶ Livermore, 53-54.

⁷ Pierson, 22.

⁸ Smith, 15.

everyone in Spain under Visigothic law fueled by Roman law; Visigothic power and customary law mixed, and was supported by the unifying force of Roman written law. The Code of Justinian was even applied in the southeastern part of the peninsula.⁹ Alaric II, Leovigild, and Recared revised the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* to create the *Fuero Juzgo* (Charter of the Laws), a law code which brought great legislative unity to the Visigoths. Legal unification was finally completed in the *Liber judiciorum* of Recceswinth in the seventh century, which was made obligatory on both Visigoths and Hispano-Romans. Smith says that Roman law ceased to exist as it had been, but that the Roman influence persisted.¹⁰

The Visigoths kept the Roman administrative system of provinces directed by military dukes, with some modification. The cities were governed by counts who had civic duties and were assisted by vicars with judicial powers. At first these counts were elected by city councils, but eventually the office became hereditary.¹¹ The Visigothic central government wanted to have greater control over local areas. The power of the cities became less than it was under the Romans as Visigothic kings sought to rule local areas through personal relationship with the dukes of local governments. Charles, likewise, ruled through personal relationship with governors of local areas. He wanted local areas to be loyal to him, and like Visigothic kings he sometimes allowed the positions of local government to become hereditary. But unlike Visigothic kings, Charles used the power of the cities rather than the power of local governments to control regions.

⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹¹ Ibid., 24.

Harold Livermore calls the “empire” of the Visigoths the first Spanish state.¹² The Visigoths were no longer pagans, like the northern Iberians, nor Catholics like the Romans, but Arians. This gave them more independence from Rome. Eventually Roman Catholicism eliminated Arianism, and Visigothic kings used orthodox Catholicism to bring national unity to Spain from the sixth century onward.¹³ Kings held great power over priests since clergy usually held governmental positions, often judicial, along with their ecclesiastical positions, and were appointed to both offices by the king.¹⁴ Before becoming Arian, and then Roman Catholic, the priests of the Visigothic pagan religion held little power compared to the king and his warrior-band government. This trend continued, and the Visigothic Catholic Church of Spain usually worked with the king in a subordinate role. The power of the king over the clergy, the use of clergy in positions of the government, and the partnership between Church and state wherein the king was in control, made Spain independent of Rome and aided in the creation of a national church controlled by the monarchy. This continued throughout the Reconquest, and into the reigns of Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles.

Whereas in England, Germanic law led to baronial power and eventually the Magna Carta, in Spain the use of stronger Roman law cut off democratizing trends and gave more power to the monarch, for instance, over legislation. As Visigothic kings wrote more law codes, a tendency toward Roman law developed. Visigothic kings used Roman law to circumvent the election of the monarch.¹⁵ Written law and customary law

¹² Livermore, 56.

¹³ Smith, 17.

¹⁴ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁵ Livermore, 56-57, 60.

mixed, and by the ninth and tenth centuries kingships were no longer voted on, but were hereditary.¹⁶ Like the Visigothic kings, Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles gained more power for the monarchy, using precedents in Visigothic and Roman law.

Arabs and Berbers from North Africa invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 711 because the Visigoths were in the midst of a civil war and were weak at that time.¹⁷ It took the invaders less than a decade to gain control of most of the peninsula, but it would take the remnants of the Visigoths in the north several centuries to retake it. The Arabs and Berbers that governed the majority of the Iberian Peninsula were fewer in number than the Visigoths had been on arriving centuries earlier.¹⁸ But unlike the Visigoths, the Arabs and Berbers occupied the towns and spread their compact military communities throughout Andalusia, restoring the Roman urbanism of the south and establishing an open society which incorporated native Spaniards into its patrilineal system rather than segregating them. This allowed them to govern the area efficiently and hold off the Christian Reconquest kings for centuries.

The Muslims' government was based in the city of Córdoba, and ruled by an emir. The emir's administration consisted of a council of ministers, a treasury, and a civil service. He had a chief advisor, called a *hajib*, as well as royal secretaries, inspectors, and tax collectors. Each province consisted of a city and its surrounding area and was controlled by a governor appointed by the emir and reporting directly to him. The governor settled questions of civil law, and the *qadi*, or judge, applied Koranic law and

¹⁶ Elena de La Souchere, *An Explanation of Spain*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 35-36.

¹⁷ Pierson, 23.

¹⁸ Livermore, 68.

was appointed by the governor of the region. The same was the case with the police and the officials of the markets. There was no municipal representation as had been under the Romans, but cities were important in the governing of local regions, and as marketing centers. During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, cities had some representation in the central government through the *cortes* (parliament), and this continued during Charles's reign. Muslim cities had no representation in the central government, but were still important to the administration of local affairs. Like the Muslims, Charles was strongly dependent upon the cities to govern local regions in Castile rather than feudal barons.

The Muslim system of governing allowed for the co-existence of the three religious groups of Spain: Muslims, Christians, and Jews. A degree of freedom was allowed for religious beliefs rather than a push for religious conformity as would be seen under the Inquisition of Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles. This would have a lasting effect in Granada even after that kingdom was conquered by Castile in 1492. Like other Spanish regions, it continued to be allowed some autonomy and customary law, as can be seen by this excerpt from the terms of the surrender. "The Moors will be judged under their own laws and courts by the Islamic law they are accustomed to observing, under the authority of their judges."¹⁹ Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles worked to gradually get rid of these regional laws. Charles learned to use the towns as the Muslim government had, to control local areas for his central power, in place of possible rival nobles and feudalism. Nobles who gained land and power in Castile during the Reconquest were

¹⁹ Jon Cowans, *Early Modern Spain*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 16.

kept from gaining political power by Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles. Greater nobles were not allowed to become governors of the towns, the bases of power in local regions.

In response to the Muslim invasion, the kingdom of Asturias rose to power. Keeping relations with the independent and pagan Basques, it resisted incorporation into the Muslim region to the south. Asturias continued Visigothic trends of ruling; being ruled by a king and his small court of nobles who elected his successor, although their choice was restricted to the dynasty of Pelayo.²⁰ Immediately after the North African invasion, those in the north tried to gain control and resettle lands to the south. The Asturians, Cantabrians, and Basques were settling throughout the oldest part of Old Castile throughout the 700s. Because of the many castles that were built on this frontier, the name “Castile” was applied to the land by 800. Most of the leaders—the counts and bishops—were of Visigothic origin, while their followers were either Asturo-Cantabrians or Basques. The settlers regulated their own affairs, using customary law, instead of the semi-Romanized code of Galicia or Asturias. But this would gradually change as kings over Castile became more powerful.

The governments of the Christian Reconquest kings in the northern parts of Spain used combinations of Roman and Visigothic models of government.²¹ These kings eventually took over the land to the south and pushed the Muslims out politically; therefore, many historians look to their governments as the natural predecessors of Charles’s Spanish government. Robertson believes that the government of Spain, even

²⁰ Livermore, 79-81.

²¹ Smith, 75.

after the defeat of the Moors, was Gothic.²² He adds that the reason it took 700 years to reconquer territory from the Moors was the lack of central authority among Christian kingdoms. Christian kingdoms throughout the Reconquest were often not in communication, or were fighting each other rather than the Muslims. In Castile, legislation was improperly balanced, and the cities were too strongly represented in the *cortes* for the monarchy to have power over the nobles or to get anything done. Any Spanish government that desired to become strong would have to overcome the regionalism and the weak monarchy introduced during the Reconquest.

Soon after the Muslim invasion, the Franks began to come over the Pyrenees and settle in Gerona and the valley of the Segre River, helping to fight the Muslims and to gain power for themselves.²³ In the late eighth century Charlemagne led several incursions into the peninsula to fight both Muslims and Basques.²⁴ But after his death, help from the Franks decreased. The Frankish march and the Asturian kingdom helped give rise to three important states: Castile, Aragon, and Navarre.²⁵ Through the next several centuries the Asturian kings and the Castilians intermittently fought the Muslims for territory in the south.²⁶ Aragon grew as a buffer state between the Franks and the Iberian Peninsula, a mix of Visigothic and Frankish characteristics. Navarre grew in power and expanded, strongly affected by Frankish culture.

²² William Robertson, *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830), 69-70.

²³ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁴ Pierson, 30.

²⁵ Livermore, 81.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

The Muslim state of Al-Andalus rose to power in the south during the ninth and tenth centuries, and Christian León was made part of it. As Al-Andalus collapsed, Christian Navarre grew in power. León was restored at the end of the ninth century by Alfonso III, who styled himself an “emperor” and brought increased strength to that kingdom.²⁷ He divided his lands among his sons, and three kingdoms came out of León at Alfonso’s death—León, Asturias, and Galicia. Eventually Castile, a part of León, became separate from León and Navarre, but after a time reunited with León as the caliphate (Muslim kingdom) became more powerful. As the caliphate weakened, the frontier principalities of Muslim Spain that bordered the Christian lands became three separate splinter states (*taifas*): Badajoz in the west, Toledo in the center, and Saragossa in the northeast.²⁸ These became tributaries of Castile during the eleventh century. The *taifas* had independent governors who assumed the titles and powers of emirs and were in constant warfare with each other and the northern Christian kingdoms.²⁹

The union of Castile and León by Ferdinand I in 1037 helped the power of Christian Spain.³⁰ The old Visigothic monarchy had become hereditary, but during the Reconquest Spanish kings parceled out their territories to their sons as Charlemagne had, causing problems between the Christian powers for generations. Even so, later in the eleventh century Sancho Garcés III was able to take over Castile and León, and unite them to Navarre, Aragon, and the Basque country.³¹ He took the title of “King of the Spains,” but when he died he divided his kingdoms among his four sons who

²⁷ Ibid., 91-92.

²⁸ Ibid., 102-103.

²⁹ Smith, 35.

³⁰ Catherine Moran, *Spain*, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 24.

³¹ Smith, 54.

immediately fell to fighting amongst themselves. His grandson Alfonso VII of Castile revived his imperial idea and took it even further, entitling himself “Emperor” in the style of the Visigoths and Romans before him.³² Thus Reconquest Spain had an imperial legacy from which Ferdinand and Isabella, as well as Charles V, would draw.

By the thirteenth century the Reconquest was led by five Christian kingdoms: León, Castile, Aragon, Navarre, and Portugal. There was little unity in Spain, but it was developing.³³ Through dynastic marriage and war with the Muslims, Christian kingdoms eventually allied into fewer states, and forged the Spanish crusading character, created by the long period of crusades against the Muslims. Ferdinand and Isabella capitalized upon this crusading spirit in the Granada War, and Charles used it to create a powerful world-wide Spanish Empire.

From the thirteenth century onward, more of Muslim Spain fell to the Christian kingdoms. Castile and León reunited and conquered parts of Andalusia, Aragon took Valencia and the Balearic Islands, and Portugal grew in territory to the west.³⁴ The nature of the unification of each of these kingdoms was such that it created a dualism. It was political, not social, and each region was strongly autonomous, although technically subordinate to the king. By 1249 there were five kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula: Granada (Muslim), Portugal (Christian), Castile (including the Christian lands of León,

³² Roger Bigelow Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918) vol. 1, 91.

³³ Smith, 60.

³⁴ Livermore, 126.

Asturias, and Galicia), Aragon (including the Christian lands of Catalonia and Valencia), and Navarre (Christian).³⁵

The Reconquest saw the development of different levels in society in the Spanish territories, especially on the Castilian frontier. A class of commoner-knights, called *caballeros villanos*, grew in power along the frontier in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.³⁶ These “knights of the horse” protected the towns, and took their place among the *caballero*, or *hidalgo* (generic term) class of nobles. The nature of the relationship between the *caballeros villanos* and the urban patriciate is debated, but recent research has shown that these two groups were very close, often intermingling, and both had a large influence in the governing of the towns.³⁷ Above this class in the two-part nobility of Castile and Aragon, were the *ricos hombres* (grandees), who were the most powerful nobles, having vast amounts of land and income but less political power in the towns.³⁸

Early in the Reconquest, people migrated from the north to settle the newly conquered territory in the frontier regions. They insisted upon liberties and privileges and received *fueros* (charters) granted to them by the king.³⁹ Towns and villages in Castile became relatively self-governing under councils elected mostly by *vecinos* (householders). Kings and nobles retained ultimate jurisdiction over the regions around

³⁵ George Hills, *Spain*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 39.

³⁶ Elena Lourie, “A Society Organized for War: Medieval Spain,” *Past and Present* 35 (1966): 55.

³⁷ Armand Arriaza, “The Castilian Bourgeoisie and the Caballeros Villanos in the Concejo before 1300: A Revisionist View,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 3 (1983): 518.

³⁸ Lourie, 60.

³⁹ Pierson, 39.

the towns. Frontier towns saw more democracy than most towns in Spain, especially since feudalism was weak and town governments had great power over local areas.⁴⁰

Kings of Castile attempted to centralize the region early. Alfonso X, in the thirteenth century, tried to establish absolute power by forming a new and general system of laws.⁴¹ In Andalusia he revived the Visigothic *Fuero Juzgo* (Charter of the Laws), a royal law which had kept Galicia faithful and subservient to the crown for a long time. In 1255, Alfonso X created the *Fuero Real* (Royal Charter), a collection of the common law of Castile, supplemented by “new laws,” applicable to all of his domains. A decade later his legal consultants, trained in Italy and versed in Justinianic, Roman, and canon law, created an alternative code, the *Siete Partidas* (Seven Documents), which was a seven-part code of laws based on Roman law forming a universal system of royal justice intended ultimately to replace the jealously guarded privileges of the Castilian municipalities and the private jurisdictions of the nobility. This was not agreed upon by the nobility who were afraid of absolute monarchy, and it remained a mere guide rather than law. The theory behind the *Siete Partidas* sought to have medieval Castilian government run by an effective royal absolutism, tempered by the democratic power of the town councils and the participation of the *cortes*.⁴² Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles created a strong monarchy similar to this model of government. Smith denies that the *cortes* represented a strong democratic trend in Spain since the *cortes*’ powers were quite restricted. “The trend was not democratic, for the *fueros* constituted a recognition rather

⁴⁰ Smith, 75.

⁴¹ Livermore, 138.

⁴² Merriman, vol. 1, 168.

of the collective rights of municipal entities—reminiscent of the ancient Roman *municipia*—than of the individual rights of citizens.”⁴³ In any case, theory did not meet reality, and both the king and the people were controlled by a rebel aristocracy for the two centuries before Ferdinand and Isabella.

During the fourteenth century Castile saw the decline of the power of the monarchy, and the rise in power of the nobility, only slowed by the power of the *cortes*, made up of the municipalities.⁴⁴ The *cortes* was the legislative body of the towns and regions in Spain.⁴⁵ City councils, or *consejos*, also held local power and helped to run the governments of the municipalities.⁴⁶ These councils developed during the twelfth century as land was reconquered from the Muslims.⁴⁷ Aragon, unlike Castile, was more of a political than a social creation, made up of four units—Aragon, Barcelona, Valencia, and Catalonia—each with different peoples, languages, and cultures.⁴⁸ Each of the regions of Aragon was unified merely by its personal connection with its ruler, like Charles’s relationship with his many lands. Castile, on the other hand, contained social unity and had a strong monarchy. Navarre was somewhat homogeneous, and Portugal contained social unity. Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles would try to bring more unity to Aragon.

The *cortes* in Aragon and Catalonia became the High Court and Parliament for those lands during the twelfth century.⁴⁹ Peter III, in 1283, issued the *General Privilege*

⁴³ Smith, 75-76.

⁴⁴ Livermore, 142.

⁴⁵ Smith, 75.

⁴⁶ Merriman, vol. 1, 188.

⁴⁷ Joseph F. O’Callaghan, “The Beginnings of the Cortes of Leon-Castile,” *The American Historical Review* 74, no. 5 (1969): 1506.

⁴⁸ Livermore, 147-148.

⁴⁹ Ulick Ralph Burke, *A History of Spain*, (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1895) vol. 1, 236.

in Aragon to the Cortes of Saragossa, giving certain liberties to the people of Aragon and the *cortes*, as well as promising that royal absolutism would never have a part in Aragon. Under James I and Pedro III in the thirteenth century Aragon became a powerful force in the Mediterranean and Europe.⁵⁰ Sicily was added to the kingdoms of the King of Aragon, and a union was created between Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia forming the Crown of Aragon.⁵¹ A trans-Pyrenean policy came naturally to the Kingdom of Aragon, and would continue to be the trend for generations.⁵²

Navarre was important to the Reconquest. Many men were drawn from the three Basque provinces to help León in resettling Spanish lands in Castile.⁵³ These provinces went back and forth between Pamplona and Burgos, but remained strongly independent, refusing to unify. Each was unified internally through general *juntas* (assemblies) made up of representatives of towns and rural districts, which scrutinized all new legislation to safeguard their existing rights. As parts of Castile were taken back, the nobles had less to do with the government, the main organization of government was by towns, and kings had to have the support of the towns if they were going to rule. The royal *fueros* given to the towns by the king allowed them specific rights and privileges of self-government, usually in the form of a council elected by town householders (*vecinos*). Towns owed allegiance to the king, but were strongly self-governing. The governmental affairs of rural areas in Spain continued to be conducted by the king, grandees, or *juntas*.

⁵⁰ Smith, 66.

⁵¹ Ibid., 67.

⁵² Jaime Vicens Vives, *Approaches to the History of Spain*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 54.

⁵³ Livermore, 156-157.

Granada was the last part of Muslim Spain, the last of the *taifas*, created by a Spanish Muslim under Christian protection, and settled by colonies of Muslim refugees from other parts of Spain.⁵⁴ Castile held strong political sway over its government. But most sultans tried to be moderate, seeking a middle road between the policies of Castile and Granada. While Granada's political life was unstable, its social life was strong through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵⁵

By the fourteenth century Spanish rulers began to see that war between Christian princes could not be followed by conquest, and that the only legitimate means of annexing a kingdom was by dynastic acquisition on the failure of a royal line.⁵⁶ For example, when the house of Barcelona failed, a member of the Castilian Trastámara family was picked to occupy the throne. This junior branch of the Trastámaras went on to unite Aragon with Castile when Ferdinand II (V of Castile) married Isabella of Castile in 1469. During the fourteenth century in Castile, nobles became more powerful. The *grandees* gained larger domains, more offices in the royal and local governments, and more titles.⁵⁷ These nobles fought for more power in Castile, and in order to keep the peace, the *cortes* met often, working to bring more power to the towns and improve business conditions. The towns kept peace by creating the *hermandades* (brotherhoods). Bishops, monasteries, and crusading military orders also grew in power, usually due to gifts from noble and royal wills.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 158.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 160.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 162-163.

⁵⁷ Pierson, 44.

Toward the end of the fourteenth century, Castile saw the further decline of its monarchy under John I, who failed to add Portugal to Castile and seemed to disgrace the chivalry of the kingdom and the old aristocracy, bringing a temporary end to its imperialist ambitions.⁵⁸ Because of the loss of prestige and power of the monarchy, the *cortes* grew in power, seen as a rise of national government and municipalities over the crown and the nobility. Visigothic kings had a circle of advisors, and Christian kings in Spain continued this trend. Eventually this circle of advisors became a council, and then a permanent government body, the *Consejo Real* (Royal Council), during the fourteenth century.⁵⁹ This council had twelve members, four from each estate, and the monarch's prerogatives were limited to "the appointment of governors and judges, presentations to sees and abbeys, the donation of lands, and the royal pardon."⁶⁰ The council, in 1385 under John I, was more democratic than later Royal Councils, having four plebeians who served as representatives of the populace. Later these would be replaced by *letrados* (lawyers), and then *oidores* (judges). Unfortunately for John I, he could not control his council.⁶¹ This was a time of strength for the Royal Council, which saw the fight against royal absolutism as part of its purpose. At Briviesca, four "doctores legistas" (Roman lawyers) were added to the council, and when John died in 1390, the council of regency for his eleven-year-old heir was formed by a small "*cortes*" consisting of three nobles, four ecclesiastics, and eight procurators of the towns rather than members of the royal

⁵⁸ Livermore, 165-166.

⁵⁹ Merriman, vol. 1, 211.

⁶⁰ Livermore, 166.

⁶¹ Merriman, vol. 1, 211.

family or great officers of the state.⁶² Eventually the Royal Council was brought under the strong control of Ferdinand and Isabella, who saw it as a way to strengthen their allies and a useful tool to regain royal prerogatives.

The legislative world of Castile increasingly became populated by lawyers learned in Roman law. They entrenched themselves as the interpreters of Spanish law. The founding of a college for Spanish students at Bologna in 1364, and the reform of the statutes of the university of Salamanca undertaken by Don Pedro de Luna (the future Pope Benedict XIII), helped Spaniards to receive Roman law. During the fourteenth century Alfonso XI (1312-1350) reordered Spanish law codes in order of precedence in the attempt to use them and gain power for the monarchy, referring many cases to the crown. Alfonso XI also allowed the creation of the *Mesta* (guild of noble sheep farmers) and used *corregidores* to further control the towns and local areas.⁶³ Afterward, Henry II (1369-1379), continuing the work of Alfonso VIII and Alfonso X, set up a special court, the *chancillería* (*audiencia* or *cort*), which consisted of four jurists and three bishops, to hear appeals. During Henry II's reign Spain saw the end of *convivencia*, where Christians, Jews, and Muslims lived in harmony, and the beginning of a trend that would lead to the Inquisition. Henry's rule helped centralize Spain religiously and formed the basis upon which the growth of the royal administration and the future bureaucratic state would build under Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles.

Roman law was increasingly used in the governments of Spain from the twelfth century onward. By the fifteenth century *procuradores* (representatives in the *cortes*)

⁶² Livermore, 166.

⁶³ E. Allison Peers, *Spain*, (London: Methuen, 1956), 54; Smith, 83.

were well versed in it, and more Spanish universities were teaching it from that century onward.⁶⁴ Town *consejos* also used it to a large degree. One thing that Roman law brought was the revival of an ancient theme of a single state and an exclusive spiritual authority.⁶⁵ It also created a strong monarchy with the ability to legislate for the whole nation and centralize the government, leading eventually to absolutism in Spain by the seventeenth century.⁶⁶ The monarch's political power grew without restraint in large part due to the support from municipalities from which they did not need money, revenue from royal lands, and the ability to levy taxes.⁶⁷ Using *fueros*, Castilian kings were able to bring the frontier towns away from democratic tendencies by rewarding fidelity with greater rights of self-government, similar to the ancient Roman *municipia*.

Spanish society was not strongly feudal during the Middle Ages. Other European countries were accustomed to feudalism, and this gave their nobles great power. In the Spanish territories feudalism never fully developed, yet the nobles still held great social and economic power.⁶⁸ People were not usually tied to land or lord in Spain, and Spaniards were free to work for a lord or to leave his land. The constantly shifting boundaries; the agricultural poverty of the *Mesta*; and the legal, political, and social system of Spain, made it difficult for a feudal system to grow.

Castilian monarchs held great power over the Church. The close relationship between Church and state led to the suppression of Judaism, to the Castilian *cortes*

⁶⁴ Gaines Post, "Roman Law and Early Representation in Spain and Italy, 1150-1250," *Speculum* 18, no. 2 (1943): 217-218.

⁶⁵ Livermore, 167.

⁶⁶ Smith, 75.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶⁸ Merriman, vol. 1, 172-173.

calling for the segregation of Muslims and Jews, and to attacks on both by Christians.⁶⁹

This caused many conversions, and the “New Christians,” especially in the case of *conversos* (converted Jews), had influence in the court, the government, and the Church. In Castile, the monarch had extraordinary power over the Church, and the Catholic Monarchs and Charles would use this power to bring religious unity to Spain.⁷⁰

Fifteenth-century Spain was filled with social and political turmoil, but the union of the Christian kingdoms was as close as it could be without being ruled by an individual sovereign.⁷¹ With the death of Martin I in 1410, the line of Aragonese kings was ended, and an Aragonese-Castilian merger was possible.⁷² A family of lesser nobility in Castile, the Trastámara family, produced a monarch for Aragon, and the problem was supposedly solved by the Compromise of Caspe in 1412. Therefore, both kingdoms were headed by a family of Castile, and this allowed for easier unity in later years. During the fifteenth century the Spanish kingdoms became strongly involved in international matters and the European Christian world. The marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella brought strength of unity that allowed Spain to go forth into the world. Until that time the Christian kingdoms of Spain were preoccupied with forcing the Muslims out of the Iberian Peninsula. With the final victory over Granada in 1492, Spain was free to pursue other things.⁷³

⁶⁹ Livermore, 168.

⁷⁰ Smith, 80.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁷² J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1479-1716*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 33.

Spain during the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella

During the fifteenth century the Spanish kingdoms became more involved in European affairs.⁷⁴ Directly before the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella, external threats caused a desire for unity. King Louis XI of France, and then his son King Charles VIII, threatened the Iberian Peninsula, and sealed off Spanish expansion to the east.⁷⁵ Many Spaniards felt that something needed to be done to keep France out of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as to allow for Spanish expansion into Europe. The threat of Louis XI caused people in Aragon and Castile to desire unification of these two kingdoms to counter the French.⁷⁶ Therefore, the heirs of the strongest kingdoms on the peninsula married in secret in 1469 in order to bring about Spanish unity. This section discusses the rule of the Catholic Monarchs, setting up chapter 4 to describe the rule of Charles.

Ferdinand and Isabella were married in the midst of chaotic times in Spain. Isabella's half brother, Henry IV, was a weak ruler of Castile who had been pressured to make Isabella heiress of the throne, yet still desired to see his daughter doña Juana become queen instead.⁷⁷ In 1469, Isabella, desiring someone strong to aid her in becoming queen of Castile, married Ferdinand of Aragon in Valladolid in Castile. In 1474 Henry IV died, and in the civil war that ensued, Ferdinand was a great help to Isabella in securing her place as ruler. The Portuguese army that came into Castile, and the towns and nobles that rose up against her in the name of her niece, were eventually defeated, and Isabella was made the new and legitimate Queen of Castile by 1479, with

⁷⁴ Jean Hippolyte Mariejol, translated by Benjamin Keen, *The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁶ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 5.

⁷⁷ Mariejol, 9-10.

total control of the kingdom.⁷⁸ In 1479, with the death of Ferdinand's father John II, Ferdinand, already King of Sicily, became King of Aragon. Charles would look mainly to the government of the Catholic Monarchs for precedents of ruling Spain and his empire. In this section I describe Spain during the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella, examining the foundation they created for a stronger central government in Spain and showing how Charles continued the Catholic Monarchs' policies in Spanish society, religion, economy, military and government. This sets up chapter 4 to further examine the government of the Catholic Monarchs in comparison to Charles's government in Spain and show continuity in governing methods.

Many noble titles were created during the Reconquest, titles that were passed from father to son over generations leading up to the fifteenth century and the reign of the "Catholic Monarchs" (a title of honor given to Ferdinand and Isabella by the pope). The fighting among the nobles during the fifteenth century became out of control. Ferdinand and Isabella made it their task to stop this fighting by taking power away from the nobles and strengthening the monarchy. During their reign there were several ranks of nobles in Aragon and Castile. At the top was the monarch. Beneath the monarch were the members of the highest level of nobles, called *ricos hombres* (grandees), who were in possession of large domains and revenues.⁷⁹ These nobles held the most distinguished titles and were often in the presence of the monarch, who alone could confer the dignities of marquis, duke, and count. Beneath the levels of highest nobility were the *caballeros*. These were usually knights within the military orders or men that the monarch felt were deserving of

⁷⁸ James Albert Harrison, *Spain*, (Chicago: The Werner Co., 1895), 199.

⁷⁹ Mariejol, 268-269.

the position of honor. Typically this was done for men who were already from noble families, “gentlemen.” But Ferdinand and Isabella conferred this rank upon commoners as well. Below the highest nobles were the members of the lesser nobility, called *hidalgos*, usually members of towns who held *fueros*, royally granted rights and privileges, and were exempt from taxes like other nobles.⁸⁰ These were often the men who risked their lives in exploration and conquest in the New World and European wars to gain wealth and move up the ranks of nobility.

While there was some mobility in the social order in Spain during the rule of the Catholic Monarchs because of their desire to find the most talented officials for the government, Ferdinand and Isabella, for the most part, desired little change in the social structure.⁸¹ It is true that they attacked the most powerful magnates and tried to wrest power from them, but this was to gain power for the monarchy, not to get rid of the high nobles.⁸² The aristocracy continued to be wealthy, many nobles increasing in social prestige and wealth because of their part in the conquest of Granada.⁸³ But while the nobles of Spain were powerful socially and economically, they were becoming less powerful politically. Unlike other nations of Europe, Spain was never strongly feudal, and during the fifteenth century feudalism in Spain was almost gone.⁸⁴ A patron/client system came to exist in its place which spread nationwide.⁸⁵ The policies of Ferdinand

⁸⁰ Ibid., 265.

⁸¹ Smith, 126.

⁸² Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 238.

⁸³ Mariejol, 262.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 265.

⁸⁵ Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 74.

and Isabella continued much of the earlier elements of Spanish society but offered social mobility based upon merit within that structure.

Like the Visigothic and Reconquest kings before them, the Catholic Monarchs held great power over the Church in Spain. By 1482 Ferdinand and Isabella held enough power to choose their own bishops for their kingdoms.⁸⁶ Some believe that because of Isabella's desire for moral reform in Castile, the most moral people were usually picked for bishoprics rather than the richest, or those from the most prestigious family. Thus, when the Lutheran Movement came about, Spain was not in such need of reform, and could not understand the religious movement in the Empire. Spaniards instead saw it as a heresy in need of eradication. The clergy was also more patriotic and nationalistic, more loyal to Spain rather than Rome. This was a tradition going back to Visigothic Spain.

The Catholic Monarchs continued a trend of previous Spanish rulers, a strong policy against papal power. Like Henry III and his predecessors, Ferdinand and Isabella continued to bring the Castilian clergy and nobles closer together, further under their control, and away from the pope's authority.⁸⁷ In this way the Catholic Monarchs solidified their control over the Spanish clergy.⁸⁸ Ferdinand and Isabella picked the high ecclesiastic positions in Spain, a power over the Spanish Church that they kept out of the pope's hands. Their patronage of the clergy gave them great control over the Church in Spain. They also picked men from the middle class and lower nobility to be bishops in order to control the clergy, and they stopped gatherings of clergymen, which they saw as

⁸⁶ Mariejol, 28-30.

⁸⁷ Smith, 105.

⁸⁸ Mariejol, 160-261.

forms of anti-royal power. They also decided which papal bulls would be published in Spain. Jiménez de Cisneros was their main instrument in these effective attempts to control the Church in Spain, take power from the pope, and reform the clergy. He used the works of Erasmus and other humanists to make moral reforms in the Church.

The Inquisition was renewed in Spain in 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV for use by the Catholic Monarchs to punish false converts and to convert Jews and Muslims in their territories. It gave Ferdinand and Isabella great powers, especially in Castile where they were still fighting to push the Muslims out of the peninsula; as well as Jews, *moriscos* (converted Muslims), and *conversos* (converted Jews).⁸⁹ It placed civil power at the service of orthodoxy, and the fanaticism of the Spanish clergy at the service of Spanish nationalism.⁹⁰ The clergy and the state worked together toward what they believed would be a better future for Spain, made so by the purity of faith of its people. Ferdinand and Isabella used the power they gained from the Inquisition to further unify their kingdoms, using faith and race as tools of unification. Other nations, such as England and France, had already accomplished what the Catholic Monarchs set out to do.⁹¹ But in their situation they did not have foreign examples to learn from; and there were four different kingdoms of Spain, each with its independent institutions.⁹² They had to decide whether they would be tolerant of the Muslim population, mainly in the newly acquired Granada. Their use of the Inquisition shows which direction they chose. They meant to bring these people, as well as the Jewish population, into religious conformity with the Christian

⁸⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 96.

⁹⁰ Smith, 124-125.

⁹¹ Roger Bigelow Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918) vol. 2, 79.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 79-80.

population. They also used the Inquisition, like other monarchs of their time, to limit the authority of the pope in the ecclesiastical affairs of their kingdoms.⁹³

The government of Ferdinand and Isabella needed money. The amount of tax revenue that it brought in was insufficient to meet the rising costs of government.⁹⁴ The three main types of revenue being used—a stamp tax, a sales tax of ten percent, and customs dues—were inadequate. To gain more money for their efforts, Ferdinand and Isabella used several methods. They were able to gain access to generous grants from the *cortes*.⁹⁵ They began to take back from the nobles many lands with minerals, forests, grazing rights, salt flats, and custom houses that had been given away by their predecessors. They put a stop to the lavish royal grants, the *mercedes*, which had been given to many nobles.⁹⁶ Control of several important towns—Cádiz, Gibraltar, and Plasencia—was surrendered by the nobles; but for the monarchy to take more from the nobles would have risked revolt. The Catholic Monarchs did not reform the tax system or abolish the financial exemptions of the clergy or the nobility.⁹⁷ But Isabella was able to persuade the thirteen electors and the knights of the three principal Military Orders of Spain to approve Ferdinand as grand master of each of them as the former ones died, and the Catholic Monarchs were able to get the pope to approve him as well. This brought further unity within Spain and a large amount of money to the crown through revenues

⁹³ Ibid., 88.

⁹⁴ Smith, 123.

⁹⁵ Pierson, 48-49.

⁹⁶ Townsend Miller, *The Castles and the Crown, Spain: 1451-1555*, (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1963), 107.

⁹⁷ Mariejol, 334-335.

from lands mostly in New Castile (southern Castile) and Andalusia.⁹⁸ The Order of Santiago came under Ferdinand in 1476, the Order of Calatrava in 1487, and the Order of Alcántara in 1494.⁹⁹ The Catholic Monarchs also used the sale of indulgences, ecclesiastical tithes originally raised for the war against the Moors, and loans. A list of the sources of public revenue is given in the proceedings of the *cortes* of Toledo in 1480: duties on imports and exports (*aduanas, almojarifazgos*), duties on the right of passage or circulation (*montazgo, portazgo*), duties on consumption or commercial transactions (*alcabalas, diezmos*), revenues from the royal domain (mines and salt pits), special aids or taxes (*servicio, moneda, moneda forera*), contributions for the Holy War (Bulla de la Cruzada), and *tercias reales* (three-ninths of the ecclesiastical tithes).¹⁰⁰ Altogether, the Catholic Monarchs were receiving revenues from these sources: stamp tax, sales tax, customs (export/import duties, circulation duties), sales of indulgences, ecclesiastical tithes (Crusade, three-ninths tax), royal domains, special taxes (such as grants from *cortes* gained by taxing the population), and loans.

The Catholic Monarchs desired to create a strong commercial economy in Spain. Overall, the Catholic Monarchs were willing to accept and build upon already existing foundations.¹⁰¹ Thus they protected the agrarian and pastoral industries. But they desired to use these industries to gain capital in order to foster a commercial state in Spain. They tried to stimulate old industries and create new ones to compete with foreign business. They worked to create a mercantilistic style of economy in which they controlled the

⁹⁸ Smith, 105.

⁹⁹ Livermore, 189.

¹⁰⁰ Mariejol, 210-211.

¹⁰¹ Smith, 120.

most important factor, the flow of precious metals.¹⁰² Their reign saw the beginning of a transition from a national to an imperial economy.¹⁰³ But the competition of other European nations in business abroad and within Spain, and the lack of capital to foster domestic industry, made it difficult to realize their dreams. Furthermore, recent unity favored internal commerce and created a situation that was difficult for the Spanish economy because Spanish merchants often traded within Spain only.¹⁰⁴

A major problem for the Catholic Monarchs in creating a strong Spanish commercial economy was the dependence of Castile upon sheep-raising rather than industry. The nobility had strong interest and control in sheep-raising and the wool trade, and would not give in to industrialization without a fight. Sheep-raising required less work than farming and less fertility of soil. Because feudalism was not strong in Spain there was an excess of men, mostly peasants, relieved from working the land, making it easier for Spain to raise armies and recruit men for exploration of the New World. Thus Castile began its imperial career with an unhealthy agrarian system that would eventually undermine Spain's economy.¹⁰⁵ While other nation-states were growing in industry and commerce, Spain still raised sheep for wool and textiles. The Honorable Assembly of the Mesta, created in 1273 in Castile to protect the grandee and *hidalgo* sheep farmers, was effective in their attempts to ensure that sheep-raising would continue to be the staple of Spain's economy. This would contribute to the economic downfall of Spain.¹⁰⁶ Like the

¹⁰² Mariejol, 126.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 128.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, 127.

¹⁰⁵ Mariejol, 219-220.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 220.

monarchs before them the Catholic Monarchs had to deal with the *Mesta*, and many of the *Mesta*'s members were powerful nobles.¹⁰⁷

The Spanish military under Ferdinand and Isabella gained experience and strength that allowed it to become the most effective military in Europe, and possibly the world, during the sixteenth century. Under the guidance of King Ferdinand and General Gonzalo de Córdoba, it was reformed and the latest military technologies were implemented.¹⁰⁸ Reorganization played an important part in updating the effectiveness of the Spanish military in battle. The Spanish *tercios* were extremely effective in Spain's dealings in Europe and the Americas. It combined the best of military elements in Europe, and the *tercios* would increase in prestige and effectiveness throughout the reigns of the Catholic Monarchs.

After the Granada campaign, Ferdinand and Isabella made it mandatory that one out of every twelve Spanish males between the ages of twelve and forty-five serve in the military, paid for by the crown. New artillery tactics were used to protect the infantry, which was made up of men with long pikes, short swords, javelins, and arquebuses, all of these meant to meet cavalry in battle. The infantry organization was improved by Ferdinand, and an additional 300 heavy cavalry and 300 light cavalry were added, along with a regiment of infantry made up of twelve companies. Each brigade was made up of two regiments, and sixty-four pieces of artillery. Spain's military thus had greater firepower and flexibility than any other continental European army.¹⁰⁹ The Spanish naval

¹⁰⁷ Hills, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Bohdan Chudoba, *Spain and the Empire, 1519-1643*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 64.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, 122.

power was also increased, with three centers of naval activity being based in the Cantabrian coast, Andalusia, and Catalonia.

The co-rule of Ferdinand and Isabella saw no *official* political union, but a union was created between Castile and Aragon by the Catholic Monarchs. Opposite policies in governing were avoided and the monarchs worked together to maintain similar policies.¹¹⁰ The two monarchs worked as one to bring justice jointly in both realms, although each was sovereign in their own lands. They even had the same letterhead on their stationery and administrative documents.¹¹¹ When they were apart they made independent decisions, but when they were together they ruled as one.¹¹² The monarchy was more accessible to the people than before or after, especially in Castile—the amount of royal ceremony and distance, while used, was not to the level of later generations.¹¹³

The union of Aragon and Castile under Ferdinand and Isabella was technically an equal one, yet Castile was the obviously predominant kingdom in the peninsula.¹¹⁴ While the monarch's power in Castile was rising to its maximum, the power of the monarchy in Aragon was reaching its minimum.¹¹⁵ Castile was rising in fortunes as Aragon was seen as a kingdom which had reached its glorious summit and was fading.¹¹⁶ Castile was in a more powerful position economically and militarily, and therefore, as Spain became more unified, it was this region that many expected to centralize the peninsula. It was also the

¹¹⁰ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 12.

¹¹¹ Ulick Ralph Burke, *A History of Spain*, (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1895) vol. 2, 59; Livermore, 187-188.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹³ Miller, 103.

¹¹⁴ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 30.

¹¹⁵ R. Trevor Davies, *The Golden Century of Spain: 1501-1621*, (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1954), 6.

¹¹⁶ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 30-31.

region that the money flowed through, especially from the New World. All business with the Americas was done through Castile for a very long time.¹¹⁷ Castilian language and culture also came to be seen as standard Spanish.¹¹⁸

According to Catalan historians, Ferdinand and Isabella desired to unite Aragon and Castile.¹¹⁹ One common goal they desired was the destruction of the liberties of the nobles of each kingdom, especially in Aragon.¹²⁰ But Ferdinand was not in as strong a position as Isabella, and was not as successful in Aragon at destroying the power of the nobles.¹²¹ Like his predecessors, he had sworn to accept and perpetuate Aragonese constitutionalism.¹²² And like Isabella in Castile, at the beginning of his reign he had his hands full ridding his kingdom of civil discord, and was not able to work toward diminishing the nobles' liberties in order to gain power for the crown. Peace was only achieved with the help of the moderate Catalan party that insisted on the continuance of the traditional laws and liberties for their support. Any reorganization of the government was done along their moderate and conservative lines.

Although loyalties were usually strongly dependent upon region, there was still a strong sense of being Spanish among the inhabitants of these two kingdoms. Many felt that by their unity Spain could find itself back in the glory days of Roman *Hispania*, and were therefore glad for Hispanic unity.¹²³ Unifying the entire Iberian Peninsula, both

¹¹⁷ John Lynch, *Spain Under the Hapsburgs*, (New York: New York University Press, 1981), vol. 1, 19.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 7-9.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 68-69

¹²³ William H. Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902) vol. 1, 7.

Hispania Citerior and *Hispania Ulterior*, was a wondrous feat that some in Spain strongly desired. Catalan humanists had been bent upon this goal since the reign of John II of Aragon in the fifteenth century.¹²⁴ Vicens Vives states that the humanist ideal, strong in Spain during this time, looked farther back than just Visigothic Spain as conceived by Asturian legitimists and the Leonese chancery and was inspired by Roman *Hispania* with its system of two large provinces.¹²⁵ During the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth century Catalan humanists wished to see the Christian kingdoms brought together after the Muslim conquest. The unity of Castile and Aragon under Isabella and Ferdinand brought this desire closer to reality.

With the Reconquest finally achieved, Aragon and Castile became more involved in conquests outside of Spain.¹²⁶ Ferdinand's military actions in Italy brought Spain into European affairs and brought more land to Ferdinand. With Louis XII as an ally, Ferdinand took Naples, and by 1500, it was a dependency of Aragon. Ferdinand, because of these victories and the military genius of his general, Gonsalvo de Córdoba, gained the admiration of Machiavelli.¹²⁷ By the end of Ferdinand's reign the five major powers on the Iberian Peninsula had become three. With the conquest of Granada by Castile and the acquisition of Navarre by Aragon, only Castile, Aragon, and Portugal remained. For all external purposes, with the strong marriage relation between Ferdinand and Isabella, Castile and Aragon were already Spain.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Ibid., 9.

¹²⁵ Vicens Vives, 79.

¹²⁶ Martin A.S. Hume, *Spain: 1479-1488*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1925), 1.

¹²⁷ Henry Dwight Sedgwick, *Spain*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 123.

¹²⁸ Hume, 1.

The taking of Granada in 1492 resulted in greater power for the monarchy of Castile. Navarre was taken by Ferdinand and made a part of Aragon in 1512 with the help of his military, Castilian resources, and a declaration from the pope that deposed the king of Navarre and made Ferdinand king. The reason for the invasion was to secure the entrance into the Iberian Peninsula in order to protect Aragon and Castile from France. In 1515, Ferdinand decided to make Navarre part of Castile in order to control it better and to get Castile more involved in the defense of Navarre and Aragon against the French.¹²⁹ The Catholic Monarchs pooled their kingdoms' resources to help each other, while still limiting European and North African expansion to the Aragonese and Catalanian governments, and American expansion to the Castilian government.¹³⁰ But both acknowledged the dominance of Castile, and saw it as the center of Spanish operations.¹³¹

Before the rule of the Catholic Monarchs, the crowns of the Spanish kingdoms were at the mercy of the nobles. Government by the nobles had inherent faults; it was not strong enough to defend the people, especially from brigands, and the nobles fought amongst themselves while failing to govern Spain effectively.¹³² After Isabella came to power in Castile, the aristocrats' powers were greatly reduced, the monarch's increased, and order was re-established under a stronger government.¹³³ Lesser nobles, without title or important family, but with loyalty for their sovereign and talent for ruling, were more often looked to by the monarchy for the running of the government. To fight brigandry and restore order in Castile, the Catholic Monarchs helped with the creation of the *Santa*

¹²⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 131-132.

¹³⁰ Vicens Vives, 91.

¹³¹ Lynch, 20; Smith, 157.

¹³² Mariejol, 17.

¹³³ Ibid., 11.

Hermandad (Sacred Brotherhood), of towns that formed teams of archers to police highways and hunt down bandits.¹³⁴ This group, officially founded in 1476 at the *cortes* of Madrigal, was based upon earlier bodies of *hermandades*, created by certain towns to carry out law and order when the monarchs and nobles would not.¹³⁵ The new institution helped Ferdinand and Isabella to administer justice in Castile, to accrue power against the nobles, and to restore order.¹³⁶ A supreme *junta* of deputies from every province judged without appeal cases submitted to them from the *alcaldes* (town mayors). But the central authority over the *Santa Hermandad* was staffed by trustworthy and loyal royal officials.¹³⁷ The Catholic Monarchs would eventually not have to work through the *Santa Hermandad* to keep order, but would have a more structured government and police force with which to work. Its job of bringing peace back to Castile having been done, the Sacred Brotherhood was ended by Queen Isabella in 1498.¹³⁸

Ferdinand and Isabella used the goodwill of the people, gained by the restoration of order in Spain, to their advantage. Support from the towns and the lesser nobles helped them to take power away from the greater nobles in the name of helping the majority of the Spanish people.¹³⁹ Certain greater nobles continued to be important members in the government, but generally the power of the grandees in the actual running of the government decreased. Ferdinand was especially important in helping Isabella reduce the

¹³⁴ Pierson, 48.

¹³⁵ Burke, vol. 2, 79; Sedgwick, 120; Merriman, vol. 2, 101.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 78-79.

¹³⁷ Marvin Lunenfeld, *The Council of the Santa Hermandad: A study of the Pacification Forces of Ferdinand and Isabella*, (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970), 61.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 99.

¹³⁹ Hume, 18.

power of the grandees, as well as the cities, and gain more direct power over Castile.¹⁴⁰

Ferdinand and Isabella concentrated on strengthening the power of the monarchy mainly in Castile, where they could more easily do so. The Catholic Monarchs used the Cortes of Toledo in 1480 to make many changes in the government and decrease the power of the grandees.¹⁴¹ In that same year they began their crusade against Granada, which rallied and occupied the most powerful nobility and allowed Ferdinand to reform the government, something that Machiavelli saw as a brilliant move.¹⁴² Many of the reforms made in the government before the war of Granada did not see completion until toward the end of Isabella's life.¹⁴³ The changes they started out to make at the beginning of their reign were: making the administration of justice more efficient, codifying the laws, decreasing the power of the nobles, reclaiming the ecclesiastical rights of the crown from the usurpation of the papal see, regulating trade, and making royal authority the pre-eminent power in Spain. The Catholic Monarchs also began a trend toward using court ceremony and daily ritual to make sure that everyone knew their place in the structure of society, strengthening the prestige of the monarchy at the expense of the high nobility.¹⁴⁴

In order to gain peace at home and glory abroad the majority of nobles were willing to give up some of their ancient liberties. The Catholic Monarchs gained much power for the monarchy, taking it away from the nobles, leading Jean Mariejol to conclude that they began an absolute monarchy, and that "absolute monarchy created the

¹⁴⁰ Robertson, 75.

¹⁴¹ Burke, vol. 2, 82.

¹⁴² Pierson, 49.

¹⁴³ Prescott, vol. 1, 275.

¹⁴⁴ Burke, vol. 2, 14.

conditions for a flowering of Spanish culture.”¹⁴⁵ Ferdinand and Isabella were absolute in some laws and legislation, but their major power was judicial.¹⁴⁶ They saw the bringing of justice to Spain as their most important duty, and they used the Council of Justice, the most important government council in the land and one that was strongly under their control, to ensure that justice was done. Regardless of whether the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella began a trend that eventually led to absolutism in later years, it was because of this period that the Spanish lands grew to know stronger and more efficient central government, further honesty in the administration of government, and quicker justice. The foundations for a strong monarchy, government efficiency and accountability, and offices filled by people of merit were laid.

But even though Ferdinand and Isabella gained power for themselves, the greater nobles still had great power over much of Spain, in both cities and rural areas. In some parts of Spain, especially some cities, families of *grandees* held feudal rights. The Velasco family was lord over the region from Burgos to Santander, and its chief was constable of Castile and Duke of Frias.¹⁴⁷ The head of the Enríquez family was admiral of Castile and Duke of Riosco, and he dominated the land around Valladolid. The Toledo family, which was headed by the Duke of Alba, controlled León from Salamanca southward. Other examples can be found of important and powerful families having strong control and influence over large regions of Spain. But during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella the power of the *grandees* became less as the bureaucracy grew in

¹⁴⁵ Mariejol, 334-335.

¹⁴⁶ Felipe Fernández-Armesto, “The Improbable Empire,” in *Spain: A History*, ed. Raymond Carr, 121 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴⁷ Pierson, 49.

size and power under direct royal control, and the most powerful nobles were either employed in the government or given social and economic concessions.

Much of the government that the Catholic Monarchs inherited in Spain was based upon Visigothic law codes, the *fueros* of the Castilian monarchs before them, and the law of the Reconquest kings such as the *Siete Partidas*.¹⁴⁸ This variety of sources caused problems with the running of Castile, mainly in jurisprudence, and Ferdinand and Isabella based their reforms mainly upon Roman law. But they still used precedents made during the Visigothic and Reconquest periods, precedents that gained back prestige for the monarchy. For example, these two passages used by them, the first from the *Fuero Real* and the second from the *Siete Partidas* describe the royal power:

All are warned that the life and health of the king are confided to their guard and ardent loyalty; that they must strive as much as they can to increase in every way the personal honor of the king and that of his sovereignty. And that none must dare to proceed in deed, word, or counsel against the king, or his sovereignty, or to incite to any revolt or tumult either against the king or his kingdom, either in his land or without, or to make common cause with his enemies or give them arms or aid them in any way whatsoever. And whoever does any of these things should be held unworthy to live and be condemned to capital punishment.¹⁴⁹

It is necessary to refrain from touching him in order to kill him, strike him, or seize his person. For in seeking his death one would go against the act of God and against His order; against His act, for one would be killing him whom God Himself placed on the throne as His representative; against His order, for He Himself forbade hand to be laid on His earthly and temporal vicar. One would be committing an attack on the kingdom itself, for one would be removing the head that Providence gave to it, and the very life by means of which the kingdom lives in unity.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 293.

¹⁴⁹ Albert du Boys, *Histoire du droit criminal en Espagne*, Paris, 1870, 328, as quoted in Mariejol, 116.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 325, as quoted in Mariejol, 116-117.

Ferdinand and Isabella made the courts accept as authority municipal charters, Roman codes, parliamentary statutes, and royal ordinances.¹⁵¹ The Catholic Monarchs used these ideas of the monarchy and this style of reform to make government in Spain more centralized, further the prestige of the Spanish monarchy, and gain more power over the councils of the central government and the local governments in Spain.

The alliance of the Catholic Monarchs and the towns took power away from the greater nobles. It also made it possible for Ferdinand and Isabella to control the towns.¹⁵² Ferdinand and Isabella were not the first monarchs to gain control over the towns, but they regularized the system.¹⁵³ More Castilian towns were added to the *cortes*, which was now only a taxing body with no actual legislative power. Because the Catholic Monarchs were seen as saving the towns from the nobles, they were able to take away the autonomy of the local areas and gain great power over every part of their land.¹⁵⁴

Ferdinand and Isabella sought to increase their power everywhere in their kingdoms, to bring about a strong and unified government in Spain, if still autonomous in their respective spheres. Each town wielded power not only within the town, but the land in between it and the nearest town, especially in the case of Castile.¹⁵⁵ The Catholic Monarchs, in the guise of protecting towns, put royal officials at the heads of each town who were strongly loyal to them, called *corregidores*.¹⁵⁶ This was usually done with the agreement of the town elected *regidor* who eventually became known as the town

¹⁵¹ William H. Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902) vol. 3, 470.

¹⁵² Davies, 4.

¹⁵³ Hume, 19-20.

¹⁵⁴ Merriman, vol. 2, 146.

¹⁵⁵ Mariejol, 331.

¹⁵⁶ Davies, 5-6.

governor.¹⁵⁷ The crown also appointed the magistrates of many towns.¹⁵⁸ Some municipal offices even became lifetime tenures, and the crown filled any vacancies.¹⁵⁹ Towns retaining free elections were forbidden to pick *regidores* from the most powerful lords, detaching the towns from the power of the grandees and bringing them into more absolute subjection to the authority of the monarchy. Eventually, because of the constant civil strife, Ferdinand and Isabella were able to gain control of the town councils.¹⁶⁰

As the power of the Catholic Monarchs in the localities grew, their power over the central government also grew. They used their power to control Spain by sending representatives of the central government throughout the local areas.¹⁶¹ The following officers grew powerful during this time: *pesquisidores* (judicial), who were sent to help local *alcaldes* with matters they could not handle; *veedores*, who reported on local government of certain areas to the monarchy; and *corregidores* (most important), who kept watch over a certain local area and could make local law with the collaboration of the local *regidor*. The *corregidor* has often been seen as an extremely loyal and competent servant of an extremely strong monarchy which sought to stop the separatism of the Spanish territories throughout all local areas of Castile.¹⁶² In Aragon, Ferdinand was unable to successfully bring the same amount of monarchical strength over local areas as was being brought to Castile, and he was forced to use a form of administrative

¹⁵⁷ Hume, 19.

¹⁵⁸ Mariejol, 331.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 26.

¹⁶⁰ Hume, 19.

¹⁶¹ Merriman, vol. 2, 146.

¹⁶² Ibid., 149.

dualism as he ruled in a contractual relationship.¹⁶³ In their reform of local authority, Ferdinand and Isabella reduced the power of the *adelantados* (provincial governors with judicial powers) and substituted them with *alcaldes mayores*, as well as getting rid of other local offices that were no longer useful or were resistant to royal authority, replacing them with other offices filled with loyal subjects.¹⁶⁴

Ferdinand and Isabella took a strong interest in the administration of the central government. According to the historian Duran y Sampedro, twelve magistrates kept good order throughout Castile, the twelve *oidores* of the Council of Justice who sat with the King, Queen, and president of the Council at tribunals. The tribunals were also composed of a clerk to read the petitions, another clerk to record the proceedings, and a number of other servants, including *alcaldes* to do various jobs or consult with the sovereigns.¹⁶⁵ Strong measures were taken against corruption in government. All branches and agencies of the government were held accountable, and because of this public wealth grew as the government worked hard to keep peace in the land, to make the roads secure, and to suppress banditry. Commerce and industry began to prosper, and towns grew richer and the government more secure. The discovery of the Americas helped create the economic upswing of the times. In foreign relations, Spain grew in power at the expense of Granada, parts of the Mediterranean, North Africa, Navarre, Italy, and the Americas.

In centralizing the administration of their kingdoms the Catholic Monarchs were often improving upon older traditions.¹⁶⁶ Their use of permanent councils under their

¹⁶³ Vicens Vives, 91.

¹⁶⁴ Peers, 54, Mariejol, 168.

¹⁶⁵ Mariejol, 335, 178.

¹⁶⁶ Smith, 120.

control is one example. Like Spanish kings before the fifteenth century, the Catholic Monarchs sought to rule an effective central government with power over the local areas of their kingdoms, in their case with the use of permanent councils. But they made these councils stronger, more specified, and more under their control. As Ferdinand and Isabella broke the power of the nobles in the provinces of Castile they brought the parts of the Royal Council under their control.¹⁶⁷ Martin A.S. Hume says that it was during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella that the multiplication of government councils and departments really began.¹⁶⁸ At the beginning of their reign the Councils of State, Castile, and Finance were seen as sections of the Royal Council. These councils were at first staffed by nobles, ecclesiastics, and members of the towns. But the Catholic Monarchs were able to replace these with lawyers. These *letrados* were trained civil servants well versed in the absolutist traditions of Roman Law. And any ecclesiastics appointed by the Catholic Monarchs owed their loyalty to them.¹⁶⁹ The royal councils, headed by the Council of Justice in Castile, grew in legislative and judicial power as well as consultative functions.¹⁷⁰ This reduced the power of the *cortes*. The royal councils were necessary to run the Spanish government smoothly, while the *cortes* was not as necessary. During the rule of John I the *cortes* had attained its highest point of power, but now it was no longer important as permanent councils began to govern Spain.¹⁷¹ During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs the aristocracy ceased to see the *cortes* as a viable

¹⁶⁷ Hume, 13.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹⁶⁹ Davies, 4.

¹⁷⁰ Mariejol, 153.

¹⁷¹ Burke, vol. 2, 77; Mariejol, 135, 140-141.

means of government and their attendance began to drop, replaced by *procuradores* of the towns.¹⁷² It lost its legislative powers during the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella.¹⁷³

Wherever the Catholic Monarchs sensed resistance to strong central government they sought to break it down.¹⁷⁴ In Castile they were successful, and became masters of that kingdom.¹⁷⁵ Their control of the councils in the central government as well as the local areas gave them increased royal power. But with their strength was also wisdom, and in several situations there can be seen necessary generosity and moderation rather than an absolutist rule. In the end, these monarchs took the broken governing system of the Spanish kingdoms before the civil war in Castile, with its greedy aristocracy, its immoral clergy, and oppressed and war-torn municipalities, and they put it on a new plan that worked, bringing about effective government and governors, a moral clergy, and peace. The price for everyone else, though, was a step closer to absolute monarchy.

Conclusions

The Catholic Monarchs brought change and unification to Spain by restoring and improving older methods of ruling. In them can be seen the continuation of Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest traditions of government. The centralization of Spain, the strengthening of the monarchy, and the use of lawyers versed in Roman law as officials in local governments and central governmental councils show this. As Ferdinand and Isabella took power away from the nobles and the towns and restored order to Spain

¹⁷² Ibid., 134.

¹⁷³ Henry Kamen, *Golden Age Spain*, (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1988), 38.

¹⁷⁴ Merriman, vol. 2, 111.

¹⁷⁵ Mariejol, 334.

under a strong monarchy, they set up a foundation from which Charles could create a stronger Spanish empire that would last for centuries.

The Catholic Monarchs were seen as strong and effective rulers by their contemporaries and successors. In Chapter 21 of Machiavelli's *The Prince* is given an account of Ferdinand of Aragon which shows his talent as a ruler.

Nothing raises a prince so high in public estimation as enterprises of great moment, and the exhibition of rare qualities. In our time, for example, there is Ferdinand of Aragon, the King of Spain. He may be considered a self-made potentate, because from having been a weak king he is now renowned as the foremost sovereign of Christendom; and if his deeds be considered, they will be found great and at times very remarkable. In the beginning of his reign he conquered Granada. That conquest was the foundation of his proud position. He went to work at this in a leisurely fashion, and thereby avoided the danger of being interfered with. Moreover, the war occupied the thoughts of the Castilian nobles and kept them off rebellion; and, in doing, he had established the royal authority over them. Incidentally he acquired a great reputation. He maintained his armies with money raised from the Church and the people; and in that long war he got the military experience that has won him so much renown. Beside this he always used religion as a cloak for undertaking great enterprises, and under pious guise practiced great cruelty. For instance, he despoiled the Moriscos and expelled them from his kingdom. There is no better instance of a policy of hypocrisy. Covered by this same cloak, he made war in Africa, undertook the expedition against Italy, and finally attacked France. In this manner he has always accomplished great exploits, and kept his subjects in suspense and admiration, busy with speculations as to how he would come out. And one enterprise has begotten another so quickly, that there has been no interval of time between for any objectors to concert measures against him.¹⁷⁶

Guicciardini, ambassador from Florence to Spain, also saw Ferdinand as a skilled ruler, as the following passage shows.

The feats that Ferdinand has accomplished, his words, his ways, and his general reputation prove that he is an extremely sagacious man. He is very secret, and unless obliged to does not communicate important matters; he could not be more patient. He leads a very regular life, assigning times for this and that. He likes to

¹⁷⁶ Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. translated by George Bull. London: Penguin Books, 1961, as quoted in Sedgwick, 124-125.

know about all the affairs of the kingdom, great and little, and has them go through his hands; and though he exhibits a willingness to hear everybody's opinion, he makes up his own mind, and directs everything himself. He is generally considered avaricious, but I can't tell whether this comes from his nature or from the constraint of expenses, for his income is small in proportion to the magnitude of his affairs. But he means to proceed in orderly fashion and limit expenses as much as he can. He is good at knightly exercises, and keeps them up; he makes a show of great piety, speaks of holy things with great reverence, and ascribes everything to God. He also makes a great parade of worship and attendance at church, as indeed the whole nation does. He is no scholar, but very friendly to the humanists. He gives audience freely and answers petitions with great dignity, and there are few who are not satisfied with what he says. But rumor has it that he often departs from his promises—either because he did not mean to keep his word, or because events make him change his mind—and that then he pays no heed to what he had said. My opinion is that he can dissimulate better than any other man....In short, he is a very notable king and has many talents; and the only criticisms upon him are that he is not generous and that he does not keep his promise.¹⁷⁷

Guiccardini believes that Isabella of Castile was just as great a ruler as Ferdinand, as he shows in the following passage.

And in all these achievements the Queen's prowess was equal to the King's, or rather by universal consent the greater share was attributed to her, for all the principal affairs of Castile passed through her hands. She had the dominating control; and even in matters common to them both it was not less advantageous to persuade her than her husband. Nor was this because the King lacked ability, for his subsequent career has proved how great that was; but because the Queen was so exceptional a person that even the King gave way to her. Or perhaps he acquiesced in her excellent plans because Castile was her kingdom. It is said that she was a great lover of justice, and a lady of the best breeding, and made herself greatly beloved and feared by her subjects. She was generous, of a high spirit, and very ambitious of renown, as much so as any woman of the time, no matter who.¹⁷⁸

Ferdinand and Isabella and the monarchs of their generation unified and centralized their kingdoms under royal control. But Ferdinand and Isabella were different

¹⁷⁷ Francesco Guicciardini, *Viaje a España de Francesco Guicciardini, embajador de Florencia ante el Rey Católico*, (Valencia: Editorial Castalia, 1952), as quoted in Sedgwick, 126.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., as quoted in Sedgwick, 127.

in that they were not able to unify or centralize as well as other contemporary monarchs.¹⁷⁹ Each of the members of this preceding generation believed in royal justice, good kingship, and protecting the weak as well as humbling the proud. They believed it was their divinely appointed task to restore such governance.

Spain had become a more unified nation by the time of Charles's inheritance of the Spanish territories. Old privileges of the nobles that stood in the way of centralization under royal power were destroyed. Strife and disorder were suppressed; order was brought throughout Spain. Communication and trade routes were opened and kept safe once again. Thus the channels were open for the ideas of the Renaissance to come to Spain as they were circulating throughout Europe. Catherine Moran says that "territorial expansion, political consolidation, and intellectual and artistic development, these are the three important aspects of the reign of the Catholic Kings."¹⁸⁰ They were the heroes of many Spaniards for years, the monarchs who unified Spain during a Golden Age. Some believe that Ferdinand's crafty rule was an inspiration for Machiavelli's *The Prince*.¹⁸¹ He and Isabella used Roman and Visigothic precedents in founding the Spanish Empire that would control Europe and much of the world for centuries afterward. The glory of Spain under the rule of Charles got its source in the measures taken by the Catholic Monarchs and the continuation of their policies.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 65.

¹⁸⁰ Moran, 99.

¹⁸¹ Hills, 49.

¹⁸² Prescott, vol. 3, 519.

CHAPTER 4

SPAIN DURING THE RULE OF CHARLES

Introduction

In his memoirs Charles wrote concerning his accession to the Spanish throne: “This was the year [1516] of the death of the Catholic King; and, dating from that moment, the archduke assumed the title of King.”¹ The inheritance of Charles, which gave the new Spanish King lands exceeding half of Europe, was probably more than Ferdinand had dreamed. Charles, a member of the Austrian Hapsburg dynasty, had grown up in the Netherlands, and held lands in Austria and eventually the Holy Roman Empire. With all of this outside influence it would seem logical that Charles would make many changes in Spain. The succession of the Hapsburg dynasty to the throne of Spain in 1516, like the discovery of the Americas by Spain in 1492, would bring that country even more into the international arena.²

Yet in Spain, Charles continued many of the policies of Ferdinand and Isabella. For instance, like Ferdinand, Charles was anti-French, a policy that many Spaniards felt was dangerous, and believed would lead to eventual disaster for Spain. Charles, like Ferdinand, continued to use Castile’s resources to control Italy. In addition to the use of Castilian money and resources for wars in Italy, Charles also used them to secure power

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *World’s Greatest Literature: Royal Memoirs: Annals; Autobiographical Leaves by Charles V, Emperor of Germany*, (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1901), 4.

² Henry Kamen, “Vicissitudes of a World Power, 1500-1700,” in *Spain: A History*, ed. Raymond Carr, 153 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

in the Holy Roman Empire.³ Like Ferdinand and Isabella before him, Charles strove to keep peace in Spain. Many feel that the peace in Spain during most of Charles's rule was due to the wars waged elsewhere.⁴ He continued the dominance of Castile over the rest of Spain. Charles also continued the marriage policy of Ferdinand and Isabella by marrying the Princess of Portugal and bringing the Iberian Peninsula closer to being one political unit.⁵ Throughout his life Charles used dynastic policy, thinking that it was God's way.⁶ He continued the Catholic Monarchs' policy of strengthening the monarchy in Spain, mainly in Castile, and fostering effective government by permanent councils under his direct control. Simultaneously he undermined the power of the nobles and gained power over local areas in Spain through support from, and dominance over, the towns.

When Charles became king in 1516, Jiménez and Adrian instructed him to govern Spain in the way it had been governed during the reign of Isabella.

Imitating the example of our Queen Doña Isabel, your grandmother, put not the grandees in Your Council, nor their close relatives, and be suspicious of their servants. All those who have offices, up to the highest...giving an account, will either be found clean and will return to their office or do another favor. Punish the one who governs badly...and the lords of the Council will then gain much authority with their being on it—if they see that they have the right to legislate beginning with the principle of government that makes justice, and you will take them over land and water with you. Keep the laws of Castile, that no one has two offices, that senators should keep their hands clean and keep away from bribes, that our king must advise all counselors and judges...that justice be made under pain of deprivation of offices. And the same warning should be given to the rest of the ministers so that the towns will see that they have legislation with plenty of fervor...Commands should be dispatched in the Council that are needed. Always inquire beforehand about people who are able, good, learned, and God-fearing and capable of office in the Council, Audiencias and courts...and set them to

³ Ibid., 158.

⁴ Ibid., 159-160.

⁵ Rhea Marsh Smith, *Spain: A Modern History*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 16, 156.

⁶ Koenigsberger, 3.

memory so that, if there is a vacancy of office, memory will provide a person for the office.⁷

Charles seems to have followed this advice to a large degree. This chapter discusses Spain under the rule of Charles V. I show how Charles continued the social, religious, economic, military, and governmental policies of the Catholic Monarchs. Secondary sources concerning Charles and Spain are brought together, and primary sources such as royal council records, town records, and Charles's correspondence are used to show how Charles used Castilian government in Spain based upon a strong monarchy, permanent councils directly under royal control and with defined roles, and towns dominating local areas and controlled by the monarchy. This system had inherent flaws only checked by the strong personality, tireless work, and practicality of Charles as he sought to be a great emperor like Charlemagne; and the loyalty and talent of his government officials.

Charles continued the efforts of the Catholic Monarchs to unify Spain, as well as the "Golden Age" that they began. A Spanish commentator in 1597 said of Spain: "All other empires began through violence and force of arms, only that of Spain began through just means, since the greater part came together through succession."⁸ The union of the crowns of Aragon and Castile under Ferdinand and Isabella, and then the closer unity of Spain under Charles through dynastic succession, brought together a larger empire than Europe had seen for seven hundred years, since Charlemagne. Spain became the base of this empire. And even though Charles spent much of his time away from Spain, he felt a deep appreciation for his Spanish inheritance, continuing its trends of

⁷ Pedro Gan Giminez, *El Consejo Real de Carlos V*, (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1988), 73-74, my translation.

⁸ Kamen, "Vicissitudes of a World Power, 1500-1700," 152.

expansion into both Europe and the New World.⁹ In so doing he continued policies at home and abroad that Ferdinand and Isabella had begun, and continued Spanish (Castilian) characteristics such as imperialism, religious crusading, and government of strong monarchy and subservient councils with power over local areas through control of the towns, all of which were characteristics that he personally grew to favor.

Like the Netherlands, Spain was dominated by imperial politics, but unlike it, Spain was Charles's center of power.¹⁰ Charles worked to centralize his personal empire, connected to him through personal relationship, in order to govern his lands more effectively and defend Europe against the Turks. In doing this, Charles continued the Spanish crusading ideal, mixed with the chivalric code of Charles's Burgundian upbringing, and drew from the legacy of Charlemagne. For centuries Spain fought North African Muslims and kept them from getting into the rest of Europe. Now Spain, after completing its Reconquest in 1492, saw itself in a position to save Europe yet again during the reign of Charles, by uniting Europe against the Turks. To do this, Charles relied heavily upon the power of Spain, mainly Castile.

Elliott believes that Charles succeeded in unifying his diverse and autonomous lands. The following passage shows the state of Spain under Charles V.

One of the greatest empires in world history is known to us as the 'Spanish Empire,' but this is not the name by which it was known to the Spaniards themselves. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was only one true empire in the western world—the Holy Roman Empire—even if other western monarchies were beginning to appropriate the title of empire for their own special purposes. With Charles I of Spain securing in 1519 the title of Holy Roman

⁹ Ibid., 154-155.

¹⁰ H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Hapsburgs and Europe, 1516-1660*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1971), 33.

Emperor as Charles V, there was no possibility at that moment of the Spaniards formally accepting the existence of two distinctive empires, the Holy Roman and the Spanish; and even after the imperial title passed in 1556 to Charles's brother Ferdinand rather than to his son, Philip II, 'the empire' continued to denote for Spaniards the Holy Roman Empire, the German lands. Their monarch was not an emperor but a king, ruling over an agglomerate of territories known as the *monarquía española* ('the Spanish Monarchy') and consisting of Spain itself, the possessions of the king in Italy and northern Europe, and his American territories, known to Spaniards as *las Indias*.

But this does not mean to say that Spaniards lacked the capacity to think in imperial terms about the widespread dominions of their king. Already in 1520 Hernán Cortés was writing, in his second letter to Charles V from Mexico, that 'one might call oneself the emperor of this kingdom with no less glory than of Germany.'¹¹

Elliott goes on to discuss the humanist circle of advisors that surrounded Charles during his reign and the way in which they embraced the imperial theme with enthusiasm, as well as representing him as being on the way to achieving a universal empire.¹² In theory the Empire was the German lands, but in reality the base of Charles's empire was Spain. As a direct result of Charles's work to centralize his Spanish lands, Spaniards would eventually see themselves as an empire in their own right, having power over territories throughout the world.

Even though there are many similarities between the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles, many historians make a great differentiation between these two eras of Spain's history. Sixteenth century Spaniards saw the era of Ferdinand and Isabella as *the* "Golden Age."¹³ At this time Spain became more unified, discovered the New World, and became more prosperous and politically powerful. Many, like Prescott, maintain that under the rule of Charles, Spain fell out of the "Golden Age" that Ferdinand

¹¹ J.H. Elliott, *Spain and its World: 1500-1700*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 7.

¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³ Henry Kamen, *Golden Age Spain*, (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1988), 1, 4.

and Isabella created.¹⁴ Charles Jago would agree with this interpretation, pointing to what he believes was the absolutism created by the Hapsburg monarchs in Spain during the sixteenth century.¹⁵ McElwee believes that the reign of Charles V was “a disastrous period for Spain,” even though he was a popular king.¹⁶ He places blame for this upon the sale of offices, over-taxation of many parts of Spain (for use in wars in other parts of Charles’s empire), and destruction of trade by the nobles and the monarchy. In one of Vicens Vives’s volumes of *Historia de España y America*, Juan Regla retells a story about a peasant speaking to Charles concerning the condition of Spain, not knowing it was the king he was speaking to. This peasant felt that the country had been laid waste by the disastrous foreign policy of Charles, which had ruined Castilian subjects through taxation to support foreign wars. He tells the monarch these things to his face, criticism that, to Charles’s credit, he takes modestly and without punishing the peasant.¹⁷ Also cited by Regla is the following seventeenth-century satirical poem that addresses the Spanish monarch’s poor financial ruling of Castile.

In Navarre and Aragon
There is no one who contributes a *real* [monetary unit]
Catalonia and Portugal are of the same opinion
Only Castile and Leon
And the noble Andalusian kingdom
Carry the cross on their shoulders
Catholic majesty.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵ Charles Jago, “Hapsburg Absolutism and the Cortes of Castile,” *The American Historical Review* 86, no. 2 (1981): 307.

¹⁶ W.L. McElwee, *The Reign of Charles V, 1516-1558*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1936), 236.

¹⁷ Teofilo F. Ruiz, *Spanish Society: 1400-1600*, (New York: University of California at Los Angeles, 2001), 29.

¹⁸ Ibid., 29.

Yet under Charles, Spain saw a golden age as well, or at least a continuation of what was seen under Ferdinand and Isabella.¹⁹ Castilians saw themselves as the successors to the Romans, and felt that their glorious position entitled them to universal empire.²⁰ Rhea Smith believes that Spain's "Golden Age" was during the reign of Charles, bankrolled by precious metals from the Americas, the rule of Philip II beginning a decline.²¹ Felipe Fernández-Armesto says that the Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw "dramatic expansion," and that Spain during this time was "so lustrous that it has always been known, by almost universal acclaim, as 'Spain's Golden Age.'"²² Henry Kamen sees the succession of Charles I as King of Spain in 1516, and then Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, as identifying Spaniards with "a new, more exciting destiny."²³ He sees Spain's Golden Age as spanning the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella through the Hapsburg monarchs up to Philip V, roughly 1470 to 1714.²⁴ I believe that Spain under Charles saw the continuation of the Catholic Monarchs' golden age. Kamen says in his book, *Golden Age Spain*, that historians have usually seen the study of Spanish history as taking in only one topic, that of the decline of Spain. But there was a period when Spain was doing well—directly before, during, and several generations following the rule of Charles I.²⁵ Kamen states:

Was the Golden Age therefore an illusion? The answer to that question depends on one's political and moral views (many nineteenth-century Spaniards

¹⁹ Smith, 137.

²⁰ Elliott, *Spain and its World: 1500-1700*, 9.

²¹ Smith, 137.

²² Felipe Fernández-Armesto, "The Improbable Empire," in *Spain: A History*, ed. Raymond Carr, 116 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²³ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁴ Kamen, *Golden Age Spain*, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

condemned the entire period as one of tyranny, bigotry and racism), on one's personal consciousness of Spain (much Catalan historiography, for example, plays down the positive aspects of Castile's role), and on the perspective one takes of history.²⁶

According to Kamen, Spain was a poor country that found itself in an opportunistic position to make itself great, took it, and then gradually lost power, returning to its former position.²⁷ The common view is that under Ferdinand and Isabella Spain reached its "Golden Age," one that was continued by Charles and his heirs, reaching its highpoint during the reign of Philip II and continuing in a lesser form for several generations.

The Beginning of Charles's Reign in Spain

At the time of Isabella of Castile's death it was evident that her daughter, Juana, was not mentally capable of ruling. Isabella left the regency of Castile to her husband Ferdinand until Charles turned twenty years old.²⁸ Even so, Juana's husband, Philip, ruled in Castile because most of the nobles feared the power of Ferdinand. After the death of Philip the nobles begged Ferdinand to return to Castile as regent to keep the peace, but angered by their earlier rejection of him, he refused to return, acting as regent from outside of Castile. Upon Ferdinand's death in 1516 Charles became King of both Aragon and Castile, finally unifying them under one ruler, although Charles technically co-ruled with his mother, Juana, in Castile.

Before Charles's arrival in Spain, Cardinal Jiménez Cisneros acted as regent in Castile. He brought the reform in government and the Church that had been demanded in

²⁶ Ibid., 62-63.

²⁷ Ibid., 62.

²⁸ Hume, 31.

Spain toward the end of the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella.²⁹ Jiménez fought to rid Spain of corruption in Church and state, and fought for religious unity. He continued the policies of Ferdinand and Isabella, putting pressure on Jews and Muslims and even expelling them.³⁰ Jiménez thus caused the final contest between Jews, Moors and Christians, striving to bring Spain under the rule of a single faith—Catholicism.³¹ Jiménez died before Charles could meet him.³² But when Charles became King of Spain he continued Jiménez's reforms with the goal of bringing unity of faith in Spain using humanism. One unfortunate outcome was eventual economic problems for Spain due to the many Jewish businessmen and Muslim workers driven away.³³ Jiménez also helped the Catholic Monarchs with the creation of councils in Spanish government, as well as the growth of royal power in the towns under *corregidores*.³⁴

Beginning in 1517 Charles strove to strengthen himself in Spain, moderating between the Spaniards and his fellow newcomers from Flanders. Through his Spanish inheritance he gained the Crown of Aragon (composed of Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, and some outposts in North Africa) and Castile (including Navarre and territories in the New World, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic).³⁵

When Charles had a chance to become Holy Roman Emperor, many in Spain felt the Netherlands and Spain should be sufficient for him. Some were afraid that if Charles

²⁹ John Lynch, *Spain Under the Hapsburgs*, (New York: New York University Press, 1981), vol. 1, 64.

³⁰ Karl Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V*, (London: Jonathon Cape Thirty Bedford Square, 1963), 69-70.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

³² *Ibid.*, 81.

³³ Lynch, 66.

³⁴ Jean Hippolyte Mariejol, translated by Benjamin Keen, *The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 174-175.

³⁵ Lynch, 38.

became emperor he would try to create new laws in Spain that would take away regional freedom in the attempt to centralize his empire. In Santa Cruz's *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V* is recorded a letter written by Charles to the Spanish nation upon his accession to the imperial crown. This document is entitled "A difficult proclamation, Charles explains to Spaniards the reasons he was obligated to put the title of Emperor before that of King of our Fatherland [Spain]." ³⁶ It shows Charles's desire to calm his Spanish subjects, to make them understand that he was not going to subject them to over-centralization, or to greatly change their governing system.

Charles, by the grace of God elected King of the Romans, future Emperor 'semper augustus,' King of Castille, of Leon, of the Two Sicilies, etc., one with the very high and very powerful Catholic Queen Juana, my mother. For it was very pleasing to the divine Providence (for whom kings reign) that we were eligible to be King of the Romans, future Emperor, and Catholic King of Spain (with which we are well content). We are promoted to the Empire, convinced that our titles are in order. Giving to each one its due place it was necessary to conform to reason, according to which the Empire preceded the other secular dignities, for it is a very high and heavenly dignity that God instituted on the earth. Thus the imperial dignity was preferred to the royal name and we entitle ourselves first as King of the Romans and future Emperor because of the said Queen, my mother, who urged upon us with necessity and reason to volunteer ourselves to be made [Emperor], because with all reverence and certainty we honor and desire to honor and accept this, and the rest will be fulfilled in the order of God to whom we are obligated. For the Queen we have and hope to make as great a succession of kingdoms and lords as is possible, and because of the said preference it is not possible for [this title] to follow another, or cause prejudice, or advance confusion concerning our role in Spain, that of our successors, or our role to the natives, our subjects, now or in the future. Therefore we desire that you know all that is now going on and that you know of what will be ahead, observed and kept inviolably, and to enjoy that state of freedom and innocence as at the time of our promotion, and even better and more completely than enjoyed before; for you to enjoy peaceful freedom. Therefore it is preferred to put in front of the titles of our dignities the one of the Empire. We see neither harm to these kingdoms of Spain in its freedom and execution as it has been, nor the creation of

³⁶ Fernando Díaz-Plaja, *La Historia de España en sus Documentos: El siglo XVI*, Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1954, 110, my translation.

any edicts...unspoken or specific. We do not put it in greater subjection or submission, but keep the honor and order to each which had any, according to what is due to the Empire. To all the other secular dignities, although this is not the subject, is left all its force and vigor the freedom and execution of which these kingdoms of Spain are due. And because all is known concerning our will and these edicts here, it can never be doubted that we commanded to give this our signature of our name, and sealed this letter with our seal, which we want to have worth and force and vigor of practicality, sanction and general declaration, as agreed to these kingdoms of Spain. Given in the city of Barcelona on the fifth of September in the year of our Savior Jesus Christ of 1519.—I, the King—I, Francisco de los Cobos, Secretary of the Caesar Catholic Majesty, have written for his hand.³⁷

In order to go to the Empire for his imperial crown Charles needed money, and thus he spoke to the *cortes* in La Coruña in 1520.³⁸ With the help of the Bishop of Badajoz, Pedro Ruiz Mota, he was able to overcome their reluctance to help him in his imperial endeavors. He assured them that Spain would be his real base of power.³⁹ He gave them two reasons that he desired the imperial title. First, he desired it for the honor of Spain, because, he said, Spain was the foundation, strength, and defense of all other kingdoms.⁴⁰ He also assured them that he would live and die in Spain, his fortress and sword. Second, it would allow him to defeat the enemies of the Holy Catholic Faith. This message to the Spanish people, like the many others throughout Charles's reign, engendered a degree of nationalism that increased during his reign. The mixing of national pride and faith in a messianic mission continued from the rule of the Catholic Monarchs into Charles's reign.

³⁷ Ibid., 110-111, my translation.

³⁸ Bohdan Chudoba, *Spain and the Empire, 1519-1643*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 18.

³⁹ Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V: elected emperor and hereditary ruler*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 34.

⁴⁰ Chudoba, 18-21.

When Charles left Spain to become Emperor, he left his former tutor Adrian of Utrecht in command as regent. In the following speech he explained to the *cortes* why he was leaving.

At last to me empire has been conferred by the single consent of Germany with God, as I deem, willing and commanding. For truly he errs who reckons that by men or riches, by unlawful canvassing or stratagem the empire of the entire world is able to fall to anyone's lot. For from God himself alone is empire.⁴¹ I have not taken up this great task for my own pleasure. I would have been content with the Spanish Empire with the Balearics, Sardinia, the kingdom of Sicily, a large part of Italy, Germany and France and with the other gold-bearing world....But there has been a fatal exigency concerning matters which force me to set sail. This decision had to be made out of respect for the faith whose enemies have become so powerful that the peace of the common-wealth, the honour of Spain and the prosperity of my kingdoms can no longer tolerate such a threat. Their continued existence can only be assured if I unite Spain to Germany and add the title of Caesar to that of King of Spain.⁴²

Manuel Fernández Alvarez separates Charles's reign into four processes: The first was making peace in Spain at the beginning of his rule.⁴³ The second was securing Italy and removing the Turkish threat from central Europe and the western Mediterranean. The third was trying to end the Lutheran heresy and bring the German Protestants back to the Catholic Church with concessions negotiated at the Council of Trent. And the fourth was consolidating his power for the benefit of his heirs. Throughout his reign Charles tried to further the policies of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain, bringing more centralization to Spain and gaining more power for the monarchy through his efforts and the efforts of his regents. The first and last of the processes mentioned here concern Spain greatly, and it is these processes that are discussed in this chapter.

⁴¹ John M. Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor: A study of the imperial chancellery under Gattinara*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 10-11; Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, *Caroli Romanorum Regis Reccessuri Adlocutio in Conventu Hispaniarum* [Rome, Jacobus Mazochius, 1520].

⁴² Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V: 1500-1558*, (London: Arnold, 2002), 118.

⁴³ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 142-143.

The Comunero Revolt and the 1520s

The Comunero Revolt in Castile was largely caused by fears that Charles would attempt to change the system of Spanish government and take power away from Spaniards and give it to foreigners. In May of 1520, as Charles was leaving Spain to receive his imperial crown, the Comunero Revolt began in Castile.⁴⁴ As Henry Seaver points out, the provocation for the revolt was the appointment of foreigners to various important government and religious offices in Spain.⁴⁵ For example, even though Charles had promised not to appoint any more foreigners to Spanish positions of government, he made Adrian of Utrecht regent of Castile.⁴⁶ But the unrest and distrust directed toward the new government was deeper than that. There was fear that Charles would introduce changes to the governmental institutions of Spain, a possibility that agitated the nobles. Also, the nobles feared they would lose their traditional rights and privileges. Thus it was the nobility who were the first to rebel in Castile.

An uprising against the local *corregidor* (royally appointed official) and his subordinate officials in Segovia in May of 1520 began the Comunero Revolt. Adrian, Charles's regent, tried to stop the spread of this revolt by acquiring the royal artillery in Medina del Campo and attacking Segovia, but Medina revolted and did not allow royal forces to get the necessary artillery. The Junta of Ávila, an assembly used as the government of the rebels, was created on June 30, 1520, by four cities—Segovia, Salamanca, Toro, and Toledo—and soon afterward Zamora, Valladolid, and others had

⁴⁴ Stephen Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile: The Forging of a Revolution, 1475-1521*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981, 3.

⁴⁵ Henry Latimer Seaver, *The Great Revolt in Castile: A Study of the Comunero Movement of 1520-1521*, (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 85.

⁴⁶ Edward Armstrong, *The Emperor Charles V*, (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1910) vol. 1, 39.

joined. At the beginning of this revolt, nobles, even members of the greater nobility, played a part. But gradually almost all of the nobles left the rebellion, and the revolt became a class-based battle. Nobles were made uneasy by the radicalization of the revolt as more members of the lower and middle classes became involved. The lower and middle class members saw an opportunity in the revolt to gain political, economic, and social power by outnumbering the nobles and controlling the rebellion. The nobles realized that their position of power depended on the legitimacy of the monarchy, and they began to defend the crown. The deal was sealed between the monarchy and the nobles, especially the greater nobles, when Constable Velasco and Admiral Enríques, both *grandees*, became coregents with Adrian. Nobles, conservatives, and especially urban elites, seeing the radicalization of the uprising, began to trickle out. The tide was turned against the remaining rebels consisting mainly of members of the lower and middle classes. The defeat of the rebel leader Juan de Padilla (a *grandee* and one of the few greater nobles who stayed in the rebellion until the end) at the Battle of Villalar on April 23, 1521, was the turning point of the revolt.⁴⁷ The next day three important rebel leaders were executed. The revolt petered out gradually after that.

When Charles heard of the revolts in his Spanish territories, the Sicilian Revolt, the German Revolt in Valencia, and the Castilian Comunero Revolt in particular, he realized that there must be a compromise in Spain, especially Castile. But because of the radicalization of the revolt due to the influx of lower and middle class members, Charles was able to win the nobles over to his side by making only slight concessions. The revolt

⁴⁷ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 207.

became a battle of the monarchy and nobles against the lower and middle classes of society. Charles was then able to crush the revolt in Castile, and as a result gained greater power over the lower and middle classes who were militarily defeated, and the nobles who realized their need for a strong monarchy. Because of the outcome of the Comunero Revolt, Charles enjoyed stability in Spain throughout his rule and was able to gain greater power for the monarchy over the nobles as well as the lower and middle classes.⁴⁸ Martin Hume says that the beginning of the decline of constitutional liberties can be traced back to the royalists' victory in the Battle of Villalar, in which most of the nobles and Charles's royalist followers defeated the Comuneros, mostly peasants and tradesmen, and turned the tide of the revolt toward victory for Charles.⁴⁹ After this revolt, no further uprisings took place in Spain against the monarchy during Charles's reign. This turning point in Spanish history put an end to the social and political turmoil that had started in Castile at the death of Isabella in 1504. It would lead Spain toward becoming an internationally powerful kingdom dominating its partner Aragon, and would allow for the growth of monarchical power as royally-controlled permanent councils were established and strengthened to direct the governing of Spain.

During the Comunero Revolt, the rebels tried to use Charles's mother, Juana, to aid them in bringing legitimacy to their government.⁵⁰ The rebels captured the Queen, and forced her in her mentally troubled state to give some assent to the rebellion, although she never signed anything against her son.⁵¹ Once Juana was again in the hands

⁴⁸ Ibid., 207.

⁴⁹ Martin A.S. Hume, *Spain: 1479-1488*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1925), 78.

⁵⁰ Seaver, 140

⁵¹ Ibid., 142.

of the Royalists, the rebels had a much harder time continuing their government.⁵² The offer that Charles made while his mother was held hostage, that he would give up his crown if the sanity of his mother was proven, and the fact that it was not proven by rebels, did much to secure his power after the revolt.⁵³

The revolt in Valencia, begun before the Comunero Revolt and caused by Charles's failure to personally visit it before going to the Empire, was successfully brought to an end after the Comunero Revolt was over. Likewise, the Sicilian Revolt began before the Comunero Revolt and ended after the royalist victory in Castile. Upon Charles's return to Spain in 1522 the revolts were practically extinguished, and those responsible were either being pardoned or hanged.

Historians have differing interpretations of the importance of the Comunero Revolt in Spanish history. The interpretation of many traditionalist Spanish historians is that the revolt was traditionalist, reactionary, medieval, and feudal, and was fueled by elements in society standing in the way of progress championed by the Hapsburg monarchy. Another, more recent, interpretation is that the revolt was the end of liberties in Spain, and the beginning of absolutism and decline. Some historians, like Joseph Perez, have tried to point out that the revolt is not that easy to interpret, and that it was not merely xenophobic and reactionary, but was largely caused by the clash of differing social and economic interests.⁵⁴ Jose Antonio Maravall says that the Comuneros were for a modern national state, and that Charles was for a medieval, backwards, ecumenical

⁵² Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 6.

⁵³ Seaver, 143.

⁵⁴ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 3; Joseph Perez, *La Revolution des "Comunidades" de Castile (1520-1521)*, (Bordeaux, 1970).

empire.⁵⁵ Daniel Crews thinks that the Comunero Revolt was an anti-Erasman and xenophobic reaction to Charles's cosmopolitan empire, and that after it Spain was able to continue with Jiménez's reform movement and the *alumbrado* (enlightened) offshoot that merged with the doctrines of Erasmus to create the basis of Charles's imperial ideology.⁵⁶ I agree with Perez, the Comunero Revolt is not easily defined due to the several different elements of society taking part in it. But it is certain that the outcome of the revolt was a strengthened monarchy in Spain under Charles.

Ferdinand and Isabella had fought for political equilibrium throughout their reign, and Charles, like them, fought to create a government powerful enough to solidify Spain. Charles chose to put political power over economic power, and this is reflected in his domestic and foreign policies. During the Comunero Revolt nobles saw something that scared them, a national uprising of the lower and middle classes competing for political, economic, and social power in Spain. Charles made a clear choice to strengthen the royal power at the expense of lower class economic and social desires. He also used the situation to gain power over the nobles, who were willing to accept a strengthened monarchy to check the rising power of the merchant class and ensure their own continued economic and social power.

After the revolt Charles still had many questions to answer concerning how he would rule Spain. It would be a difficult task monetarily, for even though Spain had been very rich during the years of the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella, there had been a decline

⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁶ Daniel A. Crews, "Juan de Valdés and the Comunero Revolt: An Essay on Spanish Civic Humanism," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 2 (1991): 233.

in these riches by the time Charles became king.⁵⁷ And much of Spain was still in an isolationist mindset when it came to European politics.⁵⁸ Charles was committed to European politics as successor to Ferdinand of Aragon, and because of his international and dynastic background. The revolt was unable to change Spanish society or stave off the costly Hapsburg dynastic foreign policy, which suppressed the evolution of a policy of Spanish national self-interest.⁵⁹ Although the royal government was in a stronger position militarily after its victory over the rebels, Charles returned to a restive and hostile Spain, and would have to prove himself. He did this during his seven-year stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529, especially after the victory at Pavia in 1525.

One of the biggest questions facing Charles was whether to pursue a Spanish or universal policy as King of Spain.⁶⁰ It seems that Charles had universal policies in mind, and Spain was to be his base. Before leaving for the Empire directly after the imperial election, he said to his Castilian subjects that once he was back “Spain would be the garden of his pleasures, the fortress of his defence, the source of his strength, his treasure, his sword, his horse and his place for repose and his abode.”⁶¹ Pedro Ruiz Mota, Bishop of Badajoz, told Charles that he must leave Spain on good terms “for Spain is the one dominion which can make or mar the Imperial adventure.”⁶²

⁵⁷ Royall Tyler, *The Emperor Charles the Fifth*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House, 1956), 236.

⁵⁸ McElwee, 25.

⁵⁹ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 207-208.

⁶⁰ Karl Brandt, *The Emperor Charles V*, (London: Jonathon Cape Thirty Bedford Square, 1963), 90.

⁶¹ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 35.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 35.

According to Brandi Charles took Spain toward a higher political consciousness and away from an outdated feudal system.⁶³ Basing his imperial theory in Spain, Charles regained for himself and his son the relationship with the papacy as an Italian power within the framework of the European system, something that had prevailed during the earlier days of the Empire. Spain became, as Charles continued what Ferdinand and Isabella started, a strong nation-state supported by Charles's universal theories. Charles, formulating his own policy by 1529, often did so based upon a Burgundian sense of heroism and Erasmian liberalism, sometimes causing problems with his Spanish government officials.⁶⁴ According to the Burgundian Commynes, the humanist theory of state that dominated Charles's councilors was quite different from that of the great lords of his time.⁶⁵ But Charles and his councilors worked to break this down. He took his ministers from every rank of society as the Catholic Monarchs had done, often from the lower ranks so that they would be dependent upon him and loyal to him.⁶⁶

John Lynch thinks that Spaniards saw their king nationally, not internationally, and that Charles was primarily King of Spain, not Holy Roman Emperor.⁶⁷ Thus his policies were defensive rather than creative, merely designed to keep what Charles had intact within his empire, not to expand imperialistically. Lynch also thinks that the advice Chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara gave to Charles was going in one ear and out the other, that Charles was faking his imperialism. But this interpretation seems shaky when

⁶³ Brandi, 14.

⁶⁴ Jaime Vicens Vives, *Approaches to the History of Spain*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 99.

⁶⁵ Brandi, 14.

⁶⁶ Moran, 108.

⁶⁷ Lynch, 74-75.

it is shown how many Spaniards were enthusiastic to crusade, became imperialists, and led conquests into the New World.⁶⁸ Charles fought to control Italy, to keep the French out of the Italian lands, to control the pope, to keep good communications with Austria, and to encircle France.⁶⁹ He was also gaining lands for his empire through 1543.

Charles's calculating and cautious policy-making at the beginning of his reign became his trademark throughout his rule.⁷⁰ It is believed that Charles was influenced by Machiavelli in his policy-making as he sought to hold his empire intact. The advice Gattinara gave Charles often showed strong Machiavellian influence, and Charles always had a copy of *The Prince* close at hand, a book which he read often.⁷¹

In the 1520s Charles stayed in Spain for seven years, his longest stay in Spain. During this time he stopped giving Burgundians offices in Spain, a practice that had caused the Comunero Revolt. After examining genealogical claims he limited the number of Spanish grandees, cutting the number of higher nobles.⁷² In Castile, there were twenty families of that rank with twenty-five separate titles; these nobles were given high social rank but excluded from the Council of State. Where once these nobles had controlled the immediate surroundings of the king, lesser nobles and high administrative officials now took their places. These two groups, not as class-conscious, tended to be more loyal to the king and more suited to royal service in the growing modern state. After the Comunero

⁶⁸ Koenigsberger, 25-26.

⁶⁹ Harold Livermore, *A History of Spain*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), 216.

⁷⁰ William Bradford, *Correspondence of the Emperor Charles V*, (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty, 1850), 132.

⁷¹ Donald W. Bleznick, "Spanish Reaction to Machiavelli in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19, no. 4 (1958): 544.

⁷² Brandi, 197.

Revolt the greater nobles were stuck in a relationship with the monarchy that put the majority of them out of the governmental administration of Spain.⁷³

During Charles's stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529, he became increasingly seen as a Spaniard. It is clear that his policy began to change after his return to Spain in 1522.⁷⁴ His Spanish public persona grew, and the Spanish people eventually became proud of their monarch, whom they saw as a defender of Catholicism.⁷⁵ His desire to make his subjects happy by learning their language and customs, as well as his appointment of Spaniards to offices in Spain rather than Flemings, endeared him to his Spanish subjects. The ease with which he had put down the Comunero Revolt helped to increase his power enormously over both the lower classes and the nobles. By keeping the fidelity of the nobles, Charles was able to crush the rebels quickly; this served as an effective example for others in years afterward. As Gómara said: the revolt "exalted beyond what it had previously been the power of the king they desired to abase."⁷⁶

But it was not until 1525 that Charles was truly popular among Spaniards as their king. Before 1525 he was still greatly dependent upon support from the nobles. But after the miraculous and "Providential" victory at Pavia, and the capture of King Francis by imperial forces, Charles became very popular and loved in Spain.⁷⁷ From that time onward he fought for total authority in Spain, and eventually gained it.⁷⁸ The Battle of Pavia was a turning point in his reign that made him a popular king in Spain and ensured

⁷³ Koenigsberger, 36.

⁷⁴ Catherine Moran, *Spain*, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 101.

⁷⁵ Henry Dwight Sedgwick, *Spain*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 157.

⁷⁶ R. Trevor Davies, *The Golden Century of Spain: 1501-1621*, (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1954), 59.

⁷⁷ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 76.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

further tranquility in his Spanish lands during the rest of his rule.⁷⁹ By the end of his seven-year stay in Spain, Charles had become a man, growing a beard in 1529 at the suggestion of Gattinara. He kept this beard throughout his reign, and it served to remind people of the Roman emperors, especially as Charles received his imperial crowning in Italy.⁸⁰ Charles was desirous of becoming a great emperor and living up to the example of Charlemagne. But his Spanish legacy was important to him as well, and he was successful in being respected as a *Spanish* king, speaking Spanish in court, and with the pope upon his visit to Italy and his coronation in 1529.

Gattinara's death in 1530 marked a significant change in Charles's inner development as a ruler; he was his own chancellor from that time onward.⁸¹ Wim Blockmans states that after Gattinara's death, Charles no longer believed that universal kingship was a realistic goal, so he split his lands between two advisors: los Cobos in Spain and Italy, and Granvelle in Germany and the Netherlands to more effectively govern them and bring centralization to his personal empire.⁸² But Spain was *his* home, its lands *his* family's empire, and in the end Charles would choose to die in Castile.⁸³

Society, Religion, Economy, Military, and Government in Charles's Spain

The society of Spain during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries continued to be dominated by Christians with Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest roots. Muslims, Jews, *moriscos*, and *conversos* were pressured to leave Spain and were eventually expelled

⁷⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁰ Hayward Keniston, *Francisco de los Cobos: Secretary of the Emperor Charles V*, (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1958), 123.

⁸¹ Brandi, 289.

⁸² Blockmans, 132.

⁸³ Moran, 101.

during the reigns of both the Catholic Monarchs and Charles. Purity of blood was important to be allowed a position of power in the Spanish government or clergy. Spanish society contained: those who ruled (three ranks of nobility), a growing middle class of merchants, and the people in lower parts of society who made up 95 percent of the population.⁸⁴ Feudalism was breaking down because sheep-raising for wool was the major business, and few workers were needed. Spanish society was based upon land holding, and the nobility controlled almost all of the land. The middle, or merchant, class was quite small in Castile, but was gradually growing as Charles became king. Even though the greater nobles lost political power to the king and his councils, they still held great social and financial power, especially after the Comunero Revolt. Helen Nader shows how aristocratic families continued to be powerful through service to the royal authority during the reigns of Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles.⁸⁵ During the reigns of these monarchs the income of aristocratic families increased greatly overall.⁸⁶ But even though nobles owned much of the land, and many others in Spanish society were in poverty, Robertson feels that Spain distinguished itself in Europe by ridding itself of feudalism early, giving its people freedom and rights in the towns and territories.⁸⁷ By the time of Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles, feudalism was not strong in Spain.

As with other growing nation-states of Renaissance Europe, Spain saw Church and state as complementary institutions. Like the Visigothic rulers, Reconquest kings,

⁸⁴ Lynch, 12-13.

⁸⁵ Helen Nader, "Noble Income in Sixteenth century Castile: The Case of the Marquises of Mondejar, 1480-1580," *The Economic History Review* 30, no. 3 (1977): 421.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 426.

⁸⁷ William Robertson, *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830), 19-21.

and the Catholic Monarchs before him, Charles held great control over the clergy in Spain. Even though disputes occurred between the two powers, this was a natural state of affairs.⁸⁸ Lewis posits that the decline of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church removed an obstacle to absolutism, which aided the King of England, Henry VIII, to become head of his own church. It also helped absolutism grow in Spain. Since the human part of the divine institution of the Church (the pope) had failed, people began to look to civil authority as the answer, and the state grew more powerful than the Church in many nations in Europe, especially Spain. In order to gain more political control, the Catholic Monarchs had the Inquisition reinstated and brought directly under their control allowing them to blame problems on *conversos*, and then *moriscos*, after the Granada War.⁸⁹ Charles also used the Inquisition to bring religious unification during his reign.

After the Comunero Revolt Spain saw a rise in trade and industry, and its economy seemed to be improving. Industrial development depends on the labor force, and Castile had the largest in Europe at that time. With feudalism largely gone in Spain, its peasants were free to work at other jobs such as manufacturing and commerce.⁹⁰ Therefore industry was doing well in Spain and getting better during the reigns of the Catholic Monarchs and into the reign of Charles, but several things came together to destroy it. First, the industry of Spain was short-lived because of the effect of the American gold and silver. R. Trevor Davies thinks that this destroyed export trade, bringing about high prices in Spain which led to greater importation but less exportation

⁸⁸ Wyndham Lewis, *Emperor of the West*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932), 22.

⁸⁹ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 42.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

of goods.⁹¹ The importation of precious metals from the Americas led to the Price Revolution, the high prices in the 1540s and 1550s, which hurt Spain's economy and caused terrible poverty throughout the nation-state. Second, increased taxation hurt the Spanish economy. The unsound foreign policies of the government and the wars it fought outside of Spain added to the damage already done to Spain's economy by making it necessary to increase taxes. Third, the *hidalgos* in the *cortes* did not care about industry. They desired only to help the agricultural portion of the Spanish economy, and did nothing to aid the failing Spanish industry. Many Spaniards wanted to be "gentlemen," which meant that they no longer worked in such capacities as industry. Industry and trade were looked down upon in favor of agrarianism, owning land and raising sheep. The many men becoming *hidalgos* created a situation where many simply desired to live out their lives as rich gentlemen and good Catholics.⁹²

The discovery of the Americas immediately following the conquest of Granada in 1492 led to the final conquest of the Canary Islands and the securing of the route to the New World.⁹³ This eventually brought enormous wealth to Spain, money that went through the kingdom of Castile, regardless of the attempts to allow other regions a part in the American endeavor. Castile's dominance in economic resources and manpower ensured this.⁹⁴ Davies feels that it was the precious metals from the Americas that led to the rise in prices in Spain, eventually leading to the downfall of Spain's economic and

⁹¹ Ibid., 71.

⁹² Ibid., 73.

⁹³ Livermore, 188.

⁹⁴ Lynch, 20.

political power in the world.⁹⁵ The following is a table of figures giving the imports of American treasure into Spain found in J.H. Elliott's book *Imperial Spain* based upon Earl J. Hamilton's work, *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain, 1501-1650*.

Table 1.

Figures for imports of American treasure before and during the reign of Charles V.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Royal</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Total</i>
1503-1505	116,660	328,607	445,266
1506-1510	256,625	722,859	979,484
1511-1515	375,882	1,058,782	1,434,664
1516-1520	312,261	879,575	1,191,836
1521-1525	42,183	118,821	161,004
1526-1530	326,485	919,640	1,246,124
1531-1535	518,833	1,461,445	1,980,277
1536-1540	1,621,062	3,104,408	4,725,470
1541-1545	909,346	5,035,460	5,944,806
1546-1550	1,911,206	4,699,246	6,610,453
1551-1555	4,354,208	7,484,429	11,838,637
1556-1560	1,882,195	7,716,604	9,598,798 ⁹⁶

Amounts are given in *pesos* of 450 *maravedís*. The figures continue to rise, peaking around the years 1591-1600, and again around 1616-1620.⁹⁷

Another chart, by Davies in *The Golden Century of Spain: 1501-1621*, is drawn also from Hamilton, as well as several other sources. It gives the total value of the imports of precious metals from the Americas in English pounds, also breaking down the percentages of gold and silver that were brought to Spain.

⁹⁵ Davies, 64.

⁹⁶ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 175.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

Table 2.

Figures for imports of American treasure before and during the reign of Charles, broken down by percentage.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Total Value</i>	
1503-5	213,400	(all gold)
1506-10	468, 970	(all gold)
1511-15	687,410	(all gold)
1516-20	571,090	(all gold)
1521-25	77,148	(gold, 97%; silver, 3%)
1526-30	597,100	(gold, 97%; silver, 3%)
1531-35	948,900	(gold, 12.5%; silver, 87.5%)
1536-40	2,234,700	(gold, 15%; silver, 85%)
1541-45	2,848,600	(gold, 15%; silver, 85%)
1546-50	3,167,600	(gold, 15%; silver, 85%)
1551-55	5,672,600	(gold, 15%; silver, 85%)
1556-60	4,599,400	(gold, 15%; silver, 85%) ⁹⁸

In this chart the figures continue to rise, peaking during the decade of the 1590s, and again in 1606-10, and 1616-20, before gradually decreasing.⁹⁹

Over-taxation hurt the economy of Spain, causing great poverty, especially in Castile, and hurting local industries. The adverse effect upon the Spanish economy by increased taxation can be seen by 1550, and the situation is usually attributed to the government.¹⁰⁰ Rather than fixing the problematic tax system of Castile which was inherited from the Catholic Monarchs, Charles allowed it to continue.¹⁰¹ In particular, Castile was burdened heavily with several taxes, both direct and indirect. These were *servicios* (grants) voted by the *cortes*, the *alcabala*, which was a purchase tax of ten percent levied on bags of wool exported to France, the Netherlands or Italy, and taxes

⁹⁸ Davies, 299.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 299-300.

¹⁰⁰ Davies, 72.

¹⁰¹ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 98-99.

levied on the clergy (with the pope's permission) as a contribution for fighting the infidel (the *cruzada*, *tercias*, and *excusado*).¹⁰²

During Charles's reign, attempts were made to increase Spain's industrial and commercial economy. Ferdinand and Isabella created much economic and social legislation to strengthen the economy of Spain, and Charles continued this.¹⁰³ The Catholic Monarchs tried to stimulate old industries and create new ones to be competitive with foreign commerce. The new nationalism and imperialism, and the trends toward an industrial and commercial economy, did aid Charles to some degree in creating a stronger empire. But Charles was unable to put into full effect the commercial policies that he brought from the commercially-driven Netherlands. The strength of the *Mesta*, foreign industrial and commercial competition, reliance on American precious metals, and over-taxation due to foreign wars, did not allow Spain to cast off its agricultural sheep-raising economy. Charles showed his commercial wherewithal at times, but Spanish commercial interests were not a major part of the guiding principles of his imperial policy.¹⁰⁴

There were three main sectors of Spain's economy in the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁵ The first was Seville, which looked toward the Atlantic and the New World. The second was northern Castile, which had dealings mainly with Flanders and northern Europe. And the third was Aragon which pointed toward the Mediterranean. The main objects of trade were ceramics, leather, silk, and blades for swords and knives. But the main industry, textiles, demanded that wool production be made the most important part of the Spanish

¹⁰² Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 55.

¹⁰³ Smith, 126.

¹⁰⁴ Brandi, 347.

¹⁰⁵ J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1479-1716*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 177.

economy.¹⁰⁶ Industry was hurt by the country's preference for sheep-raising, creating an internal weakness. Foreign competition aided in the decline of Spain's economy and prosperity. Manufacturing saw a sudden rise from 1525 to 1550 in Spain, especially because of the colonial trade.¹⁰⁷ But things were not as good as they seemed; rather than industrializing in other, more profitable areas, Spain increased its sheep industry.¹⁰⁸

Overall, Charles's government led Spain toward economic decline. It did not use its economic opportunities wisely, nor did it look realistically toward the future. The Erasmian humanist group of advisors that Charles relied on for advice pushed for a policy that spent an enormous amount of money toward gaining and keeping control of Italy and the Empire in an attempt to control Europe and fight the Turkish invasion to the east. Charles often looked to Castile and its American holdings for the money that was needed, putting Spain into debt.¹⁰⁹ Because its economy was mainly dependent upon sheep-raising, there was very little manufacturing, and not enough food was grown in Spain. After the 1540s and 1550s Spain's economy was much worse because of the over-importation of manufactured goods and food.¹¹⁰ Another problem with the Spanish economy was that it did not supply finished goods to the Americas by using its raw materials effectively.¹¹¹ When England later did this, the financial benefit led to world dominance. Keen believes that Spain did not industrialize as other European nations did

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 179-180.

¹⁰⁷ Hume, 83-84.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 85.

¹⁰⁹ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 82.

¹¹⁰ Edward Dwight Salmon, *Imperial Spain*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931, 64.

¹¹¹ Kamen, *Golden Age Spain*, 32.

until the eighteenth century, even though Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles wanted to.¹¹²

The reason for this is that something always prevented it from happening—either the work it took to centralize, the emphasis on internal trade and international affairs, the *Mesta* during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, the great number of lands of Charles, the Reformation, fighting the Turks, or foreign competition during Charles's reign.¹¹³

To help the monarchy's finances Ferdinand and Isabella had attempted to reform the *mercedes* (royal grants given to nobles for service) system. Traditionally this has been seen by Spanish historians as an attack upon the nobles; however Stephen Haliczer argues that it was more an attempt to help the royal revenues than to hurt the nobles, even though he concedes that the Catholic Monarchs did make a successful effort to reduce the political importance and economic power of the nobles.¹¹⁴ In the Cortes of Toledo in 1480 they took away the grandees' voting rights in legislation and began bringing new men from the lesser nobility and clergy into military and diplomatic offices.¹¹⁵ Also they deprived the nobles of revenue of the crown, of *juros* (liens on crown revenue purchased and held for the life of the holder or in perpetuity). They continued the policies of their predecessors in employing *letrados* and lesser nobles in administrative positions. But magnates still filled important positions, sometimes being in charge of important councils in the absence of the monarchs. Unfortunately their *mercedes* reform program collapsed because of corruption within the system, corruption that continued to bother Spain's

¹¹² Benjamin Keen, *Readings in Latin American Civilization: 1492 to the present*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955), 129.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹¹⁴ Stephen Haliczer, "Castilian Aristocracy and Mercedes Reform: 1478-82," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (1975): 449.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 449.

economy under the rule of Charles.¹¹⁶ A great number of nobles were able to keep their *mercedes* by bribing government officials.

Charles tried other innovations in order to gain money faster from his lands in Spain.¹¹⁷ Even though Charles was able to bring in much more revenue than Ferdinand and Isabella, because of his great spending, three times as much as his predecessors, he lived in constant debt, especially toward the end of his reign. Estimates of the amount of precious metals coming in from the Americas during Charles's reign range from 101.3 million ducats to 173.4 million ducats.¹¹⁸ Even so, his expenditures and the amounts he owed loan agencies was more than American precious metals and the heavy taxing of Castile could handle. Much of this had to do with Spain financing the Empire.¹¹⁹ Also, the economy was weak in Spain when Charles became king.¹²⁰ Carla Phillips believes that the decline of the Spanish economy during and after Charles's reign was due to the failure of governmental policies and to human behavior.¹²¹ Political hegemony was not enough to compensate for the economic problems caused by his foreign policy and over-taxation of Castile.¹²² By the end of his life, Charles was practically living on loans.¹²³

During Charles's reign the Spanish military was the most effective in Europe. The constant warfare with the Moors for centuries had made it a fashionable profession

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 467.

¹¹⁷ McElwee, 27.

¹¹⁸ Tyler, 249.

¹¹⁹ Koenigsberger, 33.

¹²⁰ Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile*, 147-148.

¹²¹ Carla Rahn Phillips, "Time and Duration: A Model for the Economy of Early Modern Spain," *The American Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (1987): 531.

¹²² Ibid., 532.

¹²³ Davies, 77.

among Spaniards.¹²⁴ Spanish military units recruited more disciplined people than any other contemporary army.¹²⁵ The father of the Spanish military's fame, Gonzalo de Córdoba, the "great captain" of Ferdinand and Isabella, had improved the Spanish army by introducing new methods of fighting. This was done by using a variety of arms. Within the Spanish *tercio*, or group of three thousand fighting men, was fifteen hundred armed with long pikes, one thousand with short swords and javelins, and five hundred with arquebuses. The *tercio* was commanded by a *maestro de campo*, and had twelve to fifteen companies, each commanded by a captain. In battle the pikemen would form squares with the javelin men in the center and the artillery and arquebusiers separately placed to support the squares. Charles continued to improve Spain's military to ensure it was the best in Europe. Jan Glete thinks that a fiscal-military state, a state dependent upon its military to strengthen its economy and gain political strength, was created in Spain by the Hapsburgs, and was the first in Europe.¹²⁶

To a degree, Charles continued the dualism that Isabella and Ferdinand had practiced in Castile and Aragon. But he was more successful in unifying Spain, using the domination of Castile.¹²⁷ Like Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles used more resources from Castile than his other Spanish kingdoms because Castile was more "manipulable."¹²⁸ And, after Ferdinand's death, Castilians and Aragonese stopped their political fighting to a large degree, bringing further unity to Spain. Edward Salmon, Rhea Smith, and W.L. McElwee do not believe that Charles was effective in centralizing Spain with his system

¹²⁴ Chudoba, 63.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 63-64.

¹²⁶ Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 67.

¹²⁷ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 71; Salmon, 60-61.

¹²⁸ Fernández-Armesto, "The Improbable Empire," 122.

of rule. Salmon says that Spain was still a “decentralized despotism” under Charles, as it was during the time of the Catholic Monarchs.¹²⁹ Smith believes that Charles did not fuse the Spanish territories tightly but instead desired unity only.¹³⁰ McElwee thinks that Charles did not do well in creating a centralized, modern state out of the loose, medieval federation already there.¹³¹ But Vicens Vives says that during Charles’s reign there was more than just a continuation of gradual centralization, that there was a sudden surge of centralization in Spain.¹³² Davies thinks that Charles was able to gain great power as monarch because of his continuation of Ferdinand and Isabella’s policy of supporting the rise in power of the towns and lesser nobility, and his positive attitude toward the Spanish heritage.¹³³ Charles was then able to use his strengthened power as monarch to bring further unity to Spain. I believe that Charles unified Spain more than his predecessors had, although he was not completely successful in destroying regionalism in Aragon.

Charles ruled Spain, and his other lands, through a system of viceroys and royal councils.¹³⁴ The system of rule Charles created was inherently inefficient, but the strength of his personality, and his insistence on making as many decisions in government as possible made him too much of a necessity for the government, and it could not perform efficiently without him. Even so, the talented people he chose to rule with him, and in his absence, were trustworthy and able to make the system work.

¹²⁹ Salmon, 60.

¹³⁰ Smith, 157.

¹³¹ McElwee, 231.

¹³² Vicens Vives, 100.

¹³³ Davies, 59.

¹³⁴ Blockmans, 116.

Charles continued much of the governmental policies of the Catholic Monarchs in Spain, but with some change in the administration of government.¹³⁵ By 1522 it was seen that the conciliar government of Ferdinand and Isabella was too inefficient for a large, diverse empire, and Charles's advisors Gattinara and los Cobos worked to reform it.¹³⁶ This reform was done in the hope that Castile and Aragon would be brought into a stronger union through Charles's personal rule.¹³⁷ Charles had almost absolute power in Castile, and allowed the councils, who were under his direct control, to display great authority. Through his personal attention and strong personality, Charles unified the Spanish lands so that their economies and interests were the same, even though each region continued to govern itself to a degree.¹³⁸

The governments of Aragon and Castile had differing characteristics when Charles became king. The *cortes* of Aragon consisted of four Estates and were divided according to kingdom: Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia.¹³⁹ Even though these three *cortes* were over separate kingdoms, Charles made it his custom to hold the *cortes* simultaneously in Monzon rather than in each kingdom's principal city, in order to bring them into closer unity. The chief reason for these meetings was to gain money. The *cortes* of Castile, on the other hand, was made up of delegates from eighteen designated "*cortes*" towns. Separate councils controlled administration of government in Castile and Aragon, some local and some having power over both regions.

¹³⁵ Smith, 157.

¹³⁶ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 69.

¹³⁷ Smith, 157.

¹³⁸ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 55.

¹³⁹ Brandi, 197-198.

When Charles came to Spain he reinforced a hierarchy of rank using the example of the many formalities of the Burgundian court.¹⁴⁰ Because of this, the Spanish court was made smaller.¹⁴¹ Charles's ministers began calling him "Sacra Caesarea Majestatis—Your Holy Imperial Majesty" to intensify both Charles's persona as king and his consciousness of his own sovereignty; but his advisors still kept enough private freedom to complain to, and of, Charles and to appeal to his conscience.¹⁴² "His Court was slowly re-created to combine the features both of Burgundian and Spanish culture, of Renaissance thought and imperial tradition," says Brandi when speaking about the court of Charles.¹⁴³ Charles continued the trend begun by Ferdinand and Isabella of making the Spanish court more ceremonial, bringing greater power to the monarchy by infusing the Spanish court with his Burgundian court ceremony.¹⁴⁴ A universal character was brought to the court of Charles by these elements of Burgundian and Spanish ceremony. As chancellor, Gattinara was Charles's preeminent advisor and had great influence in shaping his policy toward a universal policy until the late 1520s.¹⁴⁵ Educated in medieval traditions, he was nevertheless strongly imbued with the Italian theory of world monarchy.¹⁴⁶ And Spaniards "basked in the reflected sunlight of imperial glory."¹⁴⁷

Gerard de Pleine, Lord of La Roche, said about Spain at the beginning of Charles's reign that the grandees showed unwarrantable greed in digesting crown lands,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 196.

¹⁴¹ Blockmans, 128.

¹⁴² Brandi, 196.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 196.

¹⁴⁴ Ulick Ralph Burke, *A History of Spain*, (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1895) vol. 2, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Headley, 9.

¹⁴⁶ Brandi, 197.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 197.

and were everywhere unpopular because they and their fellows had gained control of the leading ecclesiastical and administrative posts.¹⁴⁸ The people cried out because of the extravagance of the court, saying that they could not support it along with the other burdens and debts of the country. Charles's councilors set out on a course of administrative reform in Spain to make the treasury more accountable. Like the Catholic Monarchs, and his father Philip the Handsome, Charles limited the number of grandees and limited their power.¹⁴⁹ In Castile these were limited to twenty families, who were excluded from the Council of State. Lesser nobility and high administration officials, who were more dependent upon Charles for their position, took their places, adding power to the monarchy and taking power away from the greater nobility.¹⁵⁰

Spain was unlike England and France in that its monarchs were strongly independent from their subjects and felt they only owed loyalty to God.¹⁵¹ For this reason, after the sixteenth century, coronation ceremonies stopped being held in Spain. Monarchs crowned themselves, not willing to show any submissiveness to anyone else but God. Along with this was the idea that Spain was inherently sacred and therefore there was no need for the physical act of coronation. Elliot believes that Spanish monarchs stressed their Catholicity in order to make up for the legitimacy they lost in not having a coronation ceremony.¹⁵² Spanish monarchs, therefore, were keen to show their piety. As Charles became more Spanish, the peculiar personal piety that he had gained

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 214.

¹⁴⁹ Mariejol, 269.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 197.

¹⁵¹ Glenn Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21.

¹⁵² Phyllis Mack and Margaret C. Jacob, *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11.

from his tutor Adrian in the Netherlands was useful in his acceptance as a good Spanish king. The oaths Charles gave to the *cortes* when he became King of Spain were similar to the ones he gave in the Netherlands, promising good rule by the king.¹⁵³ To keep everyone aware of the social order, the Spanish court held everyday ceremonies in the royal court, daily Mass, and meals emphasizing the greatness of the king.¹⁵⁴ The ceremony aimed to stress the king's position at the top of society and government.¹⁵⁵

In Spain, the theories of mixed or balanced monarchy competed with others of unfettered royal power. Francesco di Vitoria argued for a community between the sovereign and the realm, agreeing with the ideas of Claude de Seyssel from France.¹⁵⁶ The Crown of Aragon saw its nobles fighting to keep the traditional ancient privileges of the three kingdoms within it: Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia. In Castile, the king was definitely the highest official, but he was supposed to be at the service of Castile. Charles reiterated this in 1518 in the Cortes of Valladolid, and still adhered to it after his victory over the Comuneros. Ferdinand and Isabella hid their active, interventionist rules in the rhetoric of serving their kingdoms. Charles continued this, accepting the restrictions placed upon him yet insisting upon his authority. After the Comunero Revolt there was little talk of his sovereignty under anyone other than God.¹⁵⁷

The Spanish idea of divine appointment was one that blended well with Charles's personal beliefs about kingship. Charles continued the Catholic Monarchs's use of

¹⁵³ Ibid., 22; T.F. Ruiz, 'Une royauté sans sacre: la monarchie Castillane du bas moyen-âge', *Annales* 39 (1984), pp. 429-53.

¹⁵⁴ Richardson, 24.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 31.

Roman, Visigothic, and Reconquest law to bring respect and veneration to the monarch, centralize the legal system, and improve law and order.¹⁵⁸ All of the characteristics of the belief in the divine right of kings can be seen in Charles's monarchy: the idea that the monarchy is a divinely ordained institution, that hereditary rights are indefeasible, that kings are accountable only to God, and that non-resistance and passive obedience are enjoined by God.¹⁵⁹ The last characteristic was perhaps not completely enforced by Charles since he allowed certain people in his government to disagree with him on policy and government, although not many. Overall, Charles saw his roles as King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor as both appointments by God, and he saw Spain and the Holy Roman Empire as one, "God's," empire. As emperor, Charles sought to protect the Catholic people, the pope, and the Church. In Spain his power over the Church as monarch and his power over the government and society left him in nearly total control.

Leading up to the reigns of the Catholic Monarchs, Spanish kings secured their power in the localities, especially in Castile. Local records such as those of Castro Urdiales, show the growing strength of monarchs in regional areas leading up to the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, as well as the further growth of the power of Ferdinand and Isabella in local areas through control of the towns. Towns and villages were increasingly required to go through the monarchy to secure rights, fix boundaries, trade, sell, and do many other things. This title of a series of records from Castro Urdiales shows the growth of the monarch's power in Castile leading up to the reign of the Catholic Monarchs:

¹⁵⁸ Mariejol, 116.

¹⁵⁹ John Neville Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*, (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1970), 5-6.

Traslado de cartas de privilegio y confirmación de Juan I de Castilla de fecha 20 de agosto de 1379; de Alfonso XI de fecha 5 de junio de 1347; de Enrique II de fecha 28 de febrero de 1367 y de Enrique III de fecha 12 de marzo de 1408, a favor de la villa de Castro Urdiales, a la que se reconoce jurisdicción en la Junta y valles de Sámano, Mioño, Otañes y Baltezana.¹⁶⁰

In this record can be seen the growth of the monarchical power in Castile from 1347 to 1408 in the area of Castro Urdiales. The first portion of the records, collected in 1464, are letters of privileges and rights granted by the king, and decisions concerning jurisdiction.¹⁶¹ The trend of monarchical growth shown here was reawakened and continued in Castile by the Catholic Monarchs. Centers of civil and criminal law with the power to catch, capture, and jail, were cultivated and brought under the control of the royal power. Castro Urdiales was one such center, recognized as such by its neighbor Mioño in 1482, as well as other nearby areas.¹⁶² Licenses were increasingly needed for many things, such as: selling and transporting wine, pigs, iron, cider, and wood. The money went to the royal treasury for the governing of the land. The increase in royal influence and running of the localities can be seen in the increase of record keeping in Castro Urdiales. More royal officials began to be seen in the local areas, and their powers grew under the Catholic Monarchs.¹⁶³ Such dealings as town council meetings, rents, licenses, court cases, salaries of officials, and other things are recorded. The *regidores* (town governors) and *corregidores* (royal representatives in the towns) began to work

¹⁶⁰ Emma Blanco Campos, Elisa Fernández Álvarez Llopis, Jose Angel Garcia de Cortazar, and Ruiz de Aguirre, *Libro del Consejo (1494-1522) y documentos medievales del Archivo Municipal de Castro Urdiales*, (Santander: Fundacion Marcelino Botin, 1996), 34. "Translations of letters of privilege and confirmation of Juan I of Castile dated August 20, 1379; of Alfonso XI dated June 5, 1347; of Enrique II dated February 28, 1367 and Enrique III dated March 12, 1408; a favor of the village of Castro Urdiales, of the recognition of jurisdiction in the Junta and valleys of Samano, Mioño, Otoñes and Baltezana," my translation.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 34.

¹⁶² Ibid., 44.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 112.

with the *alcaldes* (town mayors), *procuradores* (representatives in the *cortes*), and *fieles* (town officials loyal to the crown and local authority) to run the towns.¹⁶⁴ Also recorded are the visits of the monarch's officials for *alcabala* tax collecting and for overseeing the administering of justice.¹⁶⁵ And lists were kept of all the officials in the town and those who regularly visited the town on behalf of the monarchy.¹⁶⁶

The following record is similar to several others recorded in Castro Urdiales, and shows the influence of the monarchy in local areas through officials appointed by the monarch to be part of the town and local government and to work for the strengthening of royal power. It shows a royally appointed *corregidor* taking the *alcabala* tax, as well as rent money, from the town of Castro Urdiales and surrounding areas for use by the royal government. It is entitled: "The end and departure of the alcabalas of the year 1503."

In the town of Castro de Urdiales, on the third day of the month of September of 1503, the young lord Fernando de Rebolledo, recognized and awarded *corregidor* for the king and queen, our Lords, for virtue, is deserving of the conclusion of the taking and managing of rents and alcabalas for their Highnesses in this town begun in 1502. This official for their Highnesses has the letter of payment, end, and departure from the town of Castro Urdiales, and of their goods and that of neighboring towns, of the 220,247 maravedís (monetary unit) in the said town. For this reason the said town gave and paid in this situation, and money was saved for this purpose, and of the rest it is known that the said lord *corregidor* has received payment for accounts in the form of work done for free, and this ends the same council of all said pages, etc.

Our obligation to him, our goods, and our Highnesses is fulfilled, and there is no more demand from us in any other thing in the name of our Highnesses, under penalty of paying double, etc. Firm letter has been given, and all laws renounced, and power given to the justices, etc. Witnesses...¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 115-116.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 155, 169.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 546.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 155, my translation.

Through the use of such local officials appointed by the monarchy as *corregidores*, Ferdinand and Isabella were able to gain more power in the localities. Several records of Castro Urdiales, such as a correspondence between this town and the Junta of the Cal in 1501, show the close relationship between towns and the Junta (assembly of towns).¹⁶⁸ Through this relationship, and their own close relations with the Junta, the Catholic Monarchs were able to gain power in the towns.

The local records of Castro Urdiales show that Charles, like the Catholic Monarchs, continued to gain power for the monarchy in local areas. The regulation of local areas continued throughout Spain under the rule of Charles, and an effort was made to increase the money and power of the royal government. Spaniards were forced to buy licenses for commercial activities such as selling wine in certain areas or the transporting items for sale.¹⁶⁹ Royal power was strengthened by the increased involvement of royally appointed officials in local governments, the growth of which was a continuation of the policies of Ferdinand and Isabella. Royal power can be seen in the dealings of the *regidor* and the *corregidor* in local matters recorded in several instances.¹⁷⁰

The records of Castro Urdiales show an “account of the *fieles* in the year of 1522.” This record lists officials who often took part in the running of local government.

In the village of Castro Urdiales on the first day of the month of January in the year of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ of 1522. An account of the standard assembly of lords is the licensed Salzedo e Lope, having general powers as corregidor, Lope Hurtado de Salzedo, alcalde in the said village, Lope Garcia de Otañes, Juan Marroquin de Mioño, Pedro de Cestona, regidores, Juan de la Torre, Pedro Marroquin, fieles of the consejo of the said village, Gonzalo de Solorzeno,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 214.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 101.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 280.

Pedro Royz de Llendelagua, Lope d'Espalza, regidores who were chartered in the past year, and other neighbors of the said village, took and noted necessary accounts of Pedro de la Torre, of Juan del Rio, fieles who were chartered in the said past year of 1520.¹⁷¹

The account goes on to discuss the activities of the village officials such as proposed rent and tax amounts, and reports concerning the collection of rents and taxes. Records like this one, listing so many royal officials (*regidores* and *corregidor*) in the governmental administration of the town of Castro Urdiales, shows that royal authority had great influence over local governments during the rule of Charles, a continuation of the strength Ferdinand and Isabella had over local areas through support from the towns. Charles continued to wield greater power over local areas of Spain throughout his rule by controlling the towns. The Castro Urdiales records end with a list of local officials during the reigns of Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles. Twenty-nine *alcaldes*, thirty *corregidores*, forty *fieles*, seventy-eight *procuradores*, and fifty-eight *regidores* are listed in Castro Urdiales during this time.¹⁷² Ferdinand and Isabella put more loyal royal officials into local governments, and Charles increased royal power in the towns in the same way.

After the failed Comunero Revolt, two things brought tremendous power to Charles and his office as king. These were the rise to supremacy in the towns of the lesser nobility, or *hidalgos*, and the changed attitude of Charles toward the Spanish heritage.¹⁷³ Municipal offices were now opened to nobles, and many lesser nobles sought these positions. *Hidalgos* looked to the king for offices, as well as help for the *Mesta*. The towns, filled with *hidalgos*, sent *procuredores* to the *cortes* who were loyal and friendly

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 457, my translation.

¹⁷² Ibid., 546-550.

¹⁷³ Davies, 60-61.

to the king, something that helped increase the power of the monarchy and decreased the power of the *cortes*. The decay of the *cortes*' power, begun by the Catholic Monarchs, accelerated under the rule of Charles.¹⁷⁴ Davies believes that the *cortes* brought grievances out of habit rather than the necessity of bringing forth real grievances. He also feels that they began to take their legislative duties lightly; this is the reason they eventually had none. Charles gained great power for the royal government in local areas by demanding that towns give their *procuradores* unrestricted power, that the *cortes* grant supplies before presenting grievances, and that they carry on discussions in the presence of the president and the Crown.¹⁷⁵ Charles's attitude toward Spain also helped him gain power over local areas. His favorable treatment of Spanish towns allowed Charles to end some of Spain's narrow localism and to educate Spaniards toward a world-wide outlook.¹⁷⁶

In Castile, by the time of Charles's reign, the power of the *cortes* had diminished greatly. In the Crown of Aragon this was not the case. The old nobility had successfully defended their ancient liberties, keeping the power of the monarchy weak.¹⁷⁷ These were the three areas of the Crown of Aragon: Old Aragon, where the old nobility had created *cortes* for four estates, two of them noble; Catalonia, where the third estate had become more powerful than the rest and had formed a new urban power; and Valencia, which was still mainly a colonial society where Aragonese nobles and Catalanian merchants exploited the labor of a Muslim majority. The *cortes* of Aragon was composed of four

¹⁷⁴ Mariejol, 140.

¹⁷⁵ Davies, 59.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹⁷⁷ Livermore, 183.

estates: the clergy, the greater nobles (ricos hombres), the *caballeros* and *hidalgos* (*infanzones*), and the towns.¹⁷⁸ Roger Merriman says that the Crown of Aragon reached a more advanced stage of political development than Castile.¹⁷⁹ He thinks that under a series of energetic monarchs and an active foreign policy, and with a patriotic aristocracy and third estate, Aragon prevented healthy centralization from becoming harmful despotism leading up to the sixteenth century.

In the central government the Catholic Monarchs restructured three councils that were already functioning under the monarchs before them in Castile: the Council of Justice, the Council of State (Secret Council), and the Council of Finance (Consejo de la Hacienda).¹⁸⁰ Their desire was to make the three-part Royal Council that they inherited work more efficiently and come more directly under their control. It was during their reign that the three sections of the Royal Council became specified, almost becoming their own councils, and gained well-defined roles with distinctive functions.¹⁸¹ Through the Cortes of Madrigal in 1476, and then the Cortes of Toledo in 1480, the Catholic Monarchs began to reform and control the governmental councils.¹⁸² The Council of State was separated from the Royal Council during the Catholic Monarchs' rule, and became the Privy Council, depending on the monarch's pleasure. The monarch was its president, its functions were consultative, and its purpose related mainly to foreign affairs

¹⁷⁸ Mariejol, 142-143.

¹⁷⁹ Roger Bigelow Merriman, "The Cortes of the Spanish Kingdoms in the Later Middle Ages," *The American Historical Review* 16, no. 3 (1911): 486.

¹⁸⁰ Mariejol, 153.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 151.

¹⁸² Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New*, vol. 2, 112.

and the interests of the several Spanish kingdoms. It also served as a Council of War.¹⁸³

The Council of Finance, separate from the council over Aragon, was more closely connected to Castile, since Ferdinand was more often in Castile than Aragon, but was constantly advised by Aragonese subjects.¹⁸⁴

The Council of Justice, often called the Royal Council or the Council of Castile, was the most important governmental institution.¹⁸⁵ It was efficiently structured, and its president was usually a learned ecclesiastic, a person who became the most important subject in the kingdom. Its members were appointed by the monarch, and it became the chief engine of the monarchy, bolstering the strength of the crown, never opposing it. The Catholic Monarchs increased the professional element of the Council of Justice and the other councils of government. The Council of Justice consisted of nine lawyers, three nobles, and one bishop. The Catholic Monarchs tried to use as many people from the lesser nobility as they could so that they could control them and be sure of their loyalty.¹⁸⁶ It had judicial *and* legislative powers; it could repeal law with the king's assent, and the president and four councilors could make a petition of the *cortes* into a law with the king's consent.¹⁸⁷ The judicial system of Spain consisted mainly of the Council of Justice and the king. In fact, the Council of Justice was seen as so important that while it was technically only part of the Royal Council, it was often called the Royal Council instead.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Hume, 22; Mariejol, 153.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 22-23.

¹⁸⁶ Mariejol, 151-152.

¹⁸⁷ Hume, 23.

¹⁸⁸ Mariejol, 151, 153.

In addition to the reforming of the three councils of the Royal Council, the Catholic Monarchs added new councils to specialize in certain areas of government, such as the Council of Aragon.¹⁸⁹ Aragon did not see the departmentalization of its governmental institutions as Castile did because the Catholic Monarchs were more preoccupied with bringing the expanding and prospering Castile under their power.¹⁹⁰ In addition to the already existing councils, four more councils were added, those of the *Hermandad*, the Inquisition, the Military Orders, and the Indies.¹⁹¹ These were all staffed with either nobles, representatives from the towns, or professional lawyers working for the centralization of the government.¹⁹² This trend of using professional lawyers in government, usually lesser nobles, continued throughout the rule of the Hapsburg monarchs.¹⁹³ The Catholic Monarchs worked within the constitutional makeup of Spanish governments before them, adding to it and bringing more efficient government to their kingdoms. The judicial courts were also reformed and improved. Three regional courts were established: at Valladolid (1489), Ciudad Real (1492, moved later to Granada in 1505), and in Galicia.¹⁹⁴ The splitting up of duties of the royal *audiencia* by Isabella helped to bring more efficient justice to Castile.¹⁹⁵ To aid the monarch there was an “extraordinary council” to advise him or her on court rulings in criminal cases. Ferdinand began changing this council to make it less formal, filling it with jurisconsults and calling

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 156.

¹⁹⁰ Hume, 24.

¹⁹¹ Mariejol, 153.

¹⁹² Ibid., 148, 153.

¹⁹³ Lynch, 11.

¹⁹⁴ Smith, 122.

¹⁹⁵ Mariejol, 179.

it the “ordinary council.”¹⁹⁶ In judicial matters Charles finished the reform of Ferdinand by suppressing the extraordinary council in 1519 and solely using the ordinary council.¹⁹⁷

It can be shown from Pedro Gan Giminez’s *El Consejo de Real*, records of the Royal Council, that Ferdinand and Isabella strengthened their control over the councils of Spain’s government. When they reconstituted the Council of Justice, the Catholic Monarchs placed members in it that they could control, such as lawyers and members of the lesser nobility who were loyal to them. Royal Council (Council of Justice) records show that the Catholic Monarchs made it their most important council. Members of the council were to be “a clergyman, three caballeros, and about eight or nine lawyers,” usually twelve in all.¹⁹⁸ Four other councils are shown to be under great control by the Catholic Monarchs: the Council of State (Privy), Finance (Hacienda), Aragon, and Inquisition. Bringing the Royal Council under their control brought it closer to their persons:

Ordenamos e mandamus que en la casa o cámara donde el Nuestro Consejo hobiere de estar, que esté siempre en el nuestro palacio donde Nos posaremos, e si ende non hobiere logar que los Nuestros posentadores den una buena posada para ello, la más cerca pue se fallare de Nuestro palacio.¹⁹⁹

In the Royal Council’s records there can be seen many instances where Charles, as the monarch, held extreme power over the councils of Spain’s government. The Council of Justice, still the most important and powerful council, was directly under Charles’s control, as were most other councils in the central government. The presidents

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 186-187.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 187.

¹⁹⁸ Gan Giminez, 37, my translation.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 39. “We ordered and sent that in the house or chamber where Our Council is to be, that it is always in our palace where we will settle, and if not at our palace then at a good palace for it, nearby if not at our palace,” my translation.

of the councils held power similar to viceroys and regents. While they had to do what Charles told them, they still had the power to discuss the running of the council with Charles in the aim of bringing efficiency in government. The presidents of councils were responsible for telling Charles everything that went on in council meetings if he did not attend. In the end, Charles decided on everything important, and it was to him that all council presidents and council members looked. As an example of this, Gimenez quotes from one document written by Lucio Marineo Siculo in 1539, “there is in Spain, in the royal household council of secret things (Privy Council/Council of State): of which council the King is the President. In the same way the Council of Justice, which is called the Royal Council: the president has the ability, and absolute power of any right, and justice. In which there are a dozen loyal officials and the president...”²⁰⁰

Siculo comments on the Spanish justice system in the following passage, describing the members of the Council of Justice and the council’s usual tasks.

In the royal court the mayors of justice are four: those who know of the crime and are absolute in all the kingdom in first and second hearings in the crime. And in civil power they know the first hearing: in the court, and within five leagues of any place: and are its superior president, the loyal officials. Two [mayors of justice] visit the jail each Saturday with one member of the council. The president together with the royal officials the night before Easter weekend. The authority of the president is so much in the things of justice that he is absolute. He provides for all the corregidores of the kingdom and the residences for the judges. He can command that any grandee or caballero be arrested without a mandate from the king, as long as it is a just cause. The authority of this office is so much that it is illicit to visit any lord, or receive any ambassador, or go to any place except with the royal person or by his mandate. He does not have a vote in the sentences but has a hand in the plea if he wishes. The Royal Council is so supreme that if any side is offended they can come before it as if it were the head of all. In which the dozen regular council members take a salary that many others cannot.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 18, my translation.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 18-19.

Pedro de Medina agrees that the Council of Justice was the “head of all” other councils during Charles’s reign.²⁰² He also says that it provided for the *corregidores* and judges of the kingdom, and could arrest any person, grandee or *caballero*. Like the Catholic Monarchs, Charles sought to strengthen the council, but only as a tool of royal power. Thus the president of the council could not “visit any lord, or receive any ambassador,” except in the presence of the king or with his mandate.²⁰³ Charles had to ensure that the council president did not become too powerful. Like Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles was able to keep the Council of Justice under his control. This was the state of the relationship between the monarchy and the Council of Justice when Charles visited Valladolid in 1518, and Charles continued to gain power over the council throughout his reign.²⁰⁴

Under Charles, the system of administrative councils was further developed from what was left by the Catholic Monarchs.²⁰⁵ The reorganization that they began was continued by Charles in the desire to keep governmental efficiency.²⁰⁶ Charles was able to gradually get a more secure hold on the central government after the end of the Comunero Revolt and his power increased throughout his reign.²⁰⁷ The three main councils of Spain during the rule of Charles were the Council of State, the Council of Castile (Justice), and the Council of Aragon.²⁰⁸ The other groups of councils were the

²⁰² Ibid., 21.

²⁰³ Ibid., 21-22.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 76.

²⁰⁵ Hume, 82.

²⁰⁶ Roger Bigelow Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918) vol. 2, 113.

²⁰⁷ Hume, 83

²⁰⁸ Lynch, 53-55.

Inquisition, the Council of Finance, the Military Orders, the Crusade, and the Council of the Indies. The regions were run by nine different viceroys.²⁰⁹

The following is a useful chart of Charles's conciliar system of government:

Table 3.

Chart of Charles's conciliar system of government.

KING	
[ADVISORY AND DEPARTMENTAL COUNCILS]	[TERRITORIAL COUNCILS]
STATE (1522) WAR (1517)	CASTILE (Developed from royal Council of Kings of Castile. Reorganized 1480) INDIES (1524) ARAGON (Developed from royal Council of Kings of Aragon. Reorganized 1494) ITALY (1555)
INQUISITION (1483) (MILITARY) ORDERS (1495) CRUZADA (1509) FINANCE (HACIENDA) (1523) (Financial departments (<i>contadurias</i>) absorbed into Council of Finance, 1523). ²¹⁰	

Like Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles used councils effectively, adding to their duties and powers and creating new ones, but always with the aim increasing royal power. Charles held great control over the councils of the central government because of the men he used to staff them. These were lawyers appointed by the monarch for advice who were university-trained, from the lesser nobility, and dependent upon the monarchy for their position. These councils became so powerful that they aided in the eventual creation of royal absolutism in Spain that would continue for centuries.²¹¹ The *corregidores*, royally appointed local officials, were at the zenith of their power, and

²⁰⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 166.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 162.

²¹¹ Salmon, 62-63.

worked to increase the power of the central governmental councils and the monarch.²¹² In the governmental system that Charles and his officials created from the old system of Ferdinand and Isabella, there were several important characteristics such as: Madrid was an important city in this government, although not the official capital; councils, viceroys, and *audiencias* were used to govern Charles's many lands; and the system helped run the government efficiently because of the talent of the officials in charge and the hard work of the monarch, though there were inherent flaws in the system.

According to Alvarez the conciliar government of Ferdinand and Isabella was not able to meet the demands of the new nation-state growing under Charles: Gattinara and los Cobos overhauled the government to make it more efficient.²¹³ While the Imperial Council of State was made up of grandees and officials, the Spanish Council of State did not allow grandees to be members.²¹⁴ Both of these councils advised Charles on state policy and international affairs. A strong bureaucracy was put in place by Ferdinand and Isabella to run the councils, and this continued during the reign of Charles. The Council of the Inquisition was of extreme importance because it had jurisdiction throughout all of Spain. The Council of Finance, the Military Orders, The Cruzada, and the Hermandad were also important councils. Lynch says that even though there was an administrative overhaul, the system was still not efficient, but the men in charge made the system work. Like the government of the Catholic Monarchs, Charles's government was somewhat

²¹² Ibid., 158; Smith, 158.

²¹³ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 69.

²¹⁴ Lynch, 53-55.

different than earlier Spanish governments because it had an able bureaucracy which worked to crush particularism, absorb lesser rights, and oppress the high nobility.²¹⁵

In this conciliar system the presidents of the councils were of great importance.²¹⁶ The most important secretary was Fransesco los Cobos who ran Spain's finances. The rest of the secretaries were mere clerks compared to him.²¹⁷ He, unlike Charles's group of humanist advisors in Spain, did not show great enthusiasm for a Spanish empire, but was controlled by Charles nonetheless.²¹⁸ He did much to help keep Spain's economy running efficiently and to bring some structure to Castile.²¹⁹ Brandi feels that los Cobos was not effective and took bribes, but Keniston says los Cobos was upstanding and rarely allowed himself to be bought.²²⁰ Los Cobos came from a poor family and worked hard to become an important secretary in Spain's government. When Ferdinand died, los Cobos moved to the Netherlands to become part of Charles's government, leaving Jiménez's administration in 1517.²²¹ He was made a secretary to the king, Charles's spokesman on several occasions, and eventually briefing him on Spanish affairs.²²² By the time Charles went back to Spain in 1522, los Cobos was one of the most influential advisors left to Charles, along with Gattinara, Lallemand, and Vega.²²³ When Charles and his advisors began reforming the Spanish government and economy they created the Consejo de la

²¹⁵ Brandi, 334.

²¹⁶ Lynch, 55.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

²¹⁸ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 152.

²¹⁹ Keniston, 11-12.

²²⁰ Ibid., 344.

²²¹ Ibid., 21.

²²² Ibid., 51.

²²³ Ibid., 72-73.

Hacienda (Council of Finance) in 1523.²²⁴ Charles based this reform upon the Burgundian government with which he had grown up.²²⁵ Los Cobos was named secretary of the Hacienda, and by 1526 he was a member of the Council of State.²²⁶ After 1530, and the death of Gattinara, los Cobos and Granvelle were Charles's two most important advisors.²²⁷ Los Cobos was important to Charles's government in Spain until his death in 1547.²²⁸ Fernando de Valdez succeeded him as the most important financial advisor in Spain and president of the Council of Justice.²²⁹

In Charles's letters to officials it can be seen that he held total control in government and directed actions completely. The government, in turn, sought his advice on every matter of importance. Even while out of the country and with a regent over Spain, Charles found it necessary to send direct letters to his Spanish councils, like the following letter to the Council of Justice, to ensure he knew everything that was going on. This letter from Charles to the Council of Justice in 1532 demonstrates the kind of exact instructions he continuously sent to the various parts of his government. It is entitled, "About the case of the Count of Urueña and measures that can be taken."

EL REY. Presidente y los del nuestro Consejo. Vi vuestra letra de XXVIII de Mayo sobre el negocio del casamiento del conde de Vruena y la confession y declaracion que el hizo en el dicho que le tomastes que con ella me enbiastes.²³⁰

²²⁴ Ibid., 80.

²²⁵ Hermann Kellenbenz, "The Impact of Growth on Government: The Example of Spain," *The Journal of Economic History* 27, no. 3 (1967): 345.

²²⁶ Keniston, 126.

²²⁷ Ibid., 143.

²²⁸ Blockmans, 135.

²²⁹ Ibid., 135.

²³⁰ Fernández Alvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 1, 365. "The King. President and those of Our Council. Your letter of May 28 about the negotiation of the case of the Count of Urueña and the confession and declaration that I made on the said date, and that he broke with me," my translation.

Charles goes on to tell the Council of Justice his instructions. His control over other councils was similar. In this case he told the council to send all “letters and documents” containing his “good opinion” in this case to the Empress to negotiate and “prove” his case. He told them to work with caution, and in the interest that justice may be done. The relationship between the king and his councils was not to the level of absolute monarchy because he allowed discussion within the council and did not usually force measures, but it led Spain toward absolute monarchy because there were no official methods for checks and balances between the councils and the king.

In the Spanish government under Charles, as Charles became a stronger and more experienced king, the Council of Justice became the governing body for the whole nation, deciding many of the important questions of domestic affairs.²³¹ The Council of Justice, while still powerful under Charles in cases of justice, was under his direct control. He gave it the power it needed to bring justice to Spain, as had his grandparents, because he saw the administering of justice as the most important thing he could do as king. Charles says: “As far as providing the president and governors of the Council in the things of justice, it appears that the best thing is to supply them power over the people so that they can execute justice in his service and for the kingdom.”²³² Tavera was one of Charles’s most important advisors and officials, even tutor to his son Philip. He was also president of the Council of Justice for Charles for many years. In 1528, when Charles was about to

²³¹ McElwee, 234-235.

²³² Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del emperador Carlos V*, (Madrid: Imprenta del Patronato de intendencia é intervención militares, 1925), as quoted in Smith, 79.

leave Spain and receive his imperial triple crown, Santa Cruz states the following about the relationship of the Council to its King:

and as it was the old custom of Spain that the president and officials of the Royal Council consulted with the King on Friday, the Friday before their departure he called all those of the Council, reasoning with them, requesting and ordering them, and giving great warning on good, honest government of the republic and making of justice; and afterward he departed.²³³

Charles often wrote instructions to the Council of Justice and oversaw its functioning, as he did with all parts of his governments.²³⁴

The Imperial Council of State and Spanish Council of State were used for foreign policy, diplomacy, and war.²³⁵ As chancellor, Gattinara was important in making decisions about international matters until his death in 1530. After 1530, Charles was his own chancellor and worked to make his own policy, informed by his councils of state. Members such as ambassador Nicholas Perrenot lord of Granvelle, military commander Fadrique Alvarez de Toledo duke of Alba, Cardinal Tavera archbishop of Toledo, Juan de Zuñiga tutor to crown prince Philip, and minister of state Francisco de los Cobos head of the Consejo de la Hacienda were important to Charles in making decisions concerning foreign affairs. This council normally dealt with important papers and issues, and reported to Charles if he had not been in the meeting.²³⁶ Charles's secretary then read the *consulta* (advice) of the Council of State to Charles, who gave comments to be written in the margins of the document. These documents, along with other writings from his hand,

²³³ Gan Gimenez, 111.

²³⁴ Ibid., 128.

²³⁵ Blockmans, 131.

²³⁶ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 51-53.

show him to not be a ruler who tamely accepted advice from his advisors, but an energetic king whose character demanded he act upon his own initiative.

The reform of Spanish government under Charles was the continuation of the policies of the Catholic Monarchs, and there was only slight use of the model of government in the Netherlands. The example of the Netherlands was mainly used as the model for the Council of Finance.²³⁷ This council had three advisors, a treasurer, a secretary, and a clerk. To relieve Charles of many trivialities and make sure the most important affairs took precedence, time was saved by only requiring a seal or a name stamp in the charge of a trusted official upon governmental documents. The council met daily to consider their affairs, met with the king once in the winter and once in the summer to go through everything with him, and kept minutes of all their proceedings.²³⁸

The remaining councils of Spain's government were of great importance, especially the Councils of the Inquisition, Aragon, the Military Orders, and the Indies, each according to its specialized function. The Council of the Inquisition held power throughout Castile and Aragon. The Council of Aragon governed the Crown of Aragon and was presided over by the viceroy in Aragon. Charles's confessor García de Loaysa, general of the Dominican Order, was president of the Council of the Military Orders, as well as the Council of the Indies, which oversaw Castile's dealings in the Americas.²³⁹

After 1529, Charles began the traveling style of rule that would become a well-known characteristic of his reign. Fortunately, Gattinara overhauled the Spanish

²³⁷ Blockmans, 130-131.

²³⁸ Mariejol, 214.

²³⁹ Blockmans, 131.

government to run more efficiently while Charles was gone by putting regents in Castile and Aragon.²⁴⁰ Charles could travel his lands once he had married, leaving his wife as Empress in Castile to watch over Spain. In 1526 he married Isabella of Portugal, an arrangement that would lead to the absorption of Portugal into the Spanish Empire during Philip II's reign. Isabella was a good regent, and Spain had little disorder while Charles was absent. But Isabella died in 1539, and Charles was forced to look to others for help. The emperor's traveling system of rule, so different from his son's stationary system of rule in Madrid, complicated internal and external communications. Masses of documents had to travel with him and it was an inconvenient and risky business. Charles, therefore, had a small group of trusted individuals upon whom he relied to get things done from the top down.²⁴¹ The complex system was increasingly supported by two things: the exchange of letters and embassies. The postal system was not fast, and the thousands of letters written by Charles and his agents were slow in moving, causing inefficiency. To cut down on risk of enemies reading these letters they were often sent in code.

Charles kept ambassadors at foreign courts to whom he wrote, and members of the different state councils served on temporary missions, as did secretaries. These ambassadors, as well as Charles's chief ministers, showed remarkable loyalty and professionalism, and their correspondence shows how Charles ruled his empire. Charles's ability to choose talented people for his governments is reminiscent of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the university training of these government officials helped the efficiency of his governments. Like the Catholic Monarchs, Charles worked to create important offices

²⁴⁰ Pedro Navascués Palacio, *Carolus V Imperator*, (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1999), 3.

²⁴¹ Blockmans, 133-134.

and fill them with people who were indebted to him for their power and office. The success of his government relied upon the relationship of trust between each official as well as the officials and Charles.²⁴²

Family, trust, loyalty, and personal relationships were of extreme importance in the style of governing that Charles used throughout his lands, especially Spain.²⁴³ Charles's political system was based on the unconditional devotion of the members of his dynasty, the loyalty of the great families of nobles, and a professional bureaucracy. Charles was good at gaining and keeping the devotion of his officials. One example of this was his ability to gain the devotion of Andrea Doria the Genoan naval commander, which allowed Charles to win the war against France, England, and the pope in 1529. Doria continued to be loyal to Charles throughout Charles's reign. The lesser nobility of Spain were especially enthusiastic about supporting a world-governing monarchy in which they fought for a high mission and gained great power.²⁴⁴ But the devotion of Charles's officials was not enough to hold together Charles's large and diverse empire in the centuries after his death.

The many letters Charles sent to government officials throughout his empire were meant to ensure direct control over his viceroys, regents, and the rest of his government. Charles was in constant correspondence with every part of his empire and was always receiving news and sending letters and instructions to members of his government to keep total control over policy and action. It was his strong personality that allowed this

²⁴² Ibid., 135.

²⁴³ Bradford, 138.

²⁴⁴ Brandi, 207.

system of rule to run effectively throughout his reign, over an empire of lands tied together through personal association to Charles and looking to Spain (Castile) as the center. Certain instructions to members of Charles's government, especially those sent to his son Philip as regent of Spain, are important in showing Charles's ideas on governing. The letters, or "Poderes y Instrucciones," Charles sent to regents and viceroys are important in showing Charles's desires in how to rule Spain. These were meant to help Charles's wife Isabella, other viceroys, and Philip in ruling, and provide Philip with information on good governing to use after Charles died.

From the beginning of his reign Charles wrote letters to his regents in Spain and the various parts of his governments. In 1516 he began a system of government extremely dependent upon personal relationship to him and the writing of letters to and from all parts of his government. In addition to these letters, he wrote to other rulers for the purpose of good international relations. All of these letters show a picture of his ideas on governing. The letters Charles sent to his regents Jiménes and Adrian were of extreme importance in making governmental decisions from 1516 to 1522.²⁴⁵ He gained much control over the government of Spain, and this shows in his letters to and from his Spanish regents and councils. He often got money from Spain (Castile) for endeavors elsewhere, such as his use of the Imperial Council of State for funds against the Turks in 1526.²⁴⁶ From 1528 to 1539 he wrote many letters to his wife Isabella who was regent and Empress in Castile, instructing her on his wishes in the governing of Spain.²⁴⁷ These

²⁴⁵ Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 1, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1973), 59.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 117.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 131.

letters show the great amount of detailed instruction he gave his regents and council presidents in order to ensure they acted according to his wishes. He often wrote to regents, viceroys, council presidents, government agencies, and local officials, such as his letters to the viceroy of Valencia written in 1530, to the *Consejo de la Hacienda* (Council of Finance) in 1530, to the *Justicia Mayor* (Chief Justice) of Aragon in 1531, to the *Contadores Mayores* (Paymasters in Chief) in 1532, and to the *Concejo Real* (Royal Council) in 1532.²⁴⁸ He also wrote to important members of government, like Tavera, los Cobos, and the Duke of Alba concerning matters in which he needed advice or to instruct them in missions he wanted completed.²⁴⁹ A couple of examples of Charles's government looking to him for instruction on a continual basis are the brief the Council of State sent to him in 1536 and the letter he received from the governor of Galicia in 1549, both of which informed him in detail of their actions, and asked for his orders.²⁵⁰ Charles wrote an immense number of letters to keep his government running and ensure his will was being done, and he received their replies and reports constantly to ensure he knew everything that was going on in his government and could make wise decisions. Each letter shows the degree of power Charles held over his government, and that this power grew through the 1530s, 1540s, and until his abdication in 1556.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 191, 224, 290, 338, 365.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 191, 224, 290, 338, 365; Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 2, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1973), 48, 119.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 497; Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 3, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1973), 122.

From 1539 through 1555, after the death of Isabella and when Philip was regent in Castile, Charles wrote several “Poderes y Instrucciones” to him.²⁵¹ The first of these, written in 1539, was meant by Charles to be a guide for Philip in ruling if Charles were to die.²⁵² Charles tells Philip to “always have, in as much as possible, serious principles in respect for the good of the public and universal Christianity; and the government and administration of kingdoms, territories and subjects; in success, in justice and policy.”²⁵³

In 1543 Charles wrote two important instructions to his son Philip on how to rule, again in case he were to die.²⁵⁴ The first is called the “Intimate Instruction” and relates the personal virtues Charles attributed to a good ruler. It instructs Philip in how to be a person of moral character, and refers to particular people, institutions, and political groups that he should know about as king of Spain, and how he should use or treat these.²⁵⁵ Charles told Philip to gain advice from los Cobos and Tavera in all matters, “treating each of them as is befitting the quality and authority of their persons and the confidence which I place in them, urging them to counsel you as to what is proper, in complete harmony and unmoved by false modesty, passion and confusion.”²⁵⁶ Charles sent a second set of instructions soon afterward called the “Secret Instruction,” which was for Philip’s eyes only and gave a more detailed evaluation of each main advisor that

²⁵¹ Roger B. Merriman, “Charles V’s Last Paper of Advice to his Son,” *The American Historical Review* 28, no. 3 (1923): 489.

²⁵² Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 2, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1973), 32.

²⁵³ Ibid., 33, my translation.

²⁵⁴ Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 127.

²⁵⁵ Fernández Alvarez, vol. 2, 90.

²⁵⁶ Alfred Morel-Fatio, *Catalogue des manuscrits espagnols de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, (Paris, 1892), as quoted in Keniston, 257-258.

Charles was leaving Philip with and what their strengths and weaknesses were.²⁵⁷ He told Philip why he used leaders of different political groups, like Cobos and Tavera who were heads of opposing political parties, and how this would allow him to avoid becoming dominated by one group. He also cautioned him against the ambition of the Duke of Alba, and not to trust him in the government, only in the military.²⁵⁸

In these two letters of Charles, written in 1543, he says to Philip that the first duty of a prince was to stand firm in the faith, meaning Roman Catholicism, and to protect it from contamination, supporting the Inquisition and the attack upon Lutheranism. The second duty of a prince was the administration of justice. Charles stated, “God has made you to govern, not to enjoy yourself.”²⁵⁹ Justice must be maintained zealously, but tempered with mercy. Charles felt that it was the king’s responsibility to work his hardest in order to govern the land in the best possible manner. Also, he must be able to choose his ministers well and be able to read people correctly in order to use each official efficiently and run his kingdom well. These and other instructions Charles passed on to his son as long as he lived, methods and ideas of ruling gained through tradition, humanist education, the prudent and imprudent advice of various ministers, hard experience in a Renaissance Europe full of change, and his own ideas of governing.²⁶⁰

Charles sent another important set of instructions to Philip in 1548 concerning the government of Spain, and with emphasis placed upon international affairs. It contained a

²⁵⁷ Fernández Alvarez, vol. 2, 104.

²⁵⁸ Keniston, 257-258.

²⁵⁹ M. Fernández Alvarez, *Política mundial de Carlos V y Felipe II*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), as quoted in Fernández Alvarez, *Charles V*, 127.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

“political testament” of Charles for Philip to use in case of Charles’s death.²⁶¹ This letter advised Philip on his dealings with other nations such as France and Portugal. The final important letter Charles sent to Philip was written in 1555 and again meant to help Philip in ruling after Charles was dead. In this letter can be seen the Hispanicization of Charles by the end of his life.²⁶² Charles wanted a system of checks and balances that would keep the different ministers at the same level. Perhaps he saw the possible problem of a weaker monarch on the throne, or one who was tyrannical. He thought that in the future Spain’s treasury would be replenished if it held its course, especially since it would be cut off from the Empire and the Austrian lands upon his abdication. And thinking that Philip would go on to rule England with his wife Mary, he told him “to keep peace with France as far as possible, but never to lose the friendship of England.”²⁶³ Perhaps if England and Spain had not become rivals in the years afterward, the economy and power of Spain would not have seen such decline.

Charles handed to his son a Spain that was based upon the ideas of Ferdinand and Isabella, but which was more unified and growing larger and more powerful. With this foundation Philip would go on to make the Spanish Empire. But as with the reign of Charles, taking on the responsibility of defending the Roman Catholic Church would make it difficult for Spain to continue as a stable economic and political power. Charles tried to leave Philip with as much land and power as he could.²⁶⁴ Charles had thought that through control of Italy and the Americas he would eventually have enough power and

²⁶¹ Fernández Alvarez, vol. 2, 569.

²⁶² Merriman, “Charles V’s Last Paper of Advice to his Son,” 490.

²⁶³ Ibid., 490.

²⁶⁴ McElwee, 225-226.

money to control Europe for Catholicism and the Hapsburg dynasty, and that this would pass to his son Philip.²⁶⁵ But these plans were not to come to fruition. Even so, Philip received a Spain that was quite rich and powerful. In 1554 and 1558 Charles wrote lengthy testaments concerning his rule and his ideas on government, as well as his history as a ruler.²⁶⁶ These, and his memoirs, show the power he gained as a monarch and his own opinions of his accomplishments as a ruler.²⁶⁷ It is clear from these testaments, and other documents of the government at the end of his reign, that affairs were in order upon his death. Extensive records, such a list of the *procuradores* in the *cortes* of Castile and other local officials, a list of the pensions for clergy, and the state of the government and its finances in Spain are documented and organized, and show a centralized Spain with a strong central government in 1558.²⁶⁸ What Charles left to Philip, other than instruction, was a system of government where the monarch was absolute over the royal councils as well as local areas, where nobles were powerful socially but not politically, and where permanent councils controlled by the monarch ran the government. Philip, like Charles, would work tirelessly and have a strong enough personality to hold the Spanish governing system together, making it work somewhat efficiently. But in the generations that followed, the inherent weaknesses in the government would cause problems leading to decline in Spanish power and wealth.

²⁶⁵ Tyler, 233.

²⁶⁶ Prudencio de Sandoval, *The Life and Deeds of Emperor Charles V*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1956), 533-561; Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 4, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1981), 66-97.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 485-567.

²⁶⁸ Manuel Fernández Alvarez, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, vol. 4, (Salamanca: Universidad, 1981), 372-454.

Conclusions

Spain during the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella saw unification and the growth of a stronger central government based upon former structures. Charles continued these policies after failed attempts to do otherwise. After the Comunero Revolt in Castile and his stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529, he realized the strength and potential effectiveness of using a Castilian form of government for Spain with a strong monarchy and permanent councils directly under his control, and thus he continued the work of his predecessors. He even attempted to export this form of government to the Netherlands and the Empire with some success. The records of the Council of Justice and other central government councils, the records of Castro Urdiales and other local areas' governments, and Charles's correspondence show the growth of the monarchy in Spain during this time, but this growth did not yet warrant the term "absolutism." Charles, like his contemporary rulers and the Catholic Monarchs, still had to work within a constitutional system of government and was forced to compromise with the aristocracy of the many kingdoms in his empire, although his control over Spanish central government grew throughout his reign. As king of Spain, Charles held great power, and due to the strength of Charles's government Spain grew stronger in the world, continuing the "Golden Age" of the Catholic Monarchs.

CONCLUSION

Spain under the rule of Charles was a changing nation-state, its growing power checked by its system's inherent flaws. The overall governmental structure used by Charles to rule his many lands was meant to unify them as much as possible. At first he attempted a medieval Burgundian approach to governing Spain, but after the Comunero Revolt in 1520-22, and his stay in Spain from 1522 to 1529, he began ruling Spain with a Castilian style of government. He desired to centralize Spain and his empire using the dominance of Castile. The government Charles grew up with in the Netherlands had few councils with largely unexplained powers, and a weak ruler. The government Charles used in Spain had many councils, with well-explained powers, and an extremely strong ruler. Through his use of the power of the Castilian government and its structure, Charles centralized Spain and brought its regions under more direct royal control.

Like the Catholic Monarchs, Charles dominated the councils of the central government of Spain, as I showed using the records of the Royal Council and Charles's correspondence. The local records of Castro Urdiales show that Charles gained more power in the localities through control of the towns, continuing this policy from the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella. The system of government used by Charles, one that required him to travel constantly and write an enormous amount of letters, was based upon the devotion of his government officials. His correspondence with the various parts of his government shows the degree of power Charles had as King of Spain. Although Charles held great power over the councils in Spain, he allowed and encouraged debate

when it was beneficial. He liked absolutist, consultative institutions that gathered information and helped him decide on the best course available. Even as he was empowering his councils to rule Spain efficiently, Charles took power away from them in order to keep direct control, as Ferdinand and Isabella had done. He continued to use the councils the Catholic Monarchs had created, as well as creating new ones. Like the Catholic Monarchs, Charles took political power away from the nobility as he gained a stronger hold on the central government. He changed the format and the membership of the councils to gain power for himself, a trend that began with Ferdinand and Isabella. He made the Royal Council (Council of Justice) more inclusive of the lesser nobility and lawyers. As he gained more power over the councils, and with the creation of the Council of Finance, Charles was able to gain more power in the localities than Ferdinand and Isabella were able to do, and to collect more revenue from them, even though he still technically dealt with each in a singular way. Charles was a benevolent dictator who used a system of government that needed such a ruler if it were to survive. Unfortunately, in years afterward, such a ruler was not always in power in Spain, and the inherent flaws of this personal system of government caused decline in Spanish world power. By the end of Charles's reign, Spain was on its way to being an absolutist state.

Charles brought change to Spain from the Netherlands, the Empire, and Italy, but in the end he was changed by Spain. Like Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles used religion to unify Spain racially and religiously. He continued their trend of restructuring society so that the greater nobles were less powerful politically while the monarchy gained power over the government. From the reign of the Catholic Monarchs Charles gained a

foundation based on the precedents of the Romans, Visigoths, and Reconquest kings of Spain in the form of Roman law and strong monarchy, as well as power over the Church, all of which allowed him to build a stronger central government more completely under his control. The legacy he had dreamed of living up to as emperor, that of Charlemagne, was done through his power as King of Spain.

What was different about his rule was the more international flavor that he brought to Spain from the Netherlands, Holy Roman Empire, and Italy. But throughout his rule, Spain and Spaniards came first. The changes he made were limited to the style of court, which was affected mainly by Burgundian ceremonial court life, some structuring of the Council of Finance, and the Erasmian and humanist ideas of the Renaissance which he and his advisors supported. Concerning humanism, Charles was a devout ruler as opposed to a secular one, not giving in completely to the political ideas of the time. Knowing of Machiavellian techniques, he usually rejected them, desiring to be a moral Christian ruler instead. Charles was a mix of the old and the new, a deeply religious Catholic who trusted in God for help in ruling but also believed in the importance of improving himself in order to rule well. He relied on both medieval and modern methods of governance and legitimacy. Dynastic concerns were extremely important to him, as well as marriage alliances. His memoirs show how practical a ruler he was, and yet how much he trusted God to help him as protector of the Church and Christianity, as well as God's empire on earth. He felt that, as the strongest Christian ruler since Charlemagne, he was put in a unique position by God. As King of Spain this feeling was apparent, both

to him and to Spaniards, because Spain shared a common legacy with the Holy Roman Empire as the continuer of Rome, as well as crusader against the infidel.

In the end, Charles abdicated all of his territories and responsibilities and lived near a monastery in Yuste, Spain until his death in 1558. The following abdication speech made in the Netherlands in 1555 shows the tireless efforts Charles made to keep his empire together and become a great emperor like Charlemagne.

Some of you will remember that on the 5th January last, forty years had elapsed since the day when, in this very hall, I received, at the age of fifteen, from my paternal grandfather the Emperor Maximilian, the sovereignty of the Belgian provinces. My maternal grandfather, King Ferdinand the Catholic, dying soon after, there devolved on me the care of a heritage which the state of my mother's health did not permit her to govern. At the age of seventeen, therefore, I crossed the sea to take possession of the kingdom of Spain. At nineteen, on the death of the Emperor, I ventured to aspire to the imperial crown, from a desire, not of extending my dominions, but of the more effectually providing for the safety of Germany, and of my other kingdoms, and especially of the Belgian provinces, and in the hope of maintaining peace amongst Christian nations, and of uniting their forces in defending the Catholic faith against the Turk.

These designs I have not been able completely to execute, owing, in part, to the outbreak of the German heresy, and in part to the jealousy of rival powers. But with God's help I have never ceased to resist my enemies, and to endeavour to fulfil the task imposed on me. In the course of my expeditions, sometimes to make war, sometimes to make peace, I have traveled nine times into High Germany, six times into Spain, seven times into Italy, four times into France, twice to England, and twice into Africa, accomplishing in all forty long journeys, without counting visits of less importance to my various states. I have crossed the Mediterranean eight times, and the Spanish sea twice. I will not now allude to my journey from Spain to the Netherlands, undertaken, as you know, for reasons sufficiently grave. My frequent absence from these provinces obliged me to intrust their government to my sister Mary, who is here present. I know, and the States-General know also, how well she has discharged her duties. Although I have been engaged in many wars, into none of them have I gone willingly; and in bidding you farewell, nothing is so painful to me as not to have been able to leave you a firm and assured peace. Before my last expedition into Germany, considering the deplorable state of my health, I had already contemplated relieving myself of the burden of public business; but the troubles which agitated Christendom induced me to put off my design, in the hope of restoring peace, and because, not being so enfeebled as I now am, I felt it incumbent on me to sacrifice

to the welfare of my people what remained to me of strength and life. I had almost attained the end of my endeavours, when the sudden attack made upon me by the King of France and some of the German princes forced me again to take up arms. I have done what I can to defeat the league against me; but the issue of war is in the hand of God, who gives victory or takes it away at His pleasure. Let us be thankful to Providence that we have not to deplore any of those great reverses which leave deep traces behind them, but, on the contrary, have obtained some victories of which our children may cherish the remembrance. In entering on my retirement I entreat you to be faithful to your prince, and to maintain a good understanding amongst yourselves. Above all, resist those new sects which infest the adjoining countries; and if heresy should penetrate within your frontier, hasten to extirpate it, or evil will overtake you. For myself, I must confess that I have been led into many errors, whether by youthful inexperience, or by the pride of riper age, or by some other weakness inherent in human nature. But I declare that never, knowingly or willingly, have I done wrong or violence, nor authorized such deeds in others. If, notwithstanding, such offences may be justly chargeable upon me, I solemnly assure you that I have committed them unknown to myself and against my own desire; and I entreat those whom I may thus have wronged, both those who are present to-day and those who are absent, to grant me their forgiveness.

(To Philip) Were you put in possession of these provinces by my death, so fair a heritage might well give me a claim on your gratitude. But now that I give them up to you of my own will, dying as it were before the time for your advantage, I expect that your care and love of your people will repay me in the way such a boon deserves. Other kings reckon themselves fortunate to be able, at the hour of death, to place their crowns on their children's heads; I wish to enjoy this happiness in my life, and to see you reign. My conduct will have few imitators, as it has few examples; but it will be praised if you justify my confidence, if you do not decline in the wisdom you have hitherto displayed, and if you continue to be the strenuous defender of the Catholic faith, and of law and justice, which are the strength and the bulwarks of empire. May you also have a son to whom you may, in turn, transmit your power!¹

Luis Zapata, a Spanish chronicler, wrote a poem concerning this speech made to Charles's family, important government members, and subjects in Brussels. Sixteenth century Spaniards remembered Charles as a great king and emperor, and believed Spain to be on its way toward further greatness, as the following passage shows.

¹ William Stirling-Maxwell, *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*, (London: John C. Nimmo, 1890), 10-14.

In Bruxelles Emperor Charles abode, fifth Caesar of the name;
 Weary with life's long toil was he, and rack'd with gout his frame;
 His cheek was pale, his step was frail, seldom he cross'd the door,
 He could not rule as he had ruled in the good days of yore,
 Nor meet the French in field and trench as he was wont to do
 When o'er the Flemish border the lilied banner flew;
 Wherefore he had devis'd and delayt to lay the burden down
 Of pomp, and power, and majesty; of scepter, orb, and crown;
 And all his wide-world heritage, and all his sword had won,
 To give unto Don Philip now, his dear and only son,
 Don Philip, King of England, who that noble realm had brought
 Back to Christ's faith from heresy by rebel Luther taught,
 So Caesar and the English King in Bruxelles town were met,
 And paction was between them made, and time of signing set;
 The year of grace one thousand was, five hundred fifty-five,
 The famous year that saw the morn of this great deed arrive,
 Friday, October twenty-five, three afternoon, the day
 And hour, when Caesar sign'd and seal'd his diadems away.²

Twenty lines later in the poem, Zapata describes Charles's abdication speech in the Netherlands.

Then slowly, when the Chancellor ceas'd, the Emperor arose,
 And told of all his toils at home and wars with foes,
 How twice to heathen Barbary his Christian flag he bore,
 And now eleven times had pass'd the stormy ocean o'er,
 And how one passage more, the twelfth, for him yet did remain,
 If God should grant his sole desire, to end his days in Spain.
 From his first hour of royal power it had been his endeavor
 Justice to mete and right to do with equal balance ever;
 But if in absence, or by chance or frailty led astray,
 Wrong he had done, he pray'd them all to pardon him that day;
 Their lord, whose rule in other realms the peoples' hearts had won;
 This witting, he, for such a son, could joyfully lay down
 The sacred trust he elde had kept, of scepter, sword, and crown;
 The last of all, in earnest wise three things he did command
 Unto their care, and bid them hold in honour to the end:
 Their holy faith, their country's peace, their duty to their lord,
 Who lov'd them, and would win their love: this was his parting word.³

² William Stirling-Maxwell, *The Chief Victories of the Emperor Charles V*, (London: Edinborough, private print for the editor, 1870), 66.

³ *Ibid.*, 66.

After the Comunero Revolt, and during the 1520s, Charles endeavored to become more Spanish in order to be in closer touch with his subjects. Charles had thoroughly become a Spaniard during the forty years he had been their king. And in the end he decided to die in his empire's base and chose home: Spain.

Spain continued to be dominated by Castile after Charles's reign. The councils created by Ferdinand, Isabella, and Charles would run the governments of the Spanish Empire under the direct and nearly absolute control of the king. Philip II inherited a more unified nation, although Spain continued to have regional differences. Charles had continued the policies of the Catholic Monarchs, and brought Spain into the world as a major power. The unfortunate state of its economy in the years afterward, and the religious turmoil that engulfed Europe, would cause the end of the "Golden Age" seen during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles. After centuries of gradual decline many Spaniards would look back upon Charles's reign fondly.

More work needs to be done concerning sixteenth century Spain during the rule of Charles V. Secondary sources concerning Charles and Spain do not go into enough detail about Spain during the reign of Charles. Sixteenth century Spanish sources have not been researched enough to bring about a definitive work on Charles's rule of Spain. There is a great number of chronicles, letters, and records in addition to those used for this paper, and these sources are still in need of systematic study. Most of these documents are in Spain, in the archives of Simancas and Salamanca. The further study of these materials would produce a clearer and more research-oriented account of the state of Spain during the reign of Charles.

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